Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa

A First World Interpretation

Per Frostin

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

IN TANZANIA

AND SOUTH AFRICA

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White people are white people.
They must learn to listen. Black
people are black people. They
must learn to talk.

Wally Serote

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Acknowledgements

New Edition, 2021

Gerald West

The republishing project was imagined by the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, as part of its own commitment to working within an African liberation theology trajectory. We are committed to accompanying this republication of Per Frostin's *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation* with a regular cycle of symposia in which we gather together with colleagues from around the African continent, the Third World, the margins of the First World, and others whose work is shaped by liberation theology trajectories.

This republishing project and the envisaged symposia could not have been fulfilled without the support of the Per Frostin Foundation in Sweden, the Church of Sweden Mission Fund for Mission Research, and my colleagues in the co-ordinating team, Erik Berggren, Anna Karin Hammar, and Mika Vähäkangas. We are grateful to Ingela Bergmann for permission to use her drawing of Per Frostin, and to Stephano Skauma for permission to use his sculpture as part of our cover.

Original Edition, 1998

Per Frostin

In writing a work such as this, I have often recalled an African saying Cognatus ergo sum (I exist because I belong to a family). Differently put, I am heavily indebted to others for the help I have been given in writing this book and in doing the research which lies behind it.

While teaching at the Lutheran Theological College Makumira, Tanzania, 1975-1979,1 was a member of thejamaa of the college; faculty and students helped me to gain a deeper understanding of African theology and African culture. My indebtedness to them is very great. In particular, one of the Makumira students, Kaire Mbuende, has been my dialogue partner for more than a decade. During my research travels to South Africa, Namibia, and Tanzania I have gained invaluable insights from many informants and basic communities. While it would be imprudent to name all of these, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Allan Boesak, Manas Buthelezi, Frank Chikane, Christopher Mwoleka, Beyers Naude, Buti Tlhagale, Desmond Tutu, and the small Christian community Mama wa mateso (the Mother of Pain) in Usa River, Tanzania. The loosely organized network for a liberation

Forewords

Per Frostin, *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation*, Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2021 (Republication of: Per Frostin, *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation* (Studia Theologica Lundensia 42), Lund: Lund University Press, 1988)

Gerald West, South Africa

I scour used-book sites regularly for copies of Per Frostin's pioneering book: *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation* (Studia Theologica Lundensia 42), Lund: Lund University Press, 1988. When I find them, I buy them and distribute them to my students. But every year I receive queries from students and colleagues from around the 'Third World' about whether I have copies of the book. They ask me because they have read of Per Frostin's work in my work. My work over more than thirty years has been indelibly shaped by Per Frostin's incisive analysis.

I met Per Frostin in the home of colleagues in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, in what was then the School of Theology at the University of Natal, in the late 1980s. I was in the second year of PhD studies at the time, working on my thesis, *Biblical Interpretation in Theologies of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context of Liberation*. There was an immediate resonance as we conversed, and when he gave me a copy of this newly published *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa*, I devoured every word. His analysis resonated with my methodological, epistemological, and hermeneutical emphasis, offering conceptual shape to the irruption of Third World (and margins of the First World) voices I was grappling to hear and understand. Our conversation was cut short by his untimely death a few years later, but I hear his voice still, as again and again I return to this seminal work.

It has been this recognition that Per Frostin's work has an enduring value to those of us working within liberation theology trajectories that has led to an initiative to republish *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa*. Now more than ever, perhaps, we need to hear again his analysis. How can we not be moved by the following few sentences and the analysis that underlies them as Frostin begins his section on "The Profile of the New Paradigm", as he sets out to explain the logic of liberation theology?

> The new paradigm may be defined in reference to five interrelated emphases: the choice of "interlocutors", the perception of God, social analysis, the choice of theological tools, and the relationship between theory and practice. ... The emphasis on the Third World experience sets this paradigm off from established theology in two respects. First, the choice of *social relations* is seen as the main crossroad in theology .... In other words, liberation theologians focus on a new issue seldom discussed in established theology: Who are the interlocutors of theology? Or, Who are asking the questions that theologians try to answer?

> Second, the question of the interlocutors is given a new answer, "a preferential option for the poor". ... Liberation theology ... chosen "nonpersons" as its chief interlocutors, "the poor, the exploited classes, the marginalized races, all the despised cultures" (6).

What is particularly significant about this analysis, besides Frostin's own critical contribution in terms of formulation and argument, is that his analysis is saturated with references to Third World work itself. Each set of quotation marks in the sentences cited above comes either directly or indirectly from a Third World source. The interested reader will have to read Frostin for themselves to find out who these sources are, which is why we are republishing the book! But in order to find these sources the interested reader will have to delve into the more than eighty pages that constitute the endnotes, bibliography, and index of the book. The endnotes on their own are worth acquiring the book! Here we find the unruly voices of the Third World that Frostin is attempting to introduce to his First World audience.

Per Frostin's great gift to us is that not only does he make it clear, in the title, that his is "A First World Interpretation", but that he carefully documents the path he has walked with Third World experience and Third World analysis. His book is an archive of Third World theology. Per Frostin's own contribution is immense, but so too is the detailed record of the documentation on which his contribution is based, especially the documentation associated with EATWOT (the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians).

Frostin's contribution in my view, and each of the other "Forewords" that follow will offer their own assessment, is at least fourfold. First, the most significant contribution is the conceptual analysis of the first twenty-six pages and the last nineteen pages. His "Introduction" is a remarkable conceptual analysis of the contours of 'liberation theology' (11), as is his final chapter, "The New Paradigm and Its Critics". The two case-studies that follow are profound in their analysis, but it is Fostin's conceptual account of the "internal logic" (24) of the "new paradigm" (6) that is particularly significant. Frostin shows us that liberation theology has a distinctive 'shape' (to use Albert Nolan's analytical term from his 1988 book *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel*).

The second contribution is the detail of the two case-studies, Tanzanian Ujamaa Theology and South African Black Theology as two examples of African liberation theology (13). The ordering of these two case-studies is, in my view, also important. South African Black Theology, because of its links with North American Black Theology and South Africa's anti-apartheid international profile, already had a theological profile and dialogue partners around the world. Tanzanian Ujamaa Theology was less well-known. Frostin foregrounds this African theology, giving Ujamaa Theology its rightful place as an African liberation theology.

The third contribution is Frostin's insistence that African liberation theology "be seen as a process, formed by a dialectic between the experience of the oppressed and intellectual reflection" (13-14). Liberation theology is a contextual *process* of action/experience and reflection. This understanding returns us to Frostin's conceptual analytical contribution, with which he offers us a clear sense of how he understands the shape of this process.

The fourth significant contribution is Frostin's emphasis on the economic as a distinctive feature of 'liberation theology' (7), and Marxism as a crucial "mode of

analysis" (9). This is clear in his analysis of Ujamaa Theology, where the economic dimension is distinct, by its very definition. However, Black Theology is more complex, for race or 'blackness' (86) is constitutive. Though Frostin does not take up Lebamang Sebidi's formulation of "racial capitalism" directly (though Sebidi's "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology" is cited regularly in his footnotes), Frostin does conceptualise "capitalism as the root cause of apartheid" (116).

This reference to the economic as a fundamental feature, perhaps even the distinctive feature, of liberation theology leads me into an example of how we might use Per Frostin's legacy through this republication project to give shape to our ongoing reflections on 'liberation theology' and 'liberation theologies'. Frostin tends to use the singular, foregrounding economic oppression, though acknowledging an array of intersecting oppressions (8). Each of the now many forms of systemic oppression has given rise to a liberation theology, often associating itself among 'liberation theologies'. Feminist, womanist, and African women's theologies, for example, have often been described by their practitioners as liberation theologies. Increasingly, however, though emerging theologies from among the systemically marginalised often trace their links to 'liberation theology', they do not identify themselves, in the first instance, as a 'liberation' theology. 'Queer theology' is a good example. What, then, is the relationship between first generation 'liberation theology' (in Frostin's terms), the directly related second generation 'liberation theologies' (such as Feminist Theology), and the indirectly related third generation theologies (like Queer Theology)?

Here, then, is another good reason to republish Per Frostin's *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa*! This book provides us with both the conceptual apparatus and the detail of particular case-studies for reflecting more fully on liberation-theology-type theologies. Those of us involved in the republishing project envisage such a trajectory, intending that we use this republished book as a resource for reflecting more fully on what it means to do contextual theology in our time, more than thirty years after Per Frostin's landmark book.

Anneth Munga, Tanzania

Forty-five years ago, Rev. Dr. Per Frostin set his foot for the first time on Tanzanian soil. He arrived in Tanzania accompanied by his family almost a decade and a half after Tanzania mainland (Tanganyika) had acquired its independence from colonial rule. Frostin worked as a lecturer and researcher at Makumira Lutheran Theological College from 1975 until 1979. In the 1980s, Frostin returned periodically as a guest lecturer and researcher. It was during this time that he authored the book *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation*.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the ideology of Ujamaa na Kujitegemea (Family-hood and Self-reliance) profiled Tanzania politically, socially, religiously and economically. It was initiated by Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the father of the nation, who founded the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party in 1954. On December 9th, 1961, Tanganyika acquired independence under TANU and Nyerere became the first president. Tanganyika and Zanzibar were united in 1964, forming the United Republic of Tanzania. In 1967, the Arusha Declaration was launched and Ujamaa na Kujitegemea was declared the official ideology of the country. Ten years later, TANU and its counterpart in Zanzibar, the Afro-Shirazi Party, merged and formed Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) - The Revolutionary Party. CCM, which remained the sole party until the introduction of multiparty system in 1990s, is the only party that has been in a ruling position in Tanzania.

While the ideology of Ujamaa has been dealt with by many scholars, Frostin has identified an 'Ujamaa theology'. Three factors justify such a description.

First, the ideology of Ujamaa, from its inception, was depicted with a dimension of faith. The motto Ujamaa ni imani (Ujamaa is faith) was echoed across the nation. Imani za Mwana-TANU (i.e. Creeds of TANU member) constituted 10 statements that every party member had to know. Since Tanzanians were assumed also to be TANU members, these statements were generally recognised across the country regardless of tribal and religious backgrounds. Nyerere's role in underscoring that Ujamaa is faith among Tanzanians cannot be overstated. His speeches and writings reveal his personal conviction in and commitment to Ujamaa. Frostin's work of formulating an Ujamaa theology and his use of Nyerere's publications is therefore not only understandable; it is justified.

Secondly, Ujamaa was professed as a good force of liberation that stood against evil systems. "Ujamaa ni utu" became the motto of the people in the 1970s. The term 'utu' - or 'ubuntu' in Nguni languages - means humanness; thus the watchword "Familyhood is humanness". The opposites of Ujamaa were capitalism and feudalism; systems that enabled a few (former colonial masters or those associated with them) to acquire wealth and land while leaving the masses with nothing. Capitalism and feudalism had to be rejected because they divided people between 'haves' and 'have nots'. Here, Ujamaa stood as the power of liberation from neo-colonialism to humanness. Ujamaa was the ideology behind the nationalisation of privately owned land and institutions. Likewise, Ujamaa led to the establishment of villages where people worked and shared the fruits of their labour as a family.

Thirdly, from the ecclesiological point of view, Ujamaa paralleled the self-perception of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The ELCT sought to identify itself as an indigenous church. Its organisational profile was manifested

in accordance with the political stance of its time: to liberate itself from neo-colonial influences. Although the seven churches that formed the ELCT in 1963 had not been involved in the struggle for independence, they envisioned a church that was truly Tanzanian. The formation of the ELCT therefore followed three "self-deeds": self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting. These deeds reflected the focus on liberation from neo-colonialism embedded in Ujamaa.

While the ELCT continued to develop on the basis of the three 'self-deeds', the East African Revival Movement (EARM) established itself within mainstream protestant denominations - including the ELCT in the north-western and southern parts of Tanzania. As an in-church revival movement made of lay groups, the EARM profiled itself as "the new clan of Christ" for people adversely affected by socio-economic disruptions caused by colonialism. Former sex-workers were among those specifically affected. Venereal diseases had caused barrenness among many of them, thus they were rejected by their clans. In-church revival groups with their focus on public repentance and reconciliation gave such outcasts a community that provided them with an identity and became for them "the new clan of Christ". While it cannot be claimed that the concept of "the new clan of Christ" emanated from Ujamaa, it is clear that the latter's focus on family-hood and community was reflected in the EARM.

The political direction of Tanzania and the social, religious and economic contexts of today are different from those that prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s. First, Ujamaa, neo-colonialism, capitalism, feudalism, and liberation no longer constitute the core vocabulary of society in general and faith communities in particular. Secondly, the religious landscape has changed. On one hand, interfaith cooperation between Muslims and Christians has grown from ward to national levels. On the other, ministries with strong emphasis on success faith teachings are increasing. The possibility of these ministries becoming more 'mainstream' than the traditionally 'mainline' churches is real. Frostin's study is therefore relevant, not in spite of the new religious landscape but because of it. Having moulded the political, social, religious, and economic development for decades, Ujamaa will consciously or sub-consciously remain part of theological reflection within denominations, among denominations, and between religions. For ELCT in particular, Frostin's work identifies points of continuity and discontinuity as the Church strives to remain a genuine family ('jamaa') of faith built by and for the people.

Any society or community wishing to understand where it is and foresee its course of transformation needs to take seriously the history of development of thought. By republishing *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation*, the history of theology in Tanzania is taken seriously. Thirty-two years after the book's first release, it provides an opportunity for theologians to revisit the perceptions of people on God's intervention in their own context.

Sigurd Bergmann, Sweden

When Per Frostin published his study in 1988 he offered a unique contribution to theologians who at that time were still soliloquising in a narrow Western comfort zone. Naturally, the post-war experiences, the awareness about an increasing global injustice, and growing environmental challenge and gender inequality had from the 1970s and onwards catalysed a breakthrough. A Nordic Lutheran theologian, however, who could offer a well thought through approach for an emancipated reciprocal dialogue between believers in the North and South was rare and highly original. Frostin's work - which was carried out in a common project in Lund with Manfred Hofmann, who simultaneously explored liberation theology in Nicaragua and Bolivia - could not just chronicle contemporary events in the African countries. It also elaborated a subtle hermeneutical method for an inter- and trans-local mapping and discussion of normative pain points.

One should remember that notions like postcolonialism, contextualism, and globalisation - technical terms common for us today - did not exist at that time. Frostin's study unfolds the method of contextual theology in this book, before the term and concept had arrived in Scandinavia in the early 1990s (even if it was already established in other countries). The project to keep together both the difference of African and European culture and the commonness in one world history, where both the colonised and the colonisers are united in one common history of oppression, demands a highly ambitious balancing act.

For me, the most creative message of this book is summarised in its subtitle: "A First World Interpretation". The author is painfully conscious about his own situatedness in the context of the rich North, and the constant awareness about his location in this context serves as a constructive instrument for him to enter into a dialogue with Christians in the other, strange contexts in Africa. The experience of contrast and the bottom-up epistemology appear hereby as central theoretical focus points for the author. Frostin's study hereby represents one of the first drafts in the history of theology for what we today would depict as an inter- and trans-cultural hermeneutics. The challenge to reflect on the necessity of such a methodology was in his time governed by the dialogue between countries and continents, while today it is manifest in the dialogue between individuals and groups at places all over the world. Today such a need of inter-cultural exchange appears, due to intense global migration, in nearly every city of the North, where the cultural and religious manifestations of the world are mirrored in the structure of its inhabitants. Homelessness and longing for a home have become existential values.

Another point that was important for us when Per published his study, and that I still regard as crucial, concerns 'liberation'. When Gustavo Gutiérrez published his famous *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) it was received, at least partially, in Sweden (and the North), but only missiologists and anthropologists knew anything about what happened in Africa. Following and somehow supporting the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa was of course important for many in the North, and the churches in Sweden (and the government) mobilised a reputable amount of solidarity and assistance. But knowledge about Africa was sparse and the view of the continent remained stereotyped, one-eyed and black and white. Frostin's study contributed to this situation a highly valuable and constructive insight that opened

many students and scholars' eyes and prepared the path for a long-term solidarity and constructive exchange.

Others might evaluate to what degree his study also enriches the internal history writing of the African story, but to complete one's own view with the other's "first world interpretation" appears to me as the most fruitful way in history writing, where one entangles perceptions and interpretations from both the inside and the outside, and cultivates the cross-cultural process in two directions. Frostin's study represents within such a view a central document of contemporary history, in Tanzania and South Africa as well as in Sweden. It reveals even the Swedish lens on Africa.

The description of theology in Tanzania and South Africa as "liberation theology" might appear as ambiguous and for some even as provocative. Nevertheless, in my view it is necessary to develop a central concept of normativity in any theological system, and we cannot just get rid of soteriology and replace it with ontology. It remains also natural for me that the love to the poor, and the love to the stranger - in society as well as in the cosmic community of all created beings - must remain centrally at the core of Christian faith.

One can interpret Frostin's understanding of liberation theology narrowly in a political way as if it only mirrors Marxist doctrines, but that would not do justice to either his intentions or his work. At its depth the study is anchored in a solid faith in the Creator as the Liberator, and his/her call to respond to and partake in his/her on-going history of redemption. Hereby Per and his study stayed safely in the historical context of his own academic ancestors, where especially Gustav Aulén in his famous *Christus Victor* (1931), and other not yet translated works, interpreted God's interaction with the world as a "drama", as an on-going struggle in, with, and for the world's liberation. Naturally one should question today the military metaphors of that time and replace "struggle" with terms like care, compassion, and transformation, but the idea that the living God of the Here and Now is encountered at the places where oppression is turned into liberation continues to be an essential wisdom in Christian life and theology. Frostin's study can in this way serve as a compass to navigate and encounter the Triune's life-giving and liberating Spirit that sets Creation free.

In our talks together I learned about Per's deep connection to Africa, mainly Makumira, when he dreamed about "doing theology sitting under a tree". After our visit in Tanzania in 2011, I can imagine him resting in the shadow of the leaves contemplating (and also his family not always happy about his incredible energies spent in work). It is therefore with special joy that I participate in assisting his thoughts to be shared within Africa by this e-book. It would be even more joyful if this study could inspire African theologians to produce a similar study where they present an "Interpretation from the South" on how theology in Sweden, Scandinavia, and the North occurs to them.

For our small group of friends who Per Frostin before his sudden death had chosen to administer his literary heritage - and also for our association "Institute of Contextual Theology in Lund" that I founded with Per Frostin and Göran Eidevall in 1992 (inspired by South Africa's Institute for Contextual Theology) - it is a strong encouragement to make this work available to students and scholars in Africa and on other continents where it most certainly will inspire to deepen and accelerate liberating cross-cultural exchanges all over the created world.

Tinyiko Maluleke, South Africa

I have never met Per Frostin in person. But when I learnt of his death in July 1992, it felt like I had lost a personal mentor. His passing made me realise how cherished a theological interlocutor he was to me. A year or two after Frostin died, Aasulv Lande, a friend and a colleague, professor of mission studies at Lund University at that time, invited me to Lund for a colloquium. At the end of the colloquium there was a small ceremony commemorating the life of Per Frostin.

The Lund seminar, afforded me an opportunity to 'meet' Frostin, albeit, through the eyes, words and reminisces of those who had known, worked and lived with him. I also met the members of his family who had attended the commemoration. Until then, I had known Frostin only through his English written texts, notably, *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa* and *Luther's Two Kingdoms* - crucial components of my early theological diet.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is quoted saying, "a prophet is not without honour except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home" (Mark 6:4). However, the overwhelming impression I gained in the Lund memorial was that Per Frostin was a respected and well appreciated prophet both in his hometown and among members of his own family. A few years after the Lund colloquium, on invitation of the Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA), I visited Makumira Lutheran Theological Seminary outside Arusha in Tanzania. There I met some people who fondly remembered Frostin's sterling contributions to teaching and research during his sojourn in Tanzania. On that occasion, I also met another Scandinavian theologian, Mika Vähäkangas, who wrote his doctoral thesis on Catholic theologian and musicologist, Charles Nyamiti. Incidentally, I received the news of Nyamiti's own passing whilst I was writing this foreword.

From a Black and African theology point of view, the 1980s, which is when Per Frostin's *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa* was published, were something of a golden age. However, to understand the theological golden age in context we have to go back to the two preceding decades. Whereas the emergence of the phenomenon of generic Africa Theology in written, deliberate self-conscious form can be dated back to the 1950s, as I have argued in my article "Half a Century of Black and African Theology: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century", it was in the 1980s that it came into full bloom. It takes about thirty years, at least, for a new and sustainable school of thinking to emerge in any discipline. The first years are the foundational years of establishment. While one individual may spark the fire at a particular time, for a new school of thought to be born, it often takes more than one individual. Indeed before it is born as a school of thought it is lived in communities. A school of thought derives from cumulative experienced systematically reflected upon. For Black and African theologies to be generated, it was necessary to have a minimum number of skilled and qualified people in the field of theology and related fields, at a high enough level.

It is remarkable that African American civil right leader, Martin Luther King Junior and the Congolese theologian, Vincent Mulago gwa Chikala Musharamina, and the Nigerian Methodist Bolaji Idowu, had obtained their PhDs in 1955 already. This was two years before the first African country gained its independence, namely, Ghana. In the years leading up to and subsequent to the independence of Ghana on

the 6th of March 1957, the clamour for epistemological and theological independence raged inside the fledgling African theological community, at home and abroad, and inside the emergent African church itself.

But first things first, it was necessary to have a large enough guild of qualified people.

To illustrate this point further, let us add a few more Black and and African postgraduate and doctoral graduates. The doyen of modern African Theology, John Mbiti, obtained his doctorate at Cambridge University in 1963. The founder of Black Theology, James Cone, obtained his PhD at Northwestern University in 1965. The subsequent works of the two of them became the fountains out of which a new theological language was born.

In 1968, Manas Buthelezi, "the nestor of Black Theologians in South Africa", as Frostin refers to him (92), earned his PhD at Drew University in 1968. Tanzanian theologian Charles Nyamiti obtained his first doctorate in theology from the University of Leuven, Belgium in 1969 and his second doctorate in music, in 1975. 1969 was also the year in which another important African theologian, Jean-Marc Éla, completed his PhD at the University of Strasbourg in France. During the same decade, Mpilo Desmond Tutu (1966) and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1969) obtained their Master's degrees at King's College in 1966 and Cambridge 1969, respectively. In the seventies, Gabriel Setiloane and Allan Boesak obtained their doctorates in 1973 and 1976 respectively.

It was in the early sixties when Frantz Fanon published his classic – *The Wretched of the Earth* (1962) – theorizing the Algerian revolution, unmasking the colonial condition into which African colonial subjects had been plunged, exposing Europe as a vicious fraud not to be imitated. Who can forget the haunting words with which Fanon ends his classic?

> If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe … then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries … we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man (*sic*).

Such was the spirit of the sixties. It was the spirit of searching for new concepts and new ways of being African, not only in the political sphere, but also in the cultural and religious spheres. A look at the titles of master's dissertations and doctoral theses of the earliest Black and African theologians testify to this spirit of invention and discovery as well as a desire to fashion a new theological language.

As intimated earlier, the 1980s, which is when Per Frostin's *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa* was published, were something of a golden age for Black and African theologies and related disciplines. In this decade, there was a plethora of Black and African theological doctoral qualifications and publications, for example: Takatso Mofokeng's *The Crucified Among the Cross-bearers: Towards a Black Christology* (1983), Itumeleng Mosala's *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (1987), Bonganjalo Goba's *An Agenda for Black Theology: Hermenuetics for Social Change* (1988), Clement Mokoka's *Black Experience and Black Theology* (1984),

Cecil Ngcokovane's *Demons of Apartheid: A Moral and Ethical Analysis of the NGK and Broederbond's Justification of Apartheid* (1989) - not forgetting the publication of the *Kairos Document* in 1985. In Kenya, Jesse Mugambi completed his doctorate at the University of Nairobi in 1984. Sitting on the border between enculturation theologies and liberation theologies, Cameroonian theologian and social scientist, Jean-Marc Éla, exploded with a series of publications, beginning in 1980 with his *Cri de l'homme africain* (*African Cry* (1986)), an explosion that never stopped until his death in 2008.

Whereas the likes of Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Brigalia Bam had long been raising the flag for feminist and African women's theology, and whereas issues of gender were already emerging in the late 1980 – consider for example Oduyoye's 1983 "Reflections from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's Experience and Liberation Theologies" – it was not until the late 1980s when the Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians was established and the 1990s that African Feminist Theology irrupted onto the African theological scene thanks to the emergence of a younger generation of feminist theologians and the enabling scholarly community of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.

Given the rain of publications, masters and doctoral theses that started from a diminuendo in the early eighties, reaching a crescendo in the late eighties, across the African continent, the effort of Per Frostin is remarkable. Indeed, I would like to suggest the Frostin's *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa* is a lesson on how to interpret dynamic phenomena, given the dynamism both theologically and ecclesiastically in the sub-Saharan African context of the 1980s, a dynamism Frostin acknowledges.

Nor does he hide his own locatedness and therefore his own agenda. Primarily, he seeks to interpret African liberation theologies to a first world audience. In of itself, this is not an original objective. Since the times of Greek historian Herodotus, Pliny the Elder, Aristotle up to the times of Henry Morton Stanley, various European travellers in Africa, amateur anthropologists, untrained historians, colonial overlords of all manner, novelists and missionaries have elected to interpret Africa to Europe. Many have not been conscious of either their bias or self-interest and many times, even malice, even as they undertook to interpret African realities for the people 'back home'. Granted, the Frostin project was very specific, focussed as it was on new developments in Black and African liberation theologies. He was particularly concerned that these emergent theologies were either being misunderstood or hastily dismissed in the First World. Without seeking to judge these theologies, Frostin intended to explain and interpret them as objectively as possible.

Given the great proliferation of theological works at the time, he had to delineate his scope carefully. Thus he chose Tanzania and South Africa as his focus. The former had already attained its independence and was in the throes of Nyerere's Ujamaa political programme, while the latter was at its most unstable as the push for independence intensified both internally and externally. The churches and the theological fraternity were deeply implicated both in the intensification of the struggle and in the resistance against the calls for democracy. In focussing both Ujamaa Theology and Black Theology, Frostin had chosen two of the most dynamic theological contexts in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Since Frostin's primary audience was the First World, how are non-First World (or, to use Frostin's term 'Third World') people to read and understand his book, especially now that a whole thirty-two years separates us from the original

publication date? Whereas reading Frostin might have once felt like eves-dropping, a generation later non-First-World readers can take ownership of the narrative too. Originally, the book was published in Europe for Europeans while its African subjects were too busy doing theology, struggling and barely surviving to care. But precisely because of the theological exigencies facing African theologians in the 1980s, Africans sort of needed someone else to think carefully about methodology, epistemology, and pedagogy. That said, already some Black and African theologians were already seized with matters of method, interlocution, and epistemology, notably John Mbiti and Itumeleng Mosala. Indeed, as I have argued in my essay "African Christianity as African Religion: Beyond the Contextualization Paradigm", the key themes in South African Black Theology have always been methodology and hermeneutics.

Frostin's book summons us back home, to the key areas of hermeneutics, methodology, interlocution and epistemology. Sometimes when caught in the hustle and bustle of the actual doing of theology, not enough attention is paid to these issues. Because in much of Africa, certainly in South Africa, the theological struggle continues, the reprinting of Per Frostin's ground breaking monograph could not have been more timely.

The summons of Frostin to return to the methodological and epistemological sources of our theologies could also help us deal with another problem that has risen over the past thirty years, the problem of a mindless proliferation of theology names and types in Africa, often done without sufficient regard to epistemological, ideological, hermeneutical, and methodological issues. In a recent not yet published paper read at the Global Network of Public Theology conference held at the university of Bamberg, Germany (2019), "Why I Am Not a Public Theologian", I put it this way:

> in my short life in theology, torrential rains of new theologies have fallen on me, every few years. These theologies have come at me adorned in colourful robes and dressed in dazzling jewellery; each singing the praises of its own name, each promising to surpass the one before it, each promising to be better connected to the true sources of theology, each doing its best to hide its imperial intentions: prophetic theology, contextual theology, reconstruction theology, enacted theology, white theology, beyond theology, towards theology… .

I have been frustrated by several new offerings that are either ignorant of the work already done or unwilling to factor in the ground that has already been covered. The republication of the book of Frostin will serve to remind new generations of Black and African theologians not only of the ground already covered but of the methodological and theological rationale that drove the work. Through his meticulous analysis of questions of interlocution, epistemology, and method, Frostin, once again, calls us to liberation theology basics.

Introduction

The established methodology of First World theology—often regarded as a universally valid norm—has recently been challenged. The challenge comes from different quarters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but it also comes from certain groups within the First World, e.g., from Christians within the feminist and labour movements.

Thomas Kuhn's notion of scientific paradigms, exemplary formulations of scientific theory, has been quoted to explain the shift in methodology by the new schools of thought. Specifically, some scholars are inclined to use Kuhn's phrase for scientific revolutions, "paradigm shifts," to explain the magnitude of methodological change now taking place in theology.[1]

From the perspective of this new stance the theological debate of today is viewed as a conflict between an established, "hegemonic" paradigm and a counter-hegemonic approach, emerging from what is called the periphery of power. In this study we will listen to two voices in this counter-hegemonic choir that, for reasons below, will be called "liberation theology."[2] Specifically, the aim of this study is to interpret to a Western audience two varieties of African liberation theology, namely black theology in South Africa and theology in the context of Tanzanian socialism.

Hence, the aim is intercultural, namely to "translate" theologies done in one context into a language which is understandable to readers who live in a different context. We shall not attempt to verify or falsify the truth claims of these theologies but only discuss their interpretations. The main argument for limiting this study to a clarification of the meaning and the internal logic of some varieties of the new paradigm is that the problems of understanding between First and Third World theologies are so compounded that it is well justified to devote a monograph to an interpretation of the new theologies, postponing a discussion on the validity to a later stage, when there is at least a minimal consensus about the internal logic of the new paradigm.

Black theology is one of the most misunderstood major phenomena of our time, claims one of its advocates.[3] In fact, quite a few liberation theologians assert that the new paradigm is misconceived by First World colleagues.[4] Why? Are these comments expressions of self-defence from scholars who do not accept legitimate critique, caused by lack of clarity or other deficiencies in their work? Or, is it that the texts of the new paradigm are still interpreted by many readers within the framework of the old, hegemonic paradigm in spite of their programmatic counterhegemonic character?

The answer to these questions must for obvious reasons be sought in an analysis of the texts themselves in discussion with the alleged misinterpretations. A working hypothesis of this study is that the advocates of the new paradigm have not been unjustified in their reproach of

First World critics who have been too quick to judge without properly understanding the new paradigm. In view of this counter-criticism it seems reasonable to concentrate on the question of interpretation which is logically the most fundamental since the issue of interpretation naturally must precede the issue of judgement. Accordingly, the focus on interpretation in the study does not attempt to create an illusion of neutrality (the observant reader will probably detect the author's sensibilities, anyhow) but it defines the question at issue.

Since it is our considered view that the problems of interpretation should be given more prominence in the First World discussion of the new paradigm, we will here attempt to clarify the meaning of the paradigm shift as it is seen by its advocates, both generally and with specific reference to the African context. Moreover, we will discuss the method of such an interpretation.

The New Paradigm

What texts are most appropriate as the basis for an exposition of the new paradigm? It could be argued that documents produced by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (hereafter EATWOT)—an organization of theologians from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and some other areas considered parts of the Third World—are relevant in this context, since EATWOT is one of the organizations most committed to the elaboration of the new paradigm and moreover is a forum of the different varieties of Third World theologies.

EATWOT is a small organization of some fifty members, a small number with regard to the influence of its conferences and reports.[5] The importance of the organization may be explained by the fact that it has been a platform for dialogue between noted theologians from diverse cultures and confessions. The list of contributors to the EATWOT meetings suggests the breadth of its constituency, in spite of its limited membership.[6] Among Latin Americans such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Hugo Assmann. Leonardo Boff, Enrique Dussel, José Miguez Bonino, Pablo Richard, Jon Sobrino, Elsa Tamez, and Sergio Torres could be mentioned. From Africa the following have participated: Allan Boesak, Manas Buthelezi,[7] Emilio de Carvalho, John Mbiti, Ngindu Mushete, Engelbert Mveng, Charles Nyamiti, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Peter Sarpong, and Desmond Tutu. From Asia Tissa Balasuriya, Virginia Fabella, Aloysius Pieris, Samuel Rayan, and Joshua Russell Chandran deserve mention.

Of greater importance than an arbitrary list of names, is the fact that "the tricontinental dialogue" of the EATWOT members has been of vital importance for their theologizing, according to their own testimonies.[8] The conferences have not been influential for the participants only, however.

The reports from these meetings have obviously played an important role in the emerging Third World identity in theology.[9] The founding meeting of EATWOT that took place in Dar es Salaam in 1976 has sometimes been compared with the famous conference in Bandung where political leaders from Asia, Africa, and Asia met in 1955.[10] This comparison suggests that, while the Bandung meeting established a Third World identity in politics, a similar importance could be attached to the Dar es Salaam meeting within the field of theology.

After the Dar es Salaam meeting, EATWOT has arranged six similar conferences. Three of these meetings were regional in scope, related to the issues of the three Third World continents: Africa—Accra, 1977; Asia—Wennappuwa, 1979; Latin America—São Paulo, 1980. The work of the first five-year period was summarized at the second general conference in New Delhi, 1981, and a similar general meeting was arranged five years later in Oaxtepec, Mexico. Moreover, in 1983 the association organized a dialogue between theologians from the First and the Third Worlds in Geneva. The edited reports, and especially the final statements of these gatherings, will in this section serve as a guide for our exposition of the methodological self-understanding of EATWOT.

The Emphasis on Epistemology

All EATWOT conferences have argued persistently for a new method of doing theology. Specifically, the stress on methodology is expressed in a concern for epistemology. As early as in Dar es Salaam, the founding members of EATWOT declared in an oft-quoted passage that the new methodology was based on a "a radical break in epistemology."[11]

> We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on the praxis of reality of the Third World.[12]

Why are the epistemological issues—questions related to the origin, structure, methods, and validity of knowledge[13]—stressed by EATWOT? If science is defined as systematic search for knowledge, epistemology could be characterized as the most fundamental aspect of scientific work, defining the ground rules of the quest for truth. When Third World theologians stress the question of epistemology, the reason is obviously that they want to explain that their reflection cannot be assessed on the basis of established epistemology. In other words, they do not understand their own contribution as a mere reform within an existing framework but as a challenge to a basic consensus in First World science.

Specifically, it is claimed that the *epistemologica ruptura*, as it sometimes is called in Latin America, distinguishes liberation theology not only from conservative but also from the mainstream of progressive theologies in the First World. This interpretation has important implications for our study. If Third World theologians are right in their claim of an epistemological rupture, it would be seriously misleading to interpret their texts in terms of established epistemology.

The Third World and the Third World Experience

As seen from the historical sketch of EATWOT, the term "Third World" is programmatic and builds on a division of the different parts of the globe into three parts: (1) the North Atlantic countries, i.e., West Europe and North America (the First World), (2) the Soviet bloc (the Second World), and (3) Africa, Asia, and Latin America (the Third World).[14] But is there really a Third World? Peter Berger, for one, answers the question in the negative, censuring the phrase as "ideological rhetoric." Acknowledging that the term may be a convenient shorthand to designate the less modernized societies, he affirms that "strictly speaking the 'Third World' as a political, economic or social entity does not exist."[15] Obviously, those who uphold this view are afraid that the complexities of the African, Asian, and Latin American societies will be hidden behind the general term "Third World."

By contrast, the EATWOT members insist that there is a Third World since "the countries of the Third World have had similar experiences of which account should be taken in the task of theologizing."[16] In other words, the Third World is constituted by a common experience, the experience of a commonality that is "the bitter fruit of oppression."[17]

> When we speak of Third World theologians or Third World theology, the geographical connotation is not the main point. Its full significance has to be understood in terms of the historical facts of colonial, imperialistic domination and economic exploitation of those regions by the North Atlantic and other First World powers and the consequent creation of Third-Worldness.[18]

The term "Third World" is accepted as an account of the actual distribution of power. As an Asian theologian phrased it: We are not shy to use this term since we are always treated as the Third World.[19] In other words, "Third World theologies" come close to the expression "theology from the underside of history," used as subtitle of the report from the founding conference of EATWOT. Therefore, in the EATWOT concept one can speak about different layers of meaning of the term, "which vary from the purely geographic ('the South') to the socioeconomic ('poor'/'underdeveloped') to the political ('non-aligned') and even the theological ('from the underside of history')."[20]

Yet, it can hardly be denied that both First World and Third World are crude categories that may conceal important nuances. Therefore, it is important to ask, "How are those theologians arguing who claim that there is a First-Third World dichotomy in theology?" A nestor of African theology, John Mbiti, under the heading "Towards Theological Mutuality and Reciprocity," has given an exposition of an obviously common African view on the present state of the relationship. Mbiti eloquently describes the feeling of agony because of the false but real "dichotomy between Western Christianity and the Christianity of the so-called Third World."

> The dichotomy between older and younger Christendom, between Western Christianity and the Christianity of the so-called Third World, is a real one, but it is also a false dichotomy. It is real because it is there; it is false because it ought not to be there. But because it is there when it ought not to be there, it is very agonizing.[21]

What is the reason for this "false dichotomy"? Mbiti finds the answer in a historical perspective, describing how Western theology has "become a subconscious part" of theologizing in the South but not vice versa. Since Mbiti's argument may clarify the rationale for the Third World concept it deserves to be quoted at some length.

> Theologians from the new (or younger) churches have made their pilgrimages to the theological learning of older churches. We had no alternative. We have eaten theology with you; we have drunk theology with you; we have dreamed theology with you. But it has all been onesided: it has all been, in a sense, your theology…. We know you theologically. The question is, do you know us theologically? Would you like to know us theologically? Can you know us theologically? And how can there be true theological reciprocity and mutuality, if only one side knows the other fairly well, while the other side either does not know or does not want to know the first side? You have become a major subconscious part of our theologizing, and we are privileged to be so involved in you through the fellowship we share in Christ. When will you make us part of your subconscious process of theologizing?[22]

The point of this argument appears to be that the First and Third World concepts are legitimate—in spite of their obvious crudeness—because of their theoretical significance. In short, they are seen as necessary to clarify a "real but yet false dichotomy" between theologies from different parts of the world. The acid test of these concepts is not whether they are generalizations—which they obviously are, as are other abstract concepts—but whether they are essential, at least at this initial stage, to clarify certain theoretical insights.

"The experience of the Third World as a source of theology must be taken seriously."[23] In other words, the Third World is seen as a fundamental category of experience of central importance for theology. Consequently, the concept "Third World experience" will be used as a heuristic device in the textual analysis to denote the experience of oppression and of the struggle for liberation within the context of the Third World. Similarly, the concept "Third World theologies" does not denote just any theology of the southern hemisphere but theologies based on the Third World experience.[24]

The Profile of the New Paradigm

The new paradigm may be defined in reference to five interrelated emphases: the choice of "interlocutors," the perception of God, social analysis, the choice of theological tools, and the relationship between theory and practice.[25]

1. The interlocutors of theology.
The emphasis on the Third World experience sets this paradigm off from established theology in two respects. First, the choice of *social relations* is seen as the main crossroad in theology, whereas there has been a marked tendency, at least since the Enlightenment, to choose *ideas*—for example, Revelation, Reason, Nature, or church doctrine—as distinguishing characteristics in Western theology. In other words, liberation theologians focus on a new issue seldom discussed in established theology: Who are the interlocutors of theology? Or, who are asking the questions that theologians try to answer?

Second, the question of the interlocutors is given a new answer, "a preferential option for the poor."[26] It may be useful to compare the option for the oppressed as interlocutors of theology with the well-known and influential position of Schleiermacher, who addressed "the cultured critics" of religion.[27] In an important contribution to the first EATWOT conference, Gustavo Gutiérrez—widely regarded as the nestor of academic liberation theology—interpreted modern Western theology in the light of Schleiermacher's approach. The chief interlocutor of "progressivist" Western theology, he maintains, has been the educated nonbeliever.[28] Liberation theology, by contrast, has chosen "nonpersons" as its chief interlocutors, "the poor, the exploited classes, the marginalized races, all the despised cultures."[29]

Yet, "the contrast between the interlocutors of progressivist and liberation theology" may easily be misunderstood.[30] Usually, in Western theology the relation to the poor is an ethical, not an epistemological, question but such a distinction cannot do justice to the idea of the poor as interlocutors. According to the theologians of liberation, solidarity with the poor also has consequences for the perception of the social reality, as seen in

the phrase "the epistemological privilege of the poor," reportedly coined by Hugo Assmann.[31] This startling expression suggests that cognizance of the experience of those defined as poor is a necessary condition for theological reflection. In the report from the Dar es Salaam meeting, Sergio Torres articulates this notion as follows:

> Herein lies the originality of this book and the emergent theology it represents. It proposes to develop scientifically a theology that speaks with the voice of the poor and the marginated in history.[32]

As the quotation bears out, Torres claims that the new theology is scientific and at the same time speaks "with the voice of the poor"; in other words, a scientific methodology with the poor as interlocutors.[33]

2. The perception of God.
The choice of interlocutors has important consequences not only for the interpretation of social reality but also for the understanding of God, according to liberation theologians. Even though Gutiérrez agrees with "progressivist" theology about the crisis of faith in God today, he defines the dynamics of the crisis differently: "The interlocutors of progressivist theology question faith, the interlocutors of liberation theology 'share' the same faith as their oppressors, but they do not share the same economic, social, or political life."[34]

The main issue between progressive Western theology and its interlocutors, has been whether God exists or not, while the central problem in Third World countries is not atheism but an idolatrous submission to systems of oppression, a position upheld also in the Geneva dialogue.[35]

> The question about God in the world of the oppressed is not knowing whether God exists or not, but knowing on which side God is. By idolatry is meant the deification of the ideologies used to sacralize the structures of oppression, culturally and sociologically, and to make them appear to reflect the will of God.[36]

The reflection on God and gods, the ultimate concern in all compartments of life, will here be termed *theo-logy* (to be distinguished from "theology" in a general sense). Of central importance for our study is the fact that in the new paradigm theo-logy and economy are combined in a way that differs from the dominant paradigm.

First, "the struggle against Mammon" is seen as a main task for theology.[37] Not surprisingly, the anti-Mammon position implies a critique of capitalism that is interpreted as a system where profit is the ultimate concern. According to liberation theology, the consequent profit orientation of capitalism is incompatible with Christian faith in God. "The subtle

undermining of religious values which capitalist technocracy generates in our cultures pollutes religion by betraying it to Mammon." In other words, the cult of Mammon, rather than secularization is the main cause of the spiritual crisis, it is suggested.[38]

Second, the claim is that the poor have unsubstitutable insights into the difference between God and the idols, needed in "the anti-idolatrous discernment of the false gods."[39] In fact, the main argument for the above-mentioned interpretation of capitalism is the experience of the poor. In this paradigm, in summary, the search for the true God and the struggle against the idols become central tasks of theology.

3. Analysis of conflicts.

Logically, the option for the poor as the chief interlocutors of theology is based on a conflictual perception of the social reality, affirming that there is a difference between the perspectives of the privileged "from above" and of the poor "from below." The very titles of the EATWOT reports indicate the importance of this conflictual analysis in the new methodology: "A Theology from the Underside of History" (subtitle of the Dar es Salaam report), "The Irruption of the Poor" (New Delhi), and "Doing Theology in a Divided World" (Geneva). The latter phrase embodies a double assertion that is significant for Third World theologies: (1) the world in which we live is "a divided world," a world of conflicts, (2) the task of "doing theology" can only be solved within the framework of an analysis of these conflicts, since the theologian's reflection is shaped by his or her context.[40]

What are the opposite poles of the conflict? The answer of the Dar es Salaam meeting was unequivocal: the division among rich and poor was perceived as the major phenomenon of contemporary history.[41] Even though the subsequent EATWOT meetings upheld this, the understanding of conflicts has grown more complex. The male-female contradiction, virtually neglected in Dar es Salaam, has been observed more and more. Furthermore, during recent EATWOT meetings religious and cultural categories have been included in a more comprehensive analysis of conflicts. In these discussions it seems possible to distinguish between at least six different levels of oppression:

– economic (rich-poor)

– classist (capitalists-proletariat)

– geographic (North-South)

– sexist (male-female)

– ethnic (e.g., white-black)

– cultural (dominant-dominated cultures)

This new, more complex understanding of oppression, here called multidimensional, is of crucial theological importance but raises—in spite

of its theoretical fruitfulness—a set of thorny questions that can only be mentioned here. For example, How are the different forms of oppression related to each other? Are they of equal importance or is one of them dominant? If one type of oppression should be given a central place in the analysis, is it due to its political importance or its analytical significance?

In Geneva, a reductionist approach where one level of oppression is absolutized was unanimously rejected. Moreover, it was maintained that the different forms of oppression "are not separate, isolated issues but are linked in the working of a single world system of domination which involves a whole way of life."[42] In spite of this consensus, it could be argued that the most substantial debates at the EATWOT conferences have dealt with the relationship between different levels of oppression. Generally speaking, the discussion has followed continental lines of divisions, where Latin Americans have emphasized the value of socioeconomic analysis while Africans and Asians have tended to stress religio-cultural analysis.[43] Even though this dissensus demonstrates the unfinished character of the Third World theology approach, it could be argued that the achievement of a multidimensional analysis of oppression presupposes a community recruited from as diverse contexts such as EATWOT.

The theological importance of a multidimensional analysis of conflicts is emphasized by doing "theology in context."[44] In short, this paradigm implies that theology should not be ahistorical but that the theologian must analyze his or her role in the social conflicts, to discover how the context shapes the perception of theologically relevant issues. The complex concept of contextual theology will be clarified in the following analysis.[45]

4. The social sciences and theology.

With a different interlocutor and a different perception of God, liberation theologians need different tools for their theological reflection.

While in the past theological tools have usually come from philosophy, the social sciences are assuming this role in the new paradigm. Naturally, this shift can be explained with reference to the different options for interlocutors. Philosophy is an important source for knowing the ideas of "the cultured" while a scientific reflection with the poor as interlocutors will need other tools.[46]

Since "the poor have many faces," the social sciences are first of all needed to define which persons do belong to this group.[47] In liberation theology, the distinctive characteristic of the poor is not economic statistics. Rather, the term denotes the underprivileged in the different power structures and must be clarified by means of social analysis. Further, if idolatry is interpreted as a legitimation of oppression and injustice, the economic analysis will be a necessary dimension of the theo-logical discernment between God and idol. In fact, social analysis has been a major concern at all EATWOT meetings.[48]

The emphasis on the social sciences has fundamental consequences for the understanding of the epistemological break. In short, one may say that classical epistemology as articulated in Plato's *Theaetetos* or by Descartes or Kant, is in the new paradigm replaced by sociology of knowledge.[49] In fact, liberation theologians frequently refer to this discipline when they state their own position.[50]

Even though *epistemologica ruptura* obviously differs significantly from a Western sociology of knowledge (Marxist or non-Marxist)—e.g., in the insistence on the poor as the interlocutors of theology or the discussion of God and idolatry in epistemological terms—the sociology of knowledge may provide intellectual tools for a discussion on epistemological criteria between First and Third World theologies.

The above scheme of the "multidimensional" power relations indicates that the Marxist mode of analysis is a generally accepted dimension even though, as also indicated by the scheme, it is complemented by other approaches. Moreover, the actual use of Marxist analysis differs from group to group. It is not surprising that those who emphasize sexist or cultural oppression will be less concerned about Marxism than those who place the socioeconomic analysis at the fore. In spite of these differences, reflected in an on-going debate among the protagonists of the new paradigm, it generally understands itself as "influenced, but not dominated, by Marxism."[51] The use of Marxist analysis in liberation theology has, however, stirred a heated controversy, as we will see later.

5. Dialectics between praxis and theology.

Liberation theology differs from the dominant paradigm also in its self-understanding as "a second act." The first act is defined as commitment to the liberation of the oppressed and contemplation.[52] Such a dialectic between theory and praxis is not only of ethical but also of epistemological relevance in the new paradigm. "Doing theology" is here seen as a "hermeneutical circulation" of theory and praxis where action forces the theologian to look at theory and theory forces the theologian to look at action again. The difference between the "traditional way" of epistemology and this paradigm is summarized by Sergio Torres as follows:

> The traditional way of knowing considers the truth as conformity of the mind to a given object, a part of Greek influence in the western philosophical tradition. Such a concept only conforms to and legitimizes the world as it now exists.
> But there is another way of knowing the truth—a dialectical one. In this case the world is not a static object that the human mind confronts and attempts to understand; rather, the world is an unfinished project being built. Knowledge is not the conformity of the mind to the given, but an immersion in this process of transformation and construction of a new world.[53]

The hermeneutical circulation is of relevance for our study in three respects. First, theoretical ideas must be investigated in relation to the praxis out of which they come.[54] The focus is on orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy since it is assumed—similarly as in Western political theology—that the actual content of *doxa* is expressed in praxis. Differently put, praxis is a fundamental criterion both in the critique of hegemonic theology and in an internal criticism of the new paradigm.

Second, the dialectic between theory and praxis may in social terms be described as a dialectic between scientific reflection and the experience of the "culture of silence" (Freire). The theological reflection, in other words, is a communal task where the academic theologians try to articulate not only their individual consciousness but the experience of the community. The assumption underlying this position could be described as follows: when an oppressed people live in silence, they use the words of their oppressors to describe their experience of oppression. Only within the praxis of liberation and in dialogue with what Antonio Gramsci called "organic intellectuals" is it possible for the poor to break this silence and create their own language.[55]

Third, liberation theology understands itself as an unfinished process that should be evaluated in relation to "the first act," not in relation to certain ideas, a criterion which clearly sets it off from a deductive theology, starting not from praxis but from a principle. The academic liberation theology is therefore seen as one dimension of a process in which one may discern three different levels: professional, pastoral and, popular theology.[56] For liberationists, the dialectic between theory and praxis is closely related to the insistence on a contextual methodology. Liberation theology is a fruit of the process of liberation and cannot be properly analyzed in isolation from this context.

"Liberation Theology"

On the basis of the previous account, liberation theology will now be defined with methodology and not content as the distinguishing characteristic. In reference to the problems of understanding between First and Third World theologians the phrase will be used to denote theologies where the underprivileged are the chief interlocutors; in these theologies the reflection on God is expounded in response to the experience of the poor in the struggle for liberation.[57]

This definition is no denial of the possibility that in other contexts and for other purposes different formulations may be more suitable.[58] It seems, however, that a definition that stresses the option for the poor as the interlocutors of theology is essential to First World students eager to avoid misunderstanding the new paradigm. In this definition there are double lines of demarcations; some students use the title "liberation theology" in

a more narrow sense, to denote Latin American varieties only (excluding theologies of Asian, African, or feminist origin) while others use the title in a wider sense than here, including First World liberal theology under this heading.[59]

We have discussed the definition of "liberation theology" at some length here, since it seems that many misunderstandings arise from misconstrued definitions. In particular, two questions are frequently confused. (1) What is the defining characteristic of the new paradigm? (2) What label is the most appropriate?

Obviously, the main issue is the definition of the new paradigm, not the use of the label "liberation theology."[60] Arguably, the different uses of "liberation theology" are due to divergent interpretations of what is the defining characteristic of the new paradigm, even though these interpretations are seldom explicit. The position advocated here implies that the methodological identity as expressed in the *epistemologica ruptura*, rather than geographical origin or progressive, political function is the distinguishing characteristic. This position is supported by the actual cooperation between Asian, African, Latin American, and feminist theologians, as, for example, in the EATWOT structure. More important is, however, that the other types of definitions tend to obscure theoretically significant issues such as the conflict between different paradigms. We have found that the defining characteristic of the new paradigm is the option for the poor and this observation applies also to those theologians who are generally called theologians of liberation, for example, Gutiérrez. Therefore, it is suggested that the new paradigm is called "liberation theology."

The Critique of Liberation Theology

What is the criticism leveled against the new paradigm? Without denying the complexity of the discussion, we will here briefly mention three examples of such criticism that seem to have been central to the debate and, therefore, will be foci of concern in the investigation and provide a basis for the concluding discussion.

First, some critics of liberation theology question its strong commitment to humanist concerns such as social welfare or economic justice and fear that the spiritual and theological aspects are diluted, if not completely eradicated. In other words, the new paradigm is interpreted as a reduction of Christianity to humanist concerns that may obliterate theology in a strict sense. In fact, liberation theology is frequently described as a kind of immanentism and horizontalism that tends to neglect or even exclude the transcendent, "vertical" dimension of Christian faith.

Hence, in the *argument of anthropocentrism*, as it will be called here, the dissensus on Third World theologies is explained by asserting that these

theologies, at least to some extent, have moved from theology in a proper sense to anthropocentrism. The argument does not necessarily exclude a concern for God in Third World theologies but implies that there is no intrinsic relation between such a concern and the humanist commitment in the new paradigm. Obviously, a discussion of this argument will have to focus on the relationship between God and humanity in the analyzed theologies. Is there a shift in liberation theology from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, or is faith in God and the concern for humanity systematically integrated in this theology?

A second type of critique may be termed the *argument of conflict obsession* that censures the conflictual analysis of the new paradigm. The point of this argument is as follows: the social analysis of liberation theology gives a distorted picture of the factual situation by over-emphasizing conflicts; the conflictual analysis is not only untrue to the facts, it is also incompatible with the Christian concern for love and reconciliation. Christians, so the argument goes, should avoid a pattern of analysis that generates dissensus and even hatred.

If this argument is valid, it is no wonder that there are differences between Third World theologies and Western theologies that are surely less prone to analyze social reality in conflictual terms. A discussion of this argument will deal with the question whether conflictual analysis is justified in view of the actual context and the relationship between such an analysis and the Christian concern for love.

The discussion of conflict and reconciliation is often related to the issue of theology and Marxism. As noted above, liberation theologians use Marxist concepts and methods but claim to have an independent and critical stance to this mode of analysis. On the contrary, critics question the possibility of such an independent and critical use, maintaining that Marxism is "an epistemologically unique complex" that must be accepted or rejected in its entirety.

This dissensus on social analysis and Marxism raises such questions as: why are conflicts stressed in liberation theology more than in its established counterparts? Are the protagonists of the new paradigm victims of an ideological bias, Marxism, or do the advocates of the established paradigm fail to see actual conflicts? Naturally, a discussion of these issues cannot deal only with ideas and texts but must also refer to the different interpretations of social reality.

The *argument of resacralization* is a third explanation of the dissensus on Third World theologies, pertaining to the challenge of "modern" consciousness. If the new paradigm is understood as too "radical" by the critics of anthropocentrism, it is rather seen as too traditional and even theologically conservative by the critics of resacralization.

This judgement is based on a critical analysis of the methodology of a theology "from the underside of history" where commitment plays a key role—commitment to faith and commitment to the poor.

The reference to commitment in scientific work has evoked critique from other quarters than the two above-mentioned issues. Many liberal or else progressive theologians in the First World question the compatibility of commitment and the universalism of science. Some understand liberation theology as a relapse into pre-critical and pre-Enlightenment thinking, a "re-sacralization," that neglects the irreversibility of secularization and modern, "critical" consciousness in the First World after the Enlightenment.[61]

In resolving this argument, it is of relevance to study how the advocates of the new paradigm relate to secularized persons and believers of other faiths in their own contexts. The dissensus on modernity raises questions such as: why are liberation theologians critical of modernity? Do they represent a relapse into pre-modernity or do they have a valid critique of modern consciousness?

These three arguments, which have in common that they interpret liberation theology using categories borrowed from First World theology, will be labeled the First World critique. In other words, in the analysis of Ujamaa and black theology we shall compare two types of interpretation, based on categories from the EATWOT discussion and from the First World critique.

African Liberation Theology as a Process

Having established the defining characteristic of liberation theology, we shall now clarify the understanding of African liberation theology that serves as the basis for the analysis of Ujamaa and black theology. As suggested by the analysis of *epistemologica ruptura*, the development of African liberation theology will be seen as a process, formed by a dialectic between the experience of the oppressed and intellectual reflection.[62] In the African reflection the quest for identity has been of theological significance. According to Desmond Tutu, one of the outstanding features of Africa's recent history is the

> determined search for a true and authentic African identity in all possible spheres of human endeavor; it is a search for something that will make people say "Ah, yes, that is indeed truly African." Thus there is this quest for what can be called African authenticity.[63]

Since the quest for identity, a prominent feature in all varieties of African theology, is seen as intrinsic to the struggle for liberation, the development

of African liberation theology will be analyzed within the broader context of African theology.[64]

The Development of African Theology

A study of recent African church history reveals the importance of the African initiative and suggests that African theology is as old as Christianity on the continent, even though the conscious, systematic efforts to build up such a theology are of recent origin.[65] Hence, we must distinguish between the popular and the academic expressions of African theology.

African theology as an intellectual discipline began to emerge during the 1950s, at the same time as the struggle against colonialism led to the first victory in Ghana which became independent in 1956. One year earlier the Christian Council in Ghana had sponsored a conference on "Christianity and African culture" that was a significant move in the quest for cultural and spiritual liberation. Ten years later all the university departments of religious studies in West Africa were headed by African professors: Bolaji Idowu at Ibadan (Nigeria), Christian Baeta in Accra (Ghana), and Harry Sawyerr in Freetown (Sierra Leone).[66]

Similarly, the theological climate changed at the departments of religious studies where the concern for pre-colonial culture became the order of the day in "the theology of continuity." The central theme of the emerging theology was "the nature of the traditional religion of Africa and its relationship of continuity rather than discontinuity with Christian belief."[67]

At the same time, there also emerged in the Catholic church a critique of Western dominance in theology. The Catholic discussion was initiated by a group of young priests who were studying in Rome and Paris, and, in 1956, published *Des prêtres noires s'interrogent.* Also for this group the question of cultural "roots" was basic but differently formulated. In fact, a major part of Catholic theology has been concerned with finding an alleged precolonial "Bantu philosophy," as can be seen, for example, in Alexis Kagame's thesis *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l'être.*[68]

At the end of the 1960s, one could therefore distinguish between two main streams of African theology, one Protestant, mainly English speaking and socially oriented, and one Catholic, mainly French-speaking and predominantly philosophical, jointly forming the first generation of an academic African theology.

From a sociological perspective, critical questions have been raised about this first generation of African theology which has come under the suspicion "that it is in fact a cultural resacralization which serves to conceal the new social conflicts in African countries" and thereby legitimizes the privileged position of the new, African élite.[69] A theology of indigenization may become a religion of the Bourgeoisie due to its lack of critical analysis of tradition,

claims an African theologian, who argues that existing varieties of African theology have become "a kind of 'l'art pour 'l'art' without influence on the social, economic, and political life."[70]

However, during the 1970s one could perceive a growing awareness about the plight of the poor in the villages and in the urban slum. Both in politics and theology there emerged a new wave of radicalism, demanding "Africa's second independence." The report from the EATWOT conference of Accra, characterized as "the most comprehensive work on African theology," is typical of this second stage of development, addressing the problems of neo-colonialism on the cultural, socioeconomic, and political levels.[71] Naturally, our analysis of liberation theology in the African context will pay special attention to this second stage of the quest for African identity.

It should be noted that also in the new phase of African theology cultural issues are given a place of importance, as is obvious in Ujamaa and black theology. The phrase "anthropological poverty" has been introduced to emphasize the plight of the continent under foreign spiritual and economic domination.

> [Anthropological poverty] means the general impoverishment of [the] people. Colonialism brought about a loss of their identity and a diminishment of their creativity. It indiscriminately disrupted their communal tribal life and organization and destroyed their indigenous values, religious beliefs, and traditional culture. This result of the ravages of colonialism is now maintained by economic and cultural neocolonialism.[72]

Even though the concept "anthropological poverty" is not uncontroversial, over-emphasizing the role of culture according to some critics, the concern for liberation from cultural oppression obviously characterizes the mainstream of African theology.

African Theology—Definitions and Trends

What is African theology? During the development of African theology different definitions have been used, related to different phases in the process.[73] In the earliest definitions, one will find a somewhat static view of the African identity. In an oft-quoted definition from 1969, African theology is defined in reference to "the African soul" as

> a theology based on the Biblical faith of Africans, and which speaks to the African soul. It is expressed in categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of the African people. This does not mean it is narrow in outlook (syncretistic). To speak of

African Theology involves formulating clearly a Christian attitude
to other religions.[74]

More recently, the phrase "contextual" has been used in definitions,
arguing in reference to the new paradigm that "African Theology must
be a contextual theology."[75] A third definition, which we will use here,
has been presented by Mbiti, who suggests that African theology denotes
"theological reflection and expression by African Christians," without any
other qualifiers.[76]

What, then, is the relationship between African theology and African
liberation theology?[77] If liberation theology in Africa and elsewhere is seen
as a process of doing theology "from the underside of history," all varieties
of African theology belong to this process, as far as they take the African
context seriously.[78] In other words, "African liberation theology"—or, as it is
sometimes called, "a liberation theology in the African context"—describes
African theology as a reflection within the context of the struggle against
cultural, political, and economic oppression.[79]

Naturally, there are different trends within African theology although
it is not easy to define them. In the early 1970s, before the Accra meeting,
Nyamiti distinguished between three different trends: (1) the speculative
school, characterized by a marked tendency toward systematizing and
philosophizing, consisting mainly of French-speaking Catholics; (2) the
social and Biblical school, distinguished by a pragmatic approach, found
mainly among English-speaking Protestants; (3) the militant school, an
indigenous theology of liberation, especially black theology in South Africa.[80]

Mapping African theology somewhat differently, Upkong recently
proposed the following scheme: (1) African Inculturation Theology; (2)
South African Black Theology; (3) African Liberation Theology.[81]

A third categorization was presented at the Accra conference by Ngindu
Mushete, who differentiates between two stages in the development
of African theology, adaptation and critical theology. The former is
characterized as concordism, seeing the pre-colonial culture and religion
as "stepping-stones" for evangelization. The major defect of the concordist
approach is seen in its tendency "to equate Christian revelation with the
systems of thought in which it has found historical expression" and to view
Christianity as "a closed system of absolute truths."[82] The critical approach,
by contrast, regards the notion of a universal theology as a myth, since all
theologies are socially and culturally conditioned. In obvious agreement
with this view, the final communiqué of the conference mentions three
examples of present trends in African theology:

• a theology of indigenization, "admitting the inherent values in
  the traditional religions, [but seeing] in them a preparation for the
  Gospel"

- "a critical theology which comes from contact with the Bible, openness to African realities, and dialogue with non-African theologies"
- black theology in South Africa.[83]

Generally, this study follows the categorization proposed at the Accra conference. Undeniably, the first trend is not particularly concerned about the defining characteristic of the new paradigm, the option for the poor. Therefore, this study will focus on the two other trends.

Formative Factors

The distinctive African character of African liberation theology, one might say, is constituted by its "sources."[84] At the Accra conference five sources were mentioned.

First, *the Bible and the Christian heritage*: The Bible is "the basic source of African theology" but it was declared that there is a need for a rereading—a *relectura*, to use the Latin American phrase—of the Bible "in the social context of our struggle for humanity."[85] The reference to the Christian heritage was motivated by the declaration that "African Christianity is a part of a worldwide Christianity," obviously seeing the contextual theologies of this continent as a contribution to a global dialogue.

Second, *African anthropology*: A community-oriented anthropology, often characterized as "the African view of humanity," may be the most important of the distinctive African sources, as suggested by the above account of the anthropological poverty.[86] Characteristic for this view of the human being is that a person is not seen as an autonomous individual, as in, for example, the *homo oeconomicus* paradigm of capitalist economy. On the contrary, many African theologians insist that to be human is to be a part of a community.[87] "I am, because we are and since we are, therefore I am."[88] In fact, the literature abounds with references to humanity as "being-in-relation."[89]

> Africans recognize life as life-in-community. We can truly know ourselves if we remain true to our community, past and present. The concept of individual success or failure is secondary. The ethnic group, the village, the locality, are crucial in one's estimation of oneself. Our nature as beings-in-relation is a two-way relation: with God and with our fellow human beings.[90]

Third, *African traditional religions*: In clear opposition to certain varieties of missionary theology whose main battles were fought against heathenism and witchcraft, the pre-colonial religions are seen as a kind of revelation that can enrich Christian theology and spirituality. Of special significance is the emphasis on wholeness, holding together the sacred and the secular, the material and the spiritual, as well as the individual and the corporate.[91]

In Accra this concern was formulated as follows:

> In the traditional setting there was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. On the contrary, the sacred was experienced in the context of the secular. This healthy way of understanding our African society must be taken seriously by the church.[92]

Fourth, *African Independent Churches.* The independent churches, it was upheld at the Accra meeting, have developed a type of worship, organization, and community life that is rooted in African culture. These churches are therefore of special significance in the search for African identity.

Fifth, *other African realities, as the arts and the struggle against economic, political, social, and cultural oppressions*.[93] In view of the emphasis on social analysis in the new paradigm one may ask: What is the reason for the inferior placement of the socioeconomic factors as one aspect of the lastly mentioned source in the list of the Accra conference? One answer may be that there were conflicting views at the conference, since social analysis is given more prominence in other parts of the report.

If one looks at these five sources, one finds that—as in other lists of this character—"many disparate items get included under this description, and that they cannot all be considered 'sources' in the same sense of the word."[94] Consequently, it may be more appropriate to speak about "formative factors," as suggested by John Macquarrie, who argues that the factors usually called sources are not all on the same level and of equal importance.[95] This observation may be of special significance to African theology since its development could largely be explained with reference to different emphases of the sources. Not surprisingly, the growing importance of socioeconomic factors has developed alongside a new understanding of African anthropology and African identity. Even though the five formative factors may be found in all varieties of African theology, they do not establish a static pattern but could rather be viewed as a matrix within which conflicting opinions are articulated.

A second conclusion that could be drawn from this list of formative factors of African theology is the importance of culture, which could be a summarizing theme of the community-oriented anthropology, the precolonial religions, and possibly also of the independent churches.[96]

Finally, the matrix of the sources is of relevance in a discussion about the African identity of African liberation theology in a global perspective. Contrary to popular opinion, the African contribution to the Third World theologies has been important from the outset. Even though liberation theology is frequently seen as an exclusively Latin American phenomenon, it is impossible to write the history of EATWOT if one neglects the African and the Asian contribution.[97] In fact, an interpretation of African liberation

theology that neglects its African "roots" will present a distorted picture of its internal logic, for two reasons. (1) The interrelation between popular theology and academic reflection is crucial to the process of liberation theology.[98] When liberation theology is interpreted as a Latin American project, exported to other regions, the significance of academic articulation (where the Latin Americans undeniably were pioneers) is overemphasized and the importance of popular theology in this process is neglected. (2) Even though African liberation theology unquestionably has been influenced by its Latin American counterpart, the communication within EATWOT and Third World theologies in general is not a one-way traffic but a mutual exchange of ideas."

Two Case Studies

Since the process of African liberation theology is so complex, we shall limit our analysis to two case studies, one representing the struggle against colonial or quasi-colonial oppression, and the other representing the context of combating neo-colonialism. While South Africa[100] is an obvious candidate for theological reflection in the context of oppression, the selection of Tanzania as an instance of theology done in the struggle against neo-colonialism may need some comments.

In spite of the evident problems of Tanzania, its relevance for African liberation theology is maintained by many theologians.[101] Sergio Torres asserts in the report from the Dar es Salaam meeting that Tanzania was not chosen by chance as the host country for the first EATWOT conference:

> This country identifies with its leader, President Julius Nyerere, and with his program of Ujamaa to combat underdevelopment. This program, which combines elements from both the Christian and the best African traditions, constitutes a real source of attraction and admiration for all those who ask questions about the future and the role of Christians in the developing countries.[102]

Three reasons have been mentioned to explain why Dar es Salaam was "the ideal site" for the first EATWOT conference.[103] First, Tanzania is one of the poorest nations in the world and can therefore serve as a symbol of the Third World experience. Second, the Tanzanian policy has widely been hailed as a model in the struggle against neo-colonial dominance. Third, this struggle for "self-reliance" is inspired by the culture and history of the region in a way that has an undeniable affinity to the EATWOT methodology. These three points are aptly summarized by Gustavo Gutiérrez, who says that the Tanzanian situation is an example of a "real theological lesson."[104]

> The first country to host these meetings [of EATWOT] was
> Tanzania, a small country inhabited by a poor, very poor,
> population. Its people bears the marks of a harsh past involving
> colonial rule and racial contempt. But Tanzanians have also shown
> much courage and creativity in undertaking a thoroughgoing
> process of liberation. Exploring their roots in their native African
> tradition, they have set out on their own to construct a just and
> humane order. This accounts for the disproportionate moral
> authority exercised by that small nation and its president, Julius
> Nyerere, in the concert of nations. The achievements of the
> Tanzanian people enable us to perceive and concretely experience
> the significance of the poor in history.[105]

The Tanzanian theology will here be labeled "theology in the context of
Ujamaa" or, shorter, "Ujamaa theology."[106] Three comments may be justified
in view of this concept. First, since there are different uses of "Ujamaa
theology" and "liberation theology" in the Tanzanian context, it should
be noted that these phrases here are analytical concepts used according to
set definitions, which may diverge from the definitions by the analyzed
theologians.

Second, the epithet "Ujamaa" refers to the context of this theology; in
other words, "Ujamaa theology" is an abbreviation of "theology done in the
context of Ujamaa." "In the context," then, is used in the same sense as in
contextual theology, i.e., denoting an explicit reflection on the situation.[107]
Accordingly, the term "Ujamaa theology" does not imply subservience to
the political philosophy of Ujamaa.

Third, whereas Ujamaa was a central theme of theological reflection some
years ago it is less popular today. In the First World, quite a few analysts
spurn the Tanzanian model as *passé* due to the serious economic problems
of the country. Undoubtedly, the heyday of *Tanzaphilia*—the honeymoon
of First World radicals and Ujamaa—is over, but for exactly this reason,
Tanzania may be in a position to clarify the process of African liberation
theology without yielding to romanticism.

Toward a Methodology for the Study of Contextual Theologies

Having considered the methodological self-understanding of Third World
theologies within EATWOT and its consequences for an interpretation of
African liberation theology, we will now discuss its implications for the
method of this study. Which methodology is the most appropriate for
interpreting Ujamaa and black theology?

Within the division of labour of scientific theology, such a question clearly belongs to the discipline of systematic theology. This discipline deals with the study of different interpretations of Christian faith and has an established methodology for studies of existing theologies, based on textual analysis in which the internal logic of the analyzed body of the texts is a central criterion.

Specifically, in diachronic studies of theologians from past times it is generally accepted that the interpreter should not anachronistically impose a modern thought pattern on the analyzed body of texts before rendering justice to its internal logic. Similarly, we would argue that in synchronic studies of contemporary theologians living in contexts different from that of the interpreter, the categories of the interpreter's context must be questioned if they impede the search for the internal logic of the texts.

Admittedly, this conclusion is not uncontroversial. While the criterion of the internal logic seems to be a presupposition generally acknowledged (even though seldom elaborated explicitly) in analyses of earlier European theology, it is seldom considered in First World studies of Third World theologies. Here we will, however, argue for the primacy of *the criterion of the internal logic*, which implies that in the choice between conflicting interpretations of a given body of texts, the interpretation that gives maximal coherence should be preferred, (acknowledging that an absolute coherence cannot usually be expected in Third World theologies or in other texts). Clearly, such an approach focuses on the task of finding the structures of the analyzed theology, i.e., to choose a perspective which gives the most coherent account of the studied body of ideas. Differently put, in the evaluation of the two alternative interpretations of Ujamaa and black theology, the methodological self-understanding of EATWOT and the First World critique, our main criterion will be the internal logic.

In the analysis of the internal logic we will pay special attention to the conceptual structure and the basic *Fragestellung* (the question at issue) in the analyzed theologies.[108] Obviously, central Christian concepts such as God, sin, and salvation will arrive at different interpretations due to the basic *Fragestellung*. As noted above, we shall search for a *Fragestellung* which gives maximal coherence in the analyzed theologies. The criterion of the internal logic implies that the interpreter must first test the possibility of interpreting the concepts of the analyzed text as systematically related and, only if it can be shown that such an interpretation is impossible, to subscribe to the possibility of a contradiction. In interpreting theologies based on a different *Fragestellung*, the student must ascertain that the contradictions which he or she claims to perceive in the other theology really arise from the internal logic of the body of analyzed texts and not from the imposition of the student's own *Fragestellung*.

The main argument for the criterion of the internal logic is of methodological nature. Such a criterion is essential in an intersubjectively testable argumentation about advantages and disadvantages of a given interpretation. This implies that the analyses of this study is based on texts. Hence, our study will, apart from analyses, consist of quotations and summaries of texts, rather than paraphrases that unnecessarily deviate from the texts; the extensive quotations are justified since they serve as evidence for the proposed interpretation.[109]

As a consequence of this emphasis on textual analysis, this study is devoted almost exclusively to texts written by academically trained people. Admittedly, a selection of written texts alone excludes the richness of African oral theology in prayers, songs, sermons, and proverbs. Such material will be considered as historical background and as a reminder of the fact that the experience of the most underprivileged groups such as peasants, workers, and women is not yet adequately represented in African liberation theology. The main reason for not including oral material in the argumentation is the following: as long as the Western academic community has not overcome its misunderstandings of academically trained Third World theologians, it seems premature to venture into investigations of oral theology, a task involving far greater methodological problems.[110]

Needless to say, the clarification of the internal logic necessarily involves a constructive effort by the interpreter, particularly when dealing with explicitly contextual theologies. In this constructive work, the analysis of the context is of relevance on three levels: (¹) as a heuristic tool, (2) as an argument in an internal criticism, (3) as a challenge to the self-understanding of the interpreter.

1. The context as a heuristic tool. In the search for optimal coherence of the thought structures of the analyzed texts we propose that the context could be used as a heuristic tool to discover relationships between different ideas that would be difficult to discern if the context is neglected. In other words, the context is of theoretical relevance since it may clarify an intrinsic relationship between ideas that may otherwise appear as unconnected or contradictory to a student from a different context. Consequently, the socioeconomic and political issues pertaining to an analysis of the context form an intrinsic aspect of this kind of systematic theological study.

2. The context as a critical principle. If ethnocentric arrogance is the Scylla of an intercultural study, idealization may be its Charybdis. While an uncritical idealization from one point of view may look as an affirmation of Third World theology, it nevertheless must be interpreted as a misrepresentation, that tends to see it as an epiphany of a perfect and therefore suprahistorical Truth rather than a historical trial-and-error process. In other words, an internal criticism is pertinent to clarifying the interpretation of theology as the "second act" in a praxis-theory process.

3. The context as a challenge to a new self-understanding of the interpreter. If awareness of the context of the interpreter is an intrinsic aspect of any study, it may for two reasons be of special significance in the relationship between First and Third World theologies. First, there are important but not infrequently neglected differences between the cultural perspectives of the two regions. Second, the historical relationship of colonialism but also the actual inequality of economic, political, and military power may be an obstacle to the First World study of Third World theologies.

The seriousness of this methodological problem is bluntly exposed by Desmond Tutu and deserves to be quoted in full because of its critique of the ground rules of scientific work, which with a popperian phrase are called "the rules of the game."

> Black Theology [is] a refutation of the silent claims by the white man to *ipso facto* give his values and measures universal validity. This claim is virtually never articulated explicitly, but is regarded as self-evident. Ultimately, there is no need to speak about that which is obvious. What the West has proscribed with genuine academic excellence is usually approved universally. The agenda of our life is too often determined by the white man. We have to play a game wherein the rules are decided by the white man and in which he often assumes the role as arbitrator as well. In his rather exaggerated dread of his own emotions, the Western man has proclaimed the law that to be really scientific, one must be restrained, unemotional, detached, and objective. In attempting to attain these objectives so highly prized in the West, we distorted our own nature and found that something did not add up in the final results. God has created us as we are, a people unashamed of its God-given emotions. Our scientific strivings must make room for subjectivity, for commitment, for the intuitive comprehension of matters which are hardly comprehensible for the alienated objectivity of the non-committed.[111]

Tutu's starting-point differs from ours in that he discusses the problem of First World domination from the perspective of a black theologian in South Africa, while we deal with the issue of a First World interpretation of certain varieties of Third World theologies. Yet, Tutu's critique may serve as a *caveat* in First World interpretations of Third World theologies since it raises the question: *Who* defines the rules of the games of science?

Unquestionably, if in the debate between theologies in the North and the South, "the white man" arrogates to himself the role of sole law-giver and arbiter in the games of science, he will be unable to understand the analyzed theologies on their own terms. Differently put, if "the white man" absolutizes his own paradigm he will not be able to understand liberation theology which represents a new paradigm.

The unequal distribution of power in the modern world may distort a First World study on African theology in different ways, for example, by nourishing ethnocentrism or by creating guilt feelings which may legitimize an idealization of the underprivileged. The contextual analysis must therefore deal both with the African and the First World settings as well as the relationship between them. Consequently, we argue for an *inter*cultural approach, as defined by the Swedish-Eritrean pedagogue Bereket Yebio.

> The prefix "inter" indicates for me a mutual relationship in which those interacting are subjects in a process of mutual learning. It indicates a process — of learning about the other and about oneself in the light of the presence of the other. Intercultural education is not limited to acquiring "knowledge" about the other. It also involves a process of critical self-awareness — a critical re-reading of one's own history and culture and one's own cultural values. Both actors are subjects and both cultures are the subject of critical study. [112]

Even though Yebio's deliberations are formulated within the context of education, they are of relevance also in the context of research, suggesting the need for a scientific methodology, where Western scholars, without rejecting their own intellectual traditions, may still be open to the wisdom of other intellectual traditions.

In sum, it is impossible to understand theologies from a different context unless one is willing to challenge the basic presuppositions of one's own context. If a student absolutizes his or her own *Fragestellung*, it will be impossible to do justice to the internal logic of texts that are structured in a different way.[113] The foreign context may, however, facilitate a "re-reading" of one's own context, clarifying unexamined assumptions, as aptly noted by Lesslie Newbigin.

> If a "world perspective" has anything to contribute to the reshaping of theological training in this country, I suggest that it may be chiefly at the point of helping us to be aware of the unexamined assumptions which underlie most of our contemporary English theology. I believe that English theology is to a dangerous extent encapsulated within a particular culture, and that it may be the role of our partners in other areas of the world to make us aware of this.[114]

On the basis of these deliberations on the internal logic and the importance of one's *Fragestellung*, it can safely be argued that systematic theology is an important discipline in the dialogue between Western and African theologies. Taking into account the growing importance of African churches in world Christianity, one would expect to find quite a few First World

studies on African theology, but the inverse is true.[115] Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that African studies is a grossly neglected field within Western systematic theology, not least in comparison with the situation in other disciplines such as church history, missiology, ecumenics, or history of religions.[116] In fact, our discussion in this study with earlier First World research on the subject will deal with works from these disciplines since we have found virtually no First World monographs in systematic theology related to African studies.

In studies on African theology, one may distinguish between two strands. Some scholars use a macro-perspective providing a survey of African theology, or even Third World theologies generally. When a macro-approach is pursued from a First World perspective, it may have the advantage of spelling out global differences between the two regions.[117] A liability of this approach, however, is that it is difficult to clarify the contextual character of the new theologies in such a general perspective. The other strand is based on what could be called a microperspective, concentrating on a specific country.[118] Of course, the advantages and the liabilities are here inverse, compared with a macroperspective. Arguably, in First World studies on Third World theologies there is a need for a combined micro-macro perspective, taking into account both the First-Third World relationship and the contextual rootedness of the analyzed theologies.

Yet, the methodological problems of a combined micro-macro approach are daunting. First of all, the established methodology of systematic theology has not included methods for an analysis of the relationship between theological ideas and their socioeconomic and political contexts. Moreover, while African theology is a process—"a calf with hardly grown horns"—systematic theology so far has dealt mainly with reasonably homogenous, established theological systems. Again, the debate between the established and the new paradigms raises penetrating epistemological and philosophical issues. In addition to these problems, there is an absence of a generally accepted terminology, ambiguities in the categorization of liberation theology, the limited possibility to establish what is going on in a repressive dictatorship as South Africa and so on and so forth.

In view of these methodological difficulties two options are open, either to accept a tentative methodology that has to be amended in the process of research or to avoid urgent but methodologically difficult issues.[119] While the striking absence of African studies in the field of systematic theology suggests that many students opt for the second alternative, we will argue for the first option, discussing the relationship between method and democracy.

It is a generally accepted view that methodology is the backbone of scientific work, since science, proceeding by investigation, questioning, and inquiry, implies a systematic quest for ordered knowledge, defined as belief justified by a method. The emphasis on method, not authority, as

criterion in scientific discussion may be justified with reference to the idea of democracy, which dovetails with the notion that a theory is appraised on the basis of its arguments, not on the basis of its author's authority.

However, the criticism from Third World theologians also offers a different, disturbing view on the relationship between established methodology and democracy. It could be argued that Western academic theology has neglected the experience of the underprivileged. More importantly, this negligence may be explained not as an accident but due to liabilities in the established methodology, since voices from the periphery of power obviously may be excluded due to the pressing methodological problems in such studies.

Against such a narrow-minded methodologism, we will here propose democracy as a more fundamental criterion than methodological perfection in the selection of themes and perspectives for theological studies. The option for democracy as a value superior to methodology implies that the concern for methodological exactness, legitimate in itself, should not be used to legitimize a neglect of the theological reflection of underprivileged groups.[120]

Needless to say, the criterion of democracy does not suggest that truth claims of Third World theologies should be accepted uncritically since they are presented in the name of the poor but the criterion suggests that such claims — due to the obviously unequal distribution of power — deserve more attention than would be justified from exclusively intra-academic criteria. In other words, the criterion of democracy is not an argument for truth but an argument for the selection of certain topics for research and theological debate.

Moreover, the criterion of democracy suggests a reassessment of established scientific methods. In an intercultural dialogue, based on equality and mutuality, the Western intellectual tradition will be seen as one voice among others, not as an absolute and infallible norm. The implications of such a de-absolutization, if the phrase is permitted, could be described in reference to the Swedish philosopher Lars Bergström's discussion on the problem of objectivity in social science. Unlike many other theoreticians of science, Bergström does not confine himself to drawing an ideal but discusses how this ideal may function in reality. He then arrives at the perhaps perplexing conclusion that "the possibilities of achieving objectivity are relatively good, but the desirability of doing so is quite dubious."[121] This inference is more understandable, however, if one ponders the consequences of a strict demand for objectivity in the sense of intersubjective testability. Such a demand could, for example,

> tempt social scientists to overlook many important but methodologically difficult problems, to instead concentrate purely on the collection of data or on such problems which can be studied through well-established experimental or statistical

methods. Many social scientific hypotheses and theories can be of both theoretical and practical value without meeting stringent demands for inter-subjective testability.[122]

This relativization of the demands for inter-subjective testability does not, however, imply methodological laxity.

Just the same, I am inclined to assert that rather strict intersubjective testability demands should be placed on the social sciences — at least for the cases in which one cannot argue for the acceptance of less stringent demands, which one, no doubt, can in many cases.[123]

Both quotations are of relevance not only in the social sciences but also in theology and together give an adequate account of what is here intended with the de-absolutization of the established methodology. On the one hand, a certain methodology should never be regarded as an absolute norm. On the other hand, one should not abandon established methods without good reasons. The option for democracy as a fundamental criterion entails that it should be regarded as such a reason. Specifically, this criterion implies that if the demand for methodological *rigeur* is used in such a way that it legitimizes the neglect of the theological reflection of underprivileged groups, this demand must be reconsidered and subordinated to the demand for a democratic distribution of power. The present, unequal distribution of power within the system that comprises, among others, the First World and Africa makes it legitimate and even urgent to listen to the voices at the periphery of power, even when African theologies — arguably because of the uneven distribution of power and resources — have not been elaborated as systematically and academically as is common in the metropolis of power. On the basis of the criterion of democracy, we conclude, First World studies of African theology constitute a field of research that not only is a legitimate but also an urgent task, in spite of daunting methodological problems.

Theology in the Context of Ujamaa

Chapter 1

Ujamaa as Theological Context

The Tanzanian case study, which forms the first part of this book, will focus on the relationship between context and text in order to clarify the place of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural struggle for liberation in the method of liberation theology. In short, the first chapter of this section will deal with the context and the second with the text—the theological conception—even though a strict line of division between the two entities is not possible in this paradigm. Consequently, it should be noted that in this chapter the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context will be discussed from a theological perspective, in reference to Gutiérrez's claim that Tanzania is "a real theological lesson." This limitation to Ujamaa as theological context is of special importance since Tanzania—together with South Africa—belongs to the most researched countries in Africa.

What aspects are relevant in an exposition of Ujamaa as theological context? Since contextual theology, as we saw in the Introduction, is characterized by an analysis of its place within different dimensions of conflicts, we will now search for the place of Tanzanian theology in different dimensions of power, both power relationships that affect the nation as a unity (North-South, dominant-dominated culture) and such relationships inside Tanzania as between different classes, between the relatively affluent and the poor, between males and females. In particular, we will discuss the quest for African identity in relationship to different dimensions of power. To sum up, contextualization, based on conflictual analysis, will be our concern in this chapter, as we shall deal with the quest for African identity and "African" values such as unity, reconciliation, and wholeness.

Ujamaa as a Philosophy of Liberation

The term "Ujamaa" was introduced by Nyerere as a label of his political philosophy[1] in an essay entitled "Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism," the classic of Tanzanian socialism.[2] The essay was published in 1962, the year after *uhuru* (national independence).

Why did Nyerere launch a new political philosophy the year after *uhuru*? Why did he call the people to struggle against dependence when the nation had just been granted sovereignty after some 75 years of colonial rule? The interrelation of politics, economy, and culture is here of importance

in order to understand the rationale for Ujamaa and thereby the context of Tanzanian theology. In spite of the political independence there is still need for an economic and cultural liberation, it is assumed. The struggle is for liberation from the global capitalist system that, significantly, is not seen as an economic structure only but also as a threat to the cultural values of Ujamaa. Nyerere writes in 1962:

> Our first step must be to re-educate ourselves; to regain our former attitude of mind. In our traditional African society, we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us. We neither needed nor wished to exploit our fellow men.[3]

The sharp critique of "the capitalist attitude of mind" goes hand in hand with an equally sharp critique of the capitalist methods in economics.

> And in rejecting the capitalist attitude of mind which colonialism brought into Africa, we must reject also the capitalist methods which go with it.... Unfortunately there are some of us who have already learnt to covet wealth for that purpose [namely, of dominating somebody else] and who would like to use the methods which the capitalist uses in acquiring it. That is to say, some of us would like to use, or exploit, our brothers for the purpose of building up our own personal power and prestige. This is completely foreign to us, and it is incompatible with the socialist society we want to build here.[4]

In short, Ujamaa is presented as an alternative to capitalism. Linguistically, the word is an abstract noun constructed from the kiswahili word *jamaa* which means "family." Hence the literal meaning of Ujamaa is "familyhood,"[5] referring to the pre-colonial family with its alleged communalistic pattern of life. The image of society as a family is presented as a critique of "Western" individualism.

> The word Ujamaa denotes the kind of life lived by a man and his family — father, mother, children and near relatives.... Wealth belonged to the family as a whole; and every member of a family had the right to the use of family property. No one used wealth for the purpose of dominating others. This is how we want to live as a nation. We want the whole nation to live as one family. This is the basis of socialism.[6]

An analysis of the kiswahili editions of the basic documents of Ujamaa reveals that it is defined not only in relation to the political institutions and the means of production but also in reference to other dimensions of reality.[7] Ujamaa is a commitment and a way of life, according to its adherents.

Quite a few of the concepts used to define the Tanzanian philosophy have a religious flavour. Most important of these concepts is *imani*, which plays a basic part in the Arusha Declaration. In the official translations *imani* is understood as "creed," "belief," "attitude of mind," and "way of life" but frequently it is used in religious texts with the meaning of "faith."

In a similar vein, Ujamaa is characterized as *tabia* (character), *moyo*, and *mawazo*. *Moyo* literally means "heart," but also "soul," "will," "hope." *Mawazo* is a plural form of the noun *wazo*, derived from the verb *kuwaza* which can mean to "reflect," to "think" but also to "meditate," "to have a mind." According to one dictionary, *Waza Mungu* is used for "religious meditation," "deep inward heart-searching."[8] Hence, Ujamaa is seen as an attitude of mind, a way of life and a faith, related to heart, to character and possibly also to meditation. Even though these dimensions may also be included in Western socialism, arguably they are more emphasized in the concept of Ujamaa.

In Western thought the opposite of socialism is capitalism. In the Tanzanian context, by contrast, it may be argued that the opposite of Ujamaa is *ubinafsi*, which means both "selfishness" and "individualism," even though advocates of Ujamaa may suggest that there is an-interrelation between *ubinafsi* and *ubepari* (capitalism).[9]

The Ujamaa concept has often been criticized by First World students for being vague or lofty. Even though this criticism cannot be dismissed wholesale, a more important source of misunderstanding may be a failure to perceive the difference between categories used in the First World and in Tanzania. In Western thought, "socialism" can be categorized as a political ideology on a par with liberalism, conservatism, or anarchism. When Ujamaa is defined as *imani*, *moyo*, *mawazo*, and *tabia* a different grid is used which has a certain affinity with theology, especially a holistic theology.[10]

When translating Ujamaa into Western concepts, socialism is the most appropriate equivalent, but it is of importance to remember that translations do not convey the full meaning of the kiswahili concept, especially not nuances which are relevant for a theological perspective. In this study, we will focus on Ujamaa not mainly as economic and political theory (even if these aspects will also be included) but primarily as culture, since these aspects are of fundamental importance in order to discern the relationship between Ujamaa and theology. The cultural factor is most basic in African theology, it is often asserted, and this is also true for the Tanzanian variety.[11]

What is meant by culture? In a contemporary dictionary among other definitions can be found "evidence of intellectual development (of arts, science, etc.) in human society."[12] This definition is, however, too general for our purposes since it is not explicitly related to the Third World context. The aspect of cultural identity has been at the forefront in the emerging

Third World theologies, not least in Africa. At the EATWOT conference in New Delhi 1981 the following definition was given:

> Culture is the foundation of the creativity and way of life of a people. It is the basis and bond of their collective identity. It expresses their worldview, their conception of the meaning of human existence and destiny, and their idea of God. It includes the historical manifestations of the people's creativity, such as their language, arts, social organization, philosophy, religion, and theology itself.[13]

In the EATWOT discussions, African theologians in particular have emphasized the importance of culture.

> Culture is essentially a way of conceiving the human being, the world, and God. It is culture that bestows on faith its categories and language.[14]

In the Third World theologies, culture is understood as an important dimension of the struggle for liberation. Similarly, the philosophy of Ujamaa is an attempt to search for cultural identity in the era of neo-colonialism by reviving values rooted in the pre-colonial culture, since they are regarded as a force of resistance against neo-colonial ideology.

To sum up, the image of the Tanganyikan society as a family was introduced as a critique of capitalism and individualism "to explain the kind of life we wish to live in our country."[15] For Nyerere it was important to avoid that the "African Revolution ... degenerate into neocolonialism."[16] The image of the nation as a family can be explained as a way of emphasizing solidarity as the basis for genuine liberation from foreign dominance.

The Place of Ujamaa Within the Process of Liberation

Having clarified the concept of Ujamaa, we will now describe its place within "the process of liberation."[17] In fact, history reveals that there have been different kinds of resistance against foreign domination ever since a German government charter in "the scramble for Africa" granted the German East Africa Company the right to administer an undefined part of what later was called Tanganyika (the mainland of Tanzania) in 1885.[18] The most widespread uprising in the colonial era was the Maji Maji rebellion in 1904-07 when twenty different ethnic groups vividly demonstrated the despair and anger of an oppressed people. Significantly, in the rebellion which was bloodily suppressed, the struggle for liberation fused with ideas from pre-colonial religion, as was the case with much of the resistance against colonial rule.[19]

After Germany's disastrous fate in World War I, the colony was changed into a mandate under the League of Nations (later under United Nations Organization), administered by the British government but, in practice, the colonial yoke remained.[20] New types of resistance emerged, however. One example was the famous Meru land case, where East Meru peasants actively fought against plans to resettle them and change their fields into white-owned large-scale plantations, even appealing to the UN.[21] Although they failed and were driven away from their land by force, their struggle contributed to the growing political awareness during the 1950s.

During this period different peoples in Tanganyika formed "proto-political interest groups."[22] Such ethnic associations were organized among the Haya, Chagga, Sukuma, Sambaa, Meru, and Zaramo peoples by 1952. There was also a loosely organized multiethnic organization, Tanganyika African Association. These associations cleared the ground for Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) which, formed in July 1954 under Nyerere's leadership, became the platform for "a full-scale campaign against the colonial regime."[23] The colonial administration tried in different ways to stem the tide of the independence struggle. TANU branches were closed "under a vaguely worded amendment to the penal code banning publications and statements 'likely to raise discontent among any of the inhabitants of the territory'."[24] Moreover, Nyerere and other political leaders suffered different kinds of harassments until the attainment of *uhuru* in 1961. To make a long story short, there is an impressive record of resistance against colonial rule.

The years of foreign domination did not end by *uhuru*, as we have noted. Therefore, "self-reliance" was established as a major goal for the new nation in the Arusha Declaration (1967), a policy document of the TANU party, "the charter for Tanzanian socialism."[25] Due to its insistence on "self-reliance," a termination of neo-colonial domination culturally and economically, the declaration is widely regarded as one of the most important milestones in the history of Tanganyika/Tanzania.[26] In this text one can sense the disappointment, and even anger, many years after *uhuru*.

> We have been oppressed a great deal, we have been exploited a great deal and we have been disregarded a great deal. It is our weakness that has led to our being oppressed, exploited and disregarded. Now we want a revolution—a revolution which brings to an end our weakness, so that we are never again exploited, oppressed, or humiliated.[27]

The Arusha Declaration drafted a large-scale nationalization of the "commanding heights" of the economy: the banks and the major foodprocessing, insurance, and export trading companies. It was followed in 1971 by the *Mwongozo* (TANU Guidelines), the climax of Ujamaa egalitarianism. *Mwongozo* emphasized the essentially conflictual character

of the struggle for socialism and inspired by its critique of paternalism in industrial relations some strikes that were, however, suppressed in the name of national unity. The villagization programme which had been part of Ujamaa policy since the 1960s was a principal political policy in the 1970s, with the result that in 1977, at the conclusion of the so-called Operation Tanzania, 85 percent of all rural dwellers were living in villages, more or less voluntarily. The rationale for the villagization policy was to facilitate rural development that was difficult to achieve when the population was scattered.

On analyzing "the process of liberation" in 1976, Nyerere admitted that there had been much unrealism in the independence struggle of the 1950s, as he had not foreseen the complexity of the liberation. "Our mistake was not in our demand for freedom; it was in the assumption that freedom—real freedom—would necessarily and with little trouble follow liberation from alien rule."[28] Consequently, he argues that liberation should be understood as a historical process, not as a single action which can be completed and then celebrated as a past event. In this process, four different aspects are mentioned: (1) freedom from colonialism and racism; (2) freedom from external economic domination; (3) freedom from poverty and from injustice and oppression imposed on Africans by Africans; (4) mental freedom.[29] In other words, the philosophy of Ujamaa is part of the same process as the struggle against colonialism. In a similar vein, the radicalization of Ujamaa in the Arusha Declaration and the *Mwongozo* could be explained with reference to the "the process of liberation." Yet, it should be noted that the Ujamaa interpretation of these experiences is not uncontroversial, not even among Africans, as is obvious from the dissensus on African socialism.

Ujamaa, African Socialism, and Conciliation

It seems clear from Nyerere's essay "Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism," that Ujamaa is a brand of African socialism, a political body of thought that claims to be particular for Africa. In fact, Ujamaa is often characterized as the most elaborate variety of African socialism, which, it is argued, is characterized by African traditional values such as community and solidarity. African socialism has, however, provoked widely differing reactions, also among socialists in Africa. While some perceive it as the only way of overcoming neo-colonialism and assuring self-reliance on the basis of African culture, others conceive it as the ideological legitimation of a new élite. Since the political debate on African socialism is of relevance for the understanding of African theology in general and Ujamaa theology in particular we will deal with it at some length.

How do the proponents of African socialism argue? In an analysis of this philosophy S. R. Motshologane asserts that

> African socialism should be understood in terms of a desperate and determined effort by a people in search of both a political and an economic ethic which could, most likely, lead them to the restoration of their human dignity, self-determination, and freedom of choice in their basic struggle to emancipate themselves from dehumanizing effects of colonization and imperialism.[30]

African socialism, in other words, is advocated in reference to what in this study is called the Third World experience: this brand of socialism understands itself as an ethic of liberation, emphasizing values which are essential in the struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Leópold Sédar Senghor, widely regarded as the father of African socialism, developed the theory of *négritude* which could be characterized as a powerful and emotional assertion of the inherent qualities of black culture. The underlying significance of this concept was at once cultural and political, as Adrian Hastings observes, "a reassertion of the worth of the black race and of black achievement across a necessarily somewhat mythical delineation of the blissful state of pre-colonial Africa."[31]

If the affirmation of black dignity was one important pole in this variety of African socialism, the other was the insistence on reconciliation and cooperation, specifically between whites and blacks. For Senghor it was important to avoid conflicts with the whites in the search for black freedom and dignity. Why? The answer he gives in his own writings refers to the central role of reconciliation in African traditional culture. This answer may account for two salient features in Senghor's understanding of socialism, both of relevance in a discussion on African liberation theology, namely his understanding of culture and his critique of Marxism.

In the reappropriation of humanity, the cultural dimension is at least as fundamental in Senghor's thought as in the philosophy of Ujamaa. Cultural imperialism is the main opponent of Senghor, when he reasserts African tradition in certain areas of life.

> Culture is not an appendage that can be lopped off without damage. It is not even a simple political means. Culture is the precondition and the goal of any policy worthy of the name. Culture is inside and outside, above and beneath all human activities; it is the spirit that animates them, that gives a civilization its unique style.[32]

In Senghor's discussion of Marxism, he singles out the ethical questions. He can speak with glowing enthusiasm about Marx's humanism, interpreting Marxism as an anti-capitalist ethic, while at the same time exhibiting a strong

abhorrence for the notion of class struggle and advocating conciliation as the "African" way of handling conflicts.

While it is difficult not to be moved by Senghor's poetic language, critics have been quick to point to his praxis. In spite of Senghor's extensive critique of capitalism, he has never advocated any practical program for changing the economic structures of Senegal, not even when he became the country's first president after independence. A student of his ideas about politics and economy concludes: "His socialism, paradoxically, only contributed to maintaining the previous status quo."[33] The reason for this paradoxical outcome is seen in "the reduction of Man's problems to those of his spirituality" and in the exaltation of "the autonomous existence of Negro-African culture as an entity isolated from other ramifications of society."[34]

A critical analysis of Senghor's conservative praxis should not conceal the fact that his concepts of African socialism and *negritude* obviously have had different political functions in different phases of the struggle for African liberation as perceptively noted by one student:

> Senghor's concept of *negritude* antedates his formal concern with African Socialism, but is connected with it intimately through its early militant emphasis on the primacy of Africa and later expression of African cultural values. From the time of inception during the nineteen-thirties, *negritude* has become transformed, from a vehicle of revolt against the intellectual tentacles of French assimilation, into the positive assertion of newly found identity, and finally into an abstraction of cultural values native to Africa.[35]

African socialism has been criticized, not least by Marxist-Leninist analysts, for using the "African" aims as a nationalistic-propagandistic means to conceal class contradictions and the privileges of the ruling bureaucracy. According to some critics, the whole project of African socialism is nothing but a neo-colonial manaeuvre. Among the many instances of such a harsh criticism—which is of relevance in view of the critique of liberation theology as "resacralization"—one may quote a FRELIMO leader who lashed out against Senghor and what he has represented in the following way:

> What is this African soul? What is it that makes the African soul different from all the men in the rest of the world? And how are the laws of scientific development different in Africa and in other continents? Should we perchance affirm that the reason is Greek and the heart African as that model of the neo-colonialized man has done, that puppet model named Senghor?[36]

The analysis of Senghor's interpretation of African socialism is important as a foil in a discussion of Ujamaa, since many of its critics on the left tend to identify the two protagonists of African socialism, while neglecting

important differences.[37] Unlike Senghor, it is obvious that the struggle against neo-colonialism is a key issue for Nyerere. Moreover, in this struggle the Tanzanian leader is concerned with the construction of political and economic institutions that correspond to a socialistic attitude of mind; on the level of philosophy, Nyerere's anthropology is more socially oriented.[38]

Even though these differences arguably may be detected in all phases of Nyerere's authorship, they are more apparent in its later stages. This development of his thought may be clarified by studying his understanding of the relationship between Western and African socialism. Is Ujamaa to be understood as a third way, beside capitalism and socialism in a Western sense? Or, should Ujamaa and First World socialism be understood as two variants of the same political option, adapted to different contexts? The question could also be put as follows: Are there in the world view of Ujamaa *three* political options (capitalism, Western socialism, and African socialism) or only *two*: capitalism and socialism, Ujamaa being a branch of the latter?

In the Ujamaa essay from 1962 Nyerere obviously leans toward a tripartite conception. Even though the main butt of his critique is capitalism, the conflictual analysis of "the European version of socialism" is rejected in no uncertain terms. Notably, Nyerere's main argument is of historical nature. In pre-colonial society, he argues, there were no classes and "the true African socialist" therefore must reject the notion of class struggle.[39]

> "Ujamaa" ... is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.[40]

In an essay about capitalism and socialism written ten years later, Nyerere insists, however, that the main line of division in politics lies between capitalism and socialism.

> In the modern world there are two basic systems of economic and social organization—capitalism and socialism. There are variations within these broad classifications, like welfare capitalism or humanistic socialism; but the broad distinction between the two systems remains, and our first choice has to be between them.[41]

Reducing the three options in the 1962 essay to two, the difference between European and African socialism is also played down. Not surprisingly, the understanding of pre-colonial communalism is also different. In the 1962 essay the reader may get the impression that Ujamaa is a revival of primitive communalism, whereas in 1972 Nyerere has an explicit historical

argumentation, where he claims that pre-colonial economy cannot be revived in Africa of today.[42]

> Primitive communalism is equally doomed. The moment the first enamel pot, or factory woven cloth, is imported into a self-sufficient communal society, the economic and social structure of that society receives its death blow. Afterwards it is merely a question of time, and of whether the members of that community will be participants or victims in the new economic order.[43]

The shift of emphasis can be seen also in other documents. In the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the nostalgia for pre-colonial society is less apparent than in the 1962 essay. Similarly, the *Mwongozo* has a far less idealized and harmonious perception of the Tanzanian social reality than in the first Ujamaa writings.

These differences between different stages of Ujamaa should not be overstated, however, but seen as a shift in emphases, not strictly following a chronological line but rather reflecting a continuous wrestle with the experience of foreign domination and "the African value" of consensus.

Some critics think, however, that the changes in the development of Ujamaa are too small in view of "TANU's obsession with unanimity."[44] Issa Shivji, a lecturer in Law at the University of Dar es Salaam, whose writings on "The Silent Class Struggle" have commanded great interest and lively discussion, suggests that there are class contradictions in Tanzania but that they are suppressed, "silent."[45] Here he challenges a cornerstone of African socialism, the denial of the existence of class struggles in Africa: "The alleged non-existence of classes and class struggles in Africa [serves] perfectly the interests of the ruling classes both national and international."[46]

Even though Shivji, as other Marxist-Leninist critics, tends to reduce the struggle for liberation to the socioeconomic level, thus neglecting the problem of cultural identity, it can hardly be denied that there has been a process of class formation which is not accounted for in the philosophy of Ujamaa.[47]

In an empirical study of the effect of Ujamaa policy on the village level Michaela von Freyhold found that far from representing a harmonious cooperation of different groups, the villages were rather arenas of "mounting conflicts" between "kulaks" and government officials on the one side and peasants on the other.[48] While Ujamaa ideas raised high expectations among the peasants, their attempts to put these egalitarian ideas into practice met with resistance from the kulaks. Accordingly, Freyhold explains the difficulties of Ujamaa policy not in reference to individual possessiveness but in reference to its failure to analyze the conflicts within Tanzania, arguing that

the communal villages made little progress and finally failed because the ruling party that had called for communalization did not support poor and middle peasants against kulaks, did not support the democratic structures of the villages against the authoritarian bureaucracy and did not force the technical staff to serve the villages loyally and intelligently.[49]

Other studies confirm that the philosophy of Ujamaa has failed to account for socioeconomic conflicts on the domestic level.[50] Within the confines of this treatise it is not possible to discuss these studies but only to note the conclusion which is of relevance also in the discussion on the Ujamaa theology. Even though the ideals of consensus and unanimity undeniably can be supported by beautiful arguments from African and Christian traditions, they obviously failed to give a true account of the political dynamics of the Ujamaa context.

The Ujamaa Analysis of Neo-Colonialism

If the search for reconciliation, consensus, and harmony has been one important strand in modern African politics, the struggle for liberation from colonialism and neo-colonialism has been yet another.

The Ujamaa analysis of neo-colonialism could be described as a distinct answer to the question: Why are the Third World countries poor? While some analysts's answer refer to internal causes such as bureaucracy, lack of economic incentive, or cultural values which supposedly do not not stimulate change, the proponents of Ujamaa find the main cause of poverty in the global economic system. Just as in the previous section we analyzed Ujamaa within the context of the trajectory of African socialism, we will now study Ujamaa within the framework of the development of the African critique of neo-colonialism.

In *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975*, Adrian Hastings describes the political development on the continent as a conflict between two principles—black continental universalism and white domination—which at the beginning of the period, in 1950, were represented by Kwame Nkrumah from the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Dr. Malan, the South African leader. Or in the words of a contemporary commentator: "Two utterly opposed principles are now at work in the African continent and, as things are moving at present, it seems they must ultimately come into collision."[51]

Undeniably, Nkrumah was a pioneer in the struggle for national independence in the African context. "It was the Gold Coast which was to be Africa's pace-setter during the next decade and Nkrumah its most messianic figure; the Pan-African liberator."[52] Since Ghana was at the forefront in attaining independence, it was also among the first countries which had to

come to grips with neo-colonialism, when the euphoria of independence was replaced with harsh economic realities. "Flag independence" is a central concept in Nkrumah's analysis, referring to the disillusionment that has grown in the independent nations of Africa.[53] Many had hoped that independence would transform society, but mass poverty has continued and the food situation has in recent years grown worse than ever.[54]

Nkrumah's perception of the relationship between the First and the Third World was far more antagonistic than Senghor's. For Nkrumah, conflictual analysis, embodied in the concept of neo-colonialism, was not incompatible with African identity. On the contrary, in his conception "Africa" was a key symbol in the struggle against neo-colonialism. "Africa must unite!" is the programmatic title of one of his books, advocating Pan-Africanism—a continent-wide African solidarity—as a necessary foundation for a true liberation from Western domination. Even though this title also betrays an adherence to values as consensualism and community, it envisages the unity of the underprivileged. Differently put, in Nkrumah's plea for Pan-Africanism and an "African personality" the African identity is interpreted differently than in Senghor's African socialism, since Nkrumah does not exclude conflictual analysis.

Also in the writings of Nyerere we find a causal relationship between political experience and a critique of neo-colonialism. His mounting criticism of the First World intransigence to accept justice as a fundamental criterion in economic decision making is combined with a cautious acceptance of conflictual analysis. In Nyerere's later writings he is advocating a kind of trade union of the poor countries.[55] In 1982, he writes:

> It is only ... the power of a united South to make the maintenance of Northern control over the world economy increasingly costly, which causes the North to negotiate at all.... If we allow ourselves to be divided from one another, or one group from another, then we shall all be weakened and the present injustices will continue unchecked.[56]

What is the reason for this more militant language? Nyerere's own answer is a reference to experience, obviously the experience of the unwillingness in the First World to accept a new economic order.

> We have been making the mistake of acting as if negotiation is exclusively a matter of reason and morality, which has nothing to do with the strength of the participants.[57]

When Nyerere characterizes neo-colonialism as "a very real, and very severe, limitation on national sovereignty," he is obviously speaking on the basis of his experiences as President of Tanzania.[58] Compared with the fairly unequivocal emphasis on conciliation in the tradition of African socialism in

his earlier years, his stated intention "to negotiate from a position of steadily increasing power" represents a shift in emphasis.[59] Yet, the new position should not be interpreted as substitution of dialogue for confrontation but as a combination of both strategies, according to the need of the situation.[60]

What, then, is the point of the theory of neo-colonialism? Nkrumah's answer may be found in an oft-quoted dictum, which is cited also in the context of Ujamaa:

> The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.[61]

Naturally, we cannot deal with this economic theory in depth within the confines of this study. From a theological perspective it is of crucial importance to note the structural explanation of poverty in this mode of analysis. Nyerere's lecture on church and society to a First World audience is revealing here. The lecture starts with an analysis of "our social and economic system, nationally and internationally."[62] In this analysis the focus is on the contradictions, "the division of mankind into rich and poor."[63] The division is analyzed on two levels. On the national level there is a "contrast between the wealth of a few privileged individuals and the dire poverty of the masses."[64] On the international level, the world is seen as a collection of nation states, where the same pattern is repeated.

> There are a few wealthy nations which dominate the whole world economically, and therefore politically; and a mass of smaller and poor nations whose destiny, it appears, is to be dominated.[65]

According to this structural analysis, economic domination spells political domination. The rich have power over the lives of the poor and, similarly, the rich nations have power over the policies of those which are not rich. Moreover, this intolerable condition is caused mainly by "the normal workings of the social and economic systems men have constructed for themselves."[66] Consequently, deliberate decisions play only a minor role in the creation of the division between rich and poor.

> Even more important is that our social and economic system, nationally and internationally, supports these divisions and constantly increases them, so that the rich get ever richer and more powerful, while the poor get relatively poorer and less able to control their own future.[67]

While the Ujamaa critique of selfishness and its plea for community may be uncontroversial in a Christian context, many ask critical questions about

a structural analysis of conflicts. Are not central values, such as human dignity, freedom, and responsibility, denied when one explains economic injustice in reference to structures? From the perspective of Ujamaa, however, personal options and structures are interrelated. The underlying assumption of "the efforts to create a just economic system," obviously is that economic structures are not an intrinsic aspect of human nature but can be changed by human decisions.[68] The struggle against neo-colonialism is understood as an ethical choice, where the "African values" are of crucial importance, notwithstanding the structural analysis. "We can concentrate on our personal advancement and individual freedom from restraint. Or we can choose to give service to our fellow-men, and thus to ourselves as members of the society."[69]

Articulated as a theory of dependency Nyerere's political thought implies that the relationship between the Third World countries and the advanced capitalist countries generates underdevelopment in the Third World by means of transfer of "surplus" and "unequal-exchange." On those bases, "the dependency theory concludes that the only way out of underdevelopment for the countries of the Third World is through a socialist revolution."[70]

While the theory of dependency often has been given a place of prominence in liberation theology and in the EATWOT analysis, it has been severely criticized by both classical and Marxist economists, inter alia, for conceptual vagueness and impracticality. One liability of the theory of dependency, according to these critics, is that focussing on an analysis of the individual countries in terms of their place within the international capitalist system, they tend to neglect an analysis of their internal structures. Moreover, it is argued that the theory does not provide a viable alternative for conceptualizing the social organization of Third World countries.[71] In fact, also Third World theologians have acknowledged that the theory of dependency needs to be amended at least in two respects. First, the analysis of the conflict between dominant and dominated countries should not conceal but clarify class conflicts inside the dominated countries.[72] Second, equally as Marxist and classic economics, the theory of dependence has failed to analyze the cultural and spiritual dimension of oppression.[73]

Ujamaa and Marxism

The relationship between Ujamaa and Marxism is of relevance not only in the analysis of the Tanzanian theology but also in view of the discussion about the conflictual analysis of liberation theology. Here we must distinguish between two different ways of framing the problem. A common approach is to distinguish between a theology using Marxist analysis and a non-Marxist, allegedly neutral and unbiased, theology. If one accepts this approach as an accurate description of the actual options, one can with good reason ask:

Why should theology abandon its neutral, unbiased position in favour of a dependency on Marxism?[74]

However, in reference to the experience of oppression many Third World theologians question the neutrality of the social analyses of established theology. They claim that the categories of the established position cannot be used in a structural analysis of the experience of oppression. Moreover, even though Marxism is a taboo in many theological circles, it seems, in part, to offer such categories. In this second approach the problem is not "Should theology opt for a Marxist bias or for a neutral analysis?" but "Must theology regard Marxist analysis as taboo?"

Even though the interpretation of Marxism in Ujamaa is not unambiguous, it must be considered as an expression of the second approach, clearly opposing anti-communism.[75] Nyerere praises Marx and Lenin because of the analysis of "the objective conditions of their time" and the praxis-orientation of the theories. "We can learn from their methods of analysis."[76] Yet, Nyerere wants to emphasize the difference between "Africa" and the conditions in which Marx and Lenin were living.

Consequently, he rejects an interpretation of Marxism where Marx's mode of analysis is mechanically imposed on the Tanzanian context. This censure is addressed to "scientific socialism" which, not least in Africa, has become virtually synonymous with Marxism-Leninism. In explicit critique of such an absolutization of Marxist categories, ironically characterized as a "theology of socialism," Nyerere argues that "socialism is secular."[77]

The use of the secularity of socialism as an argument against Marxism-Leninism may deserve some explanation, specifically since this notion of secularity is central also in the relationship between church and state, which we will analyze below. In what sense does Nyerere want to secularize Marxism-Leninism? According to Nyerere, Marxism-Leninism is a kind of faith in certain infallible "gods" and the notion "secular" is then a critique of such "religious" claims of infallibility.

> There is, however, an apparent tendency among certain socialists to try and establish a new religion—a religion of socialism itself. This is usually called "scientific socialism" and the works of Marx and Lenin are regarded as the holy writ in the light of which all other thoughts and actions of socialists have to be judged. Of course, this doctrine is not presented as a religion; its proponents are often most anxious to decry religion as the "opium of the people," and they present their beliefs as "science." Yet they talk and act in the same manner as the most rigid of theologians.[78]

The secularism of Tanzanian socialism is, according to our interpretation, not primarily based on compartmentalization of society in a religious and a secular sector but on the *imani* of human equality. Since all human beings

are equal, no individual or group has the right to impose a certain opinion on others but only to offer their insights and opinions as a contribution to a dialogue.[79] Differently put, in a truly secular socialism neither politicians nor philosophers are given a religious or quasireligious authority.

Even though Nyerere pokes fun at the orthodoxy of "scientific socialism," he speaks with respect of Marx's scientific achievements. When criticizing Marxist-Leninist dogmatism that uses the doctrines of Marx as a substitute for "hard work and hard thinking," Marx is cited as an argument.

> This attempt to create a new religion out of socialism is absurd. It is not scientific, and it is almost certainly not Marxist—for however combatant and quarrelsome a socialist Marx was, he never claimed to be an infallible divinity! Marx was a great thinker. He gave a brilliant analysis of the industrial capitalist society in which he lived.... But he was not God. The years have proved him wrong in certain respects just as they have proved him right in others. Marx did not write revealed truth; his books are the result of hard thinking and hard work, not a revelation from God.[80]

In short, the valid aspects in the works of Marx and Lenin are found in the analysis of "the objective conditions of their time" and in their theoretical reflection on praxis.[81] Similarly, Nyerere argues that "Africa's conditions" must be the focus of socialist analysis in Tanzania.

> Scientific thinking means finding out all the facts in a particular situation, regardless of whether you like them or not, or whether they fit in with preconceived ideas. It means analysing these facts, and then working out solutions to the problems you are concerned with in the light of these facts, and of the objectives you are trying to achieve. This is what Marx did in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century; if he had lived in Sukumaland, Masailand, or Ruvuma, he would have written a different book than *Das Kapital*, but he could have been just as scientific and just as socialist.[82]

Ujamaa is sometimes described as a critical and independent equivalent of Marxism, based on the specific character of the Tanzanian context. In his discourse on Marxism, Nyerere states how a socialist should analyze a particular society "from the stand-point of that society." This statement is of special interest since it may be understood as an account of Nyerere's own method with its emphasis on values.

> In Tanzania [a really scientific socialist] would take the existence of some socialist values as part of his material for analysis; he would study the effect of the colonial era on these attitudes and

on the systems of social organization; he would take account of the world situation as it affects Tanzania. After doing all that he would try to work out policies appropriate for the growth of a modern socialist state. And he could well finish up with the Arusha Declaration and the policies of Ujamaa![83]

The quotation suggests that Marx, "if he had lived in Sukumaland, Masailand, or Ruvuma" would have focused on "the existence of some socialist values." Needless to say, such an ethical interpretation of Marxism is not beyond dispute.

In fact, the debate on the relationship between Ujamaa and Marxism will be confused, if one does not distinguish between different concepts of Marxism. It is possible, in the first place, to consider Marxism exclusively as a body of anti-capitalist values. As we have seen, quite a few African socialists assume this position which implies that there is no theoretical conflict between Ujamaa and a "secular" interpretation of Marxism. Yet, such an "idealistic" emphasis on ahistorical values obviously fails to do justice to the Marxist insistence on a dialectical understanding of the social reality, as well as its concern for class analysis.

A second position is to identify Marxism with Marxism-Leninism, affirming that Lenin's materialist world view is intrinsic to Marxism. If one takes such a stand, Ujamaa will, of course, be regarded as non-Marxist. Arguments from the ideological feud between Comintern and African socialism may be quoted in favour of this position, which is not seldom assumed by Christian sympathizers of Ujamaa who want to free this philosophy from the communist charge.[84] A main liability of this standpoint, however, is its monolithic interpretation of Marxism, assuming that all Marxists hold substantially the same opinions.[85]

Therefore, one may prefer a third definition of Marxism for which I have argued in detail in another study of mine.[86] While Marxism is often defined in view of the politically most influential interpretations, it may from a scientific point of view be more justified to provide a definition based on a close textual analysis of *Das Kapital*. Marxism, if defined in view of Marx's *opus magnum*, denotes *an analysis of the transient character of capitalism; this analysis is the theoretical basis for a praxis intended to reduce "the birth pangs" of a post-capitalist mode of production.* The central truth claim in this methodology is the proposition that capitalism is a historically definable mode of production which appeared at a certain point in history and will be outmoded sooner or later due to its internal contradictions. In fact, the thrust of the argument of *Das Kapital* is to establish that the laws of the capitalist economy are historical, hence changeable principles, not eternal laws of nature.[87] This proposition is, of course, a necessary condition for any praxis which wants to facilitate a new mode of production. Consequently, the purpose of *Das Kapital* is to clarify "the laws of motion" of capitalism.[88]

As we all know, Marx has in our times usually been associated with Lenin's materialist world view and its corollary atheism but an analysis of *Das Kapital* reveals that—contrary to popular opinion—such a world view is not intrinsic to the Marxian methodology.[89]

Our definition of Marxism may be justified not only because it corresponds to the declared intention and the actual structure of argumentation in *Das Kapital* but also because it may clarify the actual function of Marxism in many Third World movements, e.g., in Ujamaa and in liberation theology. Clearly, the main reason for the use of Marxist categories in these contexts is not an interest in ontological theories as represented by Lenin's materialist world view but the stated need for a methodology of exploring the possibilities for changing the economic laws of capitalism.[90]

If Marxism is a methodology for social analysis its influence cannot be assessed in global terms, as may be appropriate when dealing with, for example, religious faiths. Differently put, there is no sharp line of demarcation between Marxism and non-Marxism. Rather, we must speak of different degrees of Marxist influence. Therefore, we will distinguish between classical Marxism—the theory advocated by Marx, especially in *Das Kapital*—and the Marxian *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effects), denoting analyses that are informed, more or less, by classical Marxism.[91]

The Ujamaa analysis differs in important aspects from classical Marxism, for example, in its insistence on culture and "African values." Nevertheless, Ujamaa clearly belongs to the Marxian *Wirkungsgeschichte* as seen in the assertion that capitalism is a transient mode of production which could and should be replaced with a different "system." The advocates of Ujamaa, we conclude, do not affirm the infallibility of Marxism but use it, in defiance of anti-communist taboos, as one of the resources needed in the critique of capitalism.

Perceptions of Ujamaa

Ujamaa—sometimes described as a large-scale "African experiment"—has provoked completely different reactions since its outset.[92] Many aver that Tanzania is "a case study of philosophical idealism, lost developmental opportunities, and unfulfilled promises."[93] For other students, the country—at least some years ago—represented the ideal of a developing country. In fact, the romanticization of Ujamaa was so apparent that Nyerere in 1969 admitted that he felt embarrassed by First World admiration.

> I am afraid that we receive more praise than the facts warrant—and that we might therefore at a later date receive a great deal of unwarranted blame for not being what people thought we were![94]

In this section we will not attempt to answer the question whether Tanzania is a failure or a success.[95] Two comments are justified, however.

First, the divergent assessments of Tanzania relate to different economic theories and also to different theologies. This is obvious if one listens to the different arguments presented in the debate. Critics may cite economic statistics which reveal that there has been stagnancy, and even reduction, of GNP in Tanzania since the mid-1970s. They may also refer to some of the serious planning mistakes: an extensive and costly industrialization programme never produced an economic return, because the industrial capacity was severely under-utilized; bureaucracy and overmanning have increased the wages account without increasing production.

The main reason for these difficulties, many critics argue, is a lack of incentive in the community ethic of Ujamaa which stifles entrepreneurship and individual creativity. The economic difficulties of Tanzania are then explained as a consequence of a misplaced idealism which has violated economic laws. Theologically, this position may be supported by an anthropology in which human beings are viewed as inherently selfish.

Supporters of Ujamaa can, however, also cite good arguments. For example, Tanzania has performed a set of political programmes that have benefited the most underprivileged part of the population, such as a successful literacy policy and an extensive primary health care. Moreover, in spite of the diversity of its 120 peoples with different languages and histories the country has been characterized by a high degree of political stability. Supporters of Ujamaa may also explain the economic problems in reference to the structural crisis which has affected the whole continent and they can quote statistics to corroborate this proposition.

To some extent, these arguments *pro et con* Ujamaa are of relevance independently of the theoretical framework but it is obvious that their specific meaning and importance can only be defined in relationship to a certain theoretical position about criteria and the relationship between Tanzanian economy and the capitalist system. For many critics GNP is the fundamental criterion, while advocates of Ujamaa suggest that independence, human dignity, and well-being (for example, health, education and security of food and shelter) are more important criteria.[96] Moreover, capitalism as well as socialism are based on theologically relevant assumptions about the urges of selfishness and community in human nature. In part, these assumptions may be corroborated by empirical reality but the inverse relationship may be more common, that the anthropological assumptions limit the field of vision.[97] The most significant issue of debate may, however, be the following: Is it desirable and possible to change the economic laws of capitalism? There is no denial that the Tanzanian socialism violates capitalist rationality. If one assumes that capitalism is the only rational mode of production or if one assumes that it is basically satisfactory, any experiment which defies

its economic laws must be regarded as a waste of resources. By contrast, those who regard capitalism as unjust and as transient will naturally have more positive attitudes to such experiments.

This conclusion brings us to the second point, the evaluation of Ujamaa by those who are searching for an alternative to capitalism, specifically the advocates of liberation theology. In spite of its liabilities, Ujamaa represents a significant contribution to the process of liberation, because of its insistence on socioeconomic *cum* cultural emancipation in an African context. Among the liabilities, we have paid special attention to the principle of consensualism in view of the discussion about the conflictual analysis of liberation theology. As we have noted, some scholars argue that the lack of democracy, rather than the lack of incentive, has stifled Tanzanian development.[98] One example may clarify the importance of democracy in economic development. Analysts have noted that the costly industrialization programme of the 1970s represented a significant departure from the egalitarian and rural orientation advocated in the Arusha Declaration. In fact, it seems that the industrialization policy was a major cause of the economic difficulties in Tanzania in the 1980s.[99] Interestingly, the remedies for the crisis prescribed by economists of different political convictions have important similarities to the emphasis on "self-reliance," rural development, and peasant agriculture in the Arusha Declaration. Thus, one may ask, Why was the policy of self-reliance abandoned in the 1970s? It is a remarkable fact that this fundamental break with the Arusha Declaration took place without a thorough public debate—in a spirit of unanimity, one may say. The industrialization policy was legitimized by the dependency theory and it was argued that this policy was the main road to self-reliance.[100] A class analysis may have clarified that the priorities of peasant agriculture and of high-cost, import-dependent industries represented different class interests.

What we want to say is that a conflictual analysis may be necessary to articulate the voice of the underprivileged. Analyzing the role of Ujamaa in social conflicts, one must, therefore, distinguish between the international and the domestic levels. While Ujamaa represents a voice "from below" on the international level, it has in the national context served as an ideology of unanimity which obviously has concealed social contradictions and thereby appear to have legitimized, at least in part, the position of the dominant classes.

Chapter 2

Community Versus Selfishness

Having accounted for the context of Ujamaa, we must now analyze the theological reflection done in this context. In this analysis three concepts will serve as foci of interest: God, humanity, and the church, with the quest for community as the guiding principle. These three concepts have been chosen not only with regard to their central place in Tanzanian theology but also as means of clarifying the relationship between faith in God and humanist commitment in Ujamaa theology.[1]

To clarify the difference between the liberationist paradigm as represented by Ujamaa theology and the established theology, we will use the concept of holistic theology, which denotes a theory according to which *the whole of Christian vocation cannot be reduced without residue to its parts.* While both liberation and established theologies may be concerned with questions related to faith in God, human liberation, economic justice, and epistemology, the relationship between these themes will be different in the two cases. The holism of liberation theology implies that the four issues cannot be separated as four discrete elements but must be analyzed in relationship to each other. Consequently, we shall study whether Ujamaa theology can be understood as a holistic theology.

The term *Ujamaa theology* does not, however, imply a theology in the sense of a European, established theology with a defined corpus of doctrines, as e.g., Barthian theology. Distinguishing between the popular, and the academic levels of African theology, one might say that Ujamaa theology is somewhere in-between these two levels. Drawing from sources formulated on different levels of intellectual sophistication, our reconstruction of this theology will necessarily harmonize differences existing between individual theologians. Only on a few occasions will we analyze differences between different types of theology in the context of Ujamaa.

Among the academic theologians, the nestor is Charles Nyamiti, one of the founding members of EATWOT and widely known for different books and articles about African theology. He takes Ujamaa into account without necessarily dealing with the issues of Ujamaa.[2] In this respect he differs from Laurenti Magesa, who explicitly advocates the methodology of liberation theology.[3]

On the pastoral level the Catholic bishop of the Rulenge Diocese, Christopher Mwoleka, should be mentioned. Moreover, there has been a broad discussion on church and Ujamaa in the Catholic papers *Pastoral*

Orientation Service and *Mbiu ya Chauta*, while *Africa Theological Journal*, published by the Lutheran Theological College in Makumira, has been a forum for academic reflection.

Finally, Julius Nyerere's writings are of relevance in an analysis of theology in the context of Ujamaa, not only as sources for understanding the political thinking in Tanzania but also from a theological point of view. Some readers may find it remarkable that a politician is given a place of prominence in a theological study. Three arguments may justify such a priority, however. First, the theological relevance of Nyerere's writings is widely recognized, as seen in the fact that he is represented in theological anthologies as Parratt (ed.), *A Reader in African Christian Theology* and Shorter (ed.), *African Christian Spirituality*. Moreover, in the international context quite a few liberation theologians have referred to Nyerere's work as theologically relevant, as noted above. Second, similarly as quite a few other African leaders Nyerere welds together spiritual and political authority. In this context it may be recalled that Ujamaa transcends Western political categories. Even though, as a political leader in a religiously pluralistic country, Nyerere does not take up specific Christian issues, his opinion on the question of church and society reveals an affinity with liberation theology. Third, the importance given Nyerere is also justified because of his role in Tanzanian theology. In fact, Tanzanian theologians have affirmed that Nyerere's words "are taken from our own mouths."[5]

God as Community

An "African" Critique of "Western" Dualism

Is there any substantial difference between the understanding of God in African and Western theology? Many African theologians would answer in the affirmative in reference to the holistic and community-oriented dimension of their perception of God. In fact, it has been a fundamental notion in the self-understanding of African theology that there is an "African" world view which is characterized as predominantly religious, holistic, anthropocentric, community-oriented and "this-worldly." Mbiti's account is a classic example of this position:

> Because traditional religions permeate all the departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds and

harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament. Although many African languages do not have a word for religion as such, it nevertheless accompanies the individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death. Through modern change these traditional religions cannot remain intact, but they are by no means extinct.[6]

Such a holistic approach is central both in the philosophy of Ujamaa and in its theological counterpart. The interaction between the sacred and the secular is, however, defined in different ways by different representatives of Ujamaa. When Nyerere affirms that "socialism is secular," he distinguishes between socialist and religious issues, his holistic perspective notwithstanding, and we will later study the consequences such a position has for church and state.[7]

Here we shall deal with two theologians, Nyamiti and Mwoleka, who claim that Ujamaa needs to be enriched by a reflection on God. The communal values in the pre-colonial society, they suggest, were fostered as expressions of spirituality — theologically speaking, created by God — and, more importantly, these values should be oriented toward God in order to be preserved and renewed. On the basis of a holistic theology, Mwoleka criticizes "the demon of dualism."[8] This phrase refers to dichotomies which have played a central part in Western theology, according to Mwoleka, thus dividing human life into sections of

— body and soul

— material and supernatural (grace)

— human and divine

— earthly and heavenly

— created and redeemed

— secular and religious

— profane and sacred.[9]

It should be noted that the discussion with First World theology is not about the importance of the two opposite poles of the dichotomies but about the nature of their relationship. The African theologians argue that there is an intrinsic relationship between the two poles which, they tend to argue, is denied in a dichotomic, "Western" theology. The juxtaposition of an "African" and a "Western" perspective does not suggest a total difference, however. The insistence on a holistic perspective and the rejection of a dichotomic theology is not viewed as a neologism but as an exposition of a classical theological position, which for one reason or another has been

neglected in recent Western theology. In reference to classical Catholic doctrine Mwoleka asserts that "the supernatural does not destroy but takes up and transforms nature."[10] Similarly, arguments from exegetical studies and, more rarely, from the Christian tradition are cited by Ujamaa theologians to substantiate the critique of "Western" dualism.

Participation and Community

The interrelation between the emphasis on community and a holistic view of reality is clearly seen in the discussion on "participation." As we all know, this concept has been of importance in the history of Western theology and it has, moreover, been central in recent ethical discussion in many parts of the world, not least in the ecumenical movement and in Latin American theology. However, in the Tanzanian context "participation" arguably has a distinctive character because of the influence of the Ujamaa philosophy. In fact, notwithstanding the complexity of this philosophy, one may argue for "participation" as the key concept of Ujamaa from a theological point of view. Central to Ujamaa is the *imani* that each human being is a part of the whole and therefore has the right to participate (*kushiriki*) in political life on equal footing with other citizens.[11]

It is hardly surprising that the community aspect of Ujamaa has been of specific interest to Tanzanian theologians. Charles Nyamiti, for one, bases his exposition of "God as communion and sharing" on an analysis of "participation" and distinguishes between the more individualistic Western interpretation of participation and the African emphasis on "communion."

It is a well-known fact that "participation" comes from the Latin *pars* and *capere*, which imply sharing or taking part in some reality.[12] Referring to this etymology, Nyamiti discusses briefly the term in relation to Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and more recent European thinking. He finds some similarities between African thought and the Western reflection on the problem of how finite beings participate in God. In modern times these similarities have been strengthened by personalistic and existentialist philosophies which are said to "have brought the Western understanding even closer to the African conception," since both try to overcome the dichotomy between the individual and society.[13] As an example of these similarities Nyamiti quotes a Western philosopher:

> What is proper to participation is to make me discover an act which appears to me at the same time as mine and not mine, as universal and personal.... Instead of saying that we are part of the world, we ought to say that we participate in the operation whereby the world is in perpetual self-accomplishment.[14]

Nyamiti is especially interested in the relation between "the Thomistic and African ways of understanding participation." A major difference is found in their epistemologies. "The African conception is derived mainly from *experience*, whereas the Thomist's is more the result of *philosophical reflection*."[15] The latter approach is characterized as rational and individualistic, concerned mainly with the nature of participation, "as it is in itself." The African idea of participation, on the other hand, "is more interconnected with other elements by a sort of organic symbiosis, with a close association between participation and the other elements of cosmic reality."[16] Participation is seen as "a uniting factor" where "the emphasis is not on sharing a part of a certain whole but on communion."[17]

> To participate is not firstly *to appropriate to oneself a part* of a whole, but rather to *belong to that whole*, to make with it a certain totality of communion. This can be seen from the etymology of some Bantu equivalents of participation: for example, in Swahili the verb "to participate" is *kushiriki*, which means "to have communion with," as is shown by its derivative *shirika*, community or congregation.[18]

The discussion of differences between the Thomistic and the African conception of participation does not end with a recommendation of either of them but in a conciliatory conclusion which is rather characteristic of what Nyamiti calls the African approach. "The consequence is that both approaches need one another: they are not contradictory but complementary."[19] In particular, the Thomist may be tempted to "reduce all the aspects of participation to the rational and objective levels" if he neglects the other approach.[20] On the other hand, the traditional African lacked "scientific and critical method" which often made his understanding "vague and confused," Nyamiti suggests.[21]

Undeniably, the distinction between "African" and "Western" theology is problematic. It may be used to idealize the African identity, as we have seen. In fact, quite a few critics suggest that it is too crude to be of intellectual value. On the other hand, it could be argued, that the distinction, in spite of its obvious liabilities, is of heuristic significance in a tentative elaboration of African identity.

Anthropocentrism and Theocentrism

African traditional religion and African theology have often been criticized as too "materialistic" and "this-worldly." The African approach, critics argue, is anthropocentric, not theocentric. Religion is reduced to a means to material ends. Is such a critique theologically valid? In Nyamiti's theology there seems to be two different answers, one corresponding to the new

paradigm and the other more in accordance with established positions. Postponing a discussion of the latter answer, we shall now deal with his defence of anthropocentrism as a theological category:

> African Christian theism should be *anthropocentric*, and should have as one of its main preoccupations the showing of the relevance of God to the material and spiritual well-being of humanity. It will avoid any speculation that is irrelevant to the problems of human life and salvation. But this implies it also has to be *theocentric*, since God is relevant to man only because man is made for God. It will not be a theology that is purely functional.[22]

Even though Nyamiti does not regard theocentrism and anthropocentrism as mutually exclusive options, neither does he see them as synonyms. Rather one could say that the two concepts relate to two emphases which are both needed in theology and which clarify each other. From this perspective it is impossible to conceive a life without the sacred, since "for the African the sacred is identical with power, and, in the last analysis, with reality or being."[23] The search for God is consequently the search for one's own welfare and the quest for God is the quest for true humanity. Such a theocentric approach implies

> a theology presenting God as the ultimate link of human and cosmic solidarity. Creatures are united with each other, not only because they have the same Creator, in whose life and power they share, but because they have God as their goal. All creatures are meant to work and cooperate together to reach this final goal.[24]

The "African" conception of participation is characterized as both theocentric and anthropocentric. The theocentric concern is substantiated by the assertion that "participation is closely linked with the sacred — the supernatural"; the anthropocentric concern is explained with reference to the notion that the African "wants to share in cosmic and sacred forces," because community is the only way to life and power.[25] Hence "the African approach ... is more centred on people: not as individuals but as living and sharing life and sacred power with the living and the dead, and with the cosmos."[26] In African traditional religion "the African approaches God, not primarily for God's own sake, but rather because he gives good things to men.''[27] Naturally, Nyamiti does not want to endorse this traditional stance unreservedly, since "this attitude is ambivalent and can lead to a narrow understanding of God."[28] In explicit critique of such one-sidedness, the incarnation is presented as a mediation between anthropocentrism and theocentrism.

> The right approach is an integration of what is valid in anthropocentrism and theocentrism. Such a union is typified by the union of the human and the divine in Christ. God and man are not opposed: God is for us, because we cannot realise the fullness of our humanity outside of him. Christ is Emmanuel, God with us. In him, the dangers of anthropocentrism are avoided, and we can see the need for the knowledge of God as he is in himself, and for the love of God for his own sake. A stress on the importance of contemplative life as a means to divine union will also help to avoid the 'this-worldliness' of African religions.[29]

However, in spite of its one-sidedness Nyamiti finds in the traditional attitude an insight which is "basically correct": "Man is made for God, and rightly seeks God as the One in whom fulfillment is attained. African theology has the task of showing the meaning of God for human welfare."[30]

In short, Nyamiti refuses a *Fragestellung* in which anthropocentrism and theocentrism are understood as two mutually exclusive options, representing two different answers to the question: Who should be placed in the center, God or his creature? In his view, anthropocentrism and theocentrism do not denote two alternatives but two sides of the same faith.

Nyamiti's discussion of God and humanity is, to our understanding, fundamental for understanding Ujamaa theology as a whole. Also in Nyerere's thought we can see the same interrelation between commitment to God and humanism, even though his wordings naturally enough are less elaborate from a theological point of view. Also for Nyerere, the main crossroad is not between theocentrism and anthropocentrism but between a humanism, which for him personally is grounded in Christian faith, and an idolatry that uses human beings as means to reach other ends. The question how to strike a proper balance between the concern for God and the concern for humanity—a central issue in a dichotomic theology—is obviously irrelevant in this conception. The main choice for Nyerere is between the idols, "those who represent mammon" on one side, and God and humanity on the other. Therefore, he calls on the church to "reject alliances with those who represent mammon and [to] co-operate with all those who are working for man."[31] Consequently, the gross economic injustice is not only analyzed as a problem concerning human dignity but also as a theological problem. Referring to the classical anthropological theme of *imago Dei*, Nyerere maintains that God is degraded when human beings are degraded.

> The present condition of men must be unacceptable to all who think of an individual person as a unique creation of a living God. We say man was created in the image of God. I refuse to imagine a God who is poor, ignorant, superstitious, fearful, oppressed, wretched—which is the lot of the majority of those He created in his own image.[32]

The interrelation between faith in God and humanist commitment is often explicated with reference to Ireneus' dictum: *Gloria Deo, vivens homo* (The glory of God is a human person fully alive), both in Ujamaa theology and in other varieties of the new paradigm.[33] The intrinsic relationship between theocentrism and anthropocentrism is elaborated in the reflection on the Trinity "as the source and exemplar of all solidarity, totality, and participation in creation."[34]

Trinity as a Model for Human Life in Community

The doctrine of the Trinity in Ujamaa theology is interpreted within the framework of a fundamental contradiction between selfishness and community. The triune God is understood as a community, calling humanity to denounce selfishness and to "live the Trinity."[35] Hence, the doctrine has fundamental socioeconomic and political implications, as Mwoleka explains:

> I am dedicated to the ideal of Ujamaa because it invites all men, in a down to earth practical way, to imitate the life of the Trinity which is a life of sharing. The three Divine Persons share everything in such a way that they are not three gods but only one. And Christ's wish is: "That they (His followers) may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me may they be so completely one...."[36]

The quotation bears out that "sharing" is the uniting bond between the Trinity and Ujamaa in Mwoleka's theology. When the three persons of the divinity can be called both *three* and *one*, it is due to their sharing, "each subsisting in the other."[37] Similarly, Nyamiti advocates "a trinitarian approach to God's mystery," emphasizing solidarity, totality, and participation.[38]

> In the Trinity, participation implies the communication of the one single divine life and power among the three Persons. This in no way implies having a *part* of the divine life or power, the Father shares his *entire being* with the Son and the Spirit. Hence the African sense of participation is closer to the truth than is the Western "pars capere," to have a part.... It is a question of having communion in the same divine life shared equally and totally among the divine Persons who are, as a consequence, one and identical in life, nature and power.[39]

Since the interrelation between the three persons in the Trinity is a sharing of the "entire being," Nyamiti thinks that with regard to the Trinity, "communions and communication" are better terms than "participation."[40] This "communitarian" understanding of God has fundamental bearing on

the understanding of the creation—and consequently for anthropology—since God is the "ultimate source, exemplar, and goal for creatures."[41] Therefore, life in community is a vocation for all creatures. When speaking about "creatures" Nyamiti widens the scope to deal not only with God and humanity but includes the whole of creation in this plea for community, even though the main focus remains on the importance of the Trinity for interpersonal relations.[42]

Imitation is an expression often used to describe the vocation of humanity with regard to the Trinity and an expression of critique against intellectualism.

> I think we have difficulties in understanding the Holy Trinity because we approach the mystery from the wrong side. The intellectual side is not the best to start with. We try to get hold of the wrong end of the stick, and it never works. The right approach to the mystery is to imitate the Trinity…. God does not reveal Himself to us for the sake of speculation. He is not giving us a riddle to solve. He is offering us Life. He is telling us: "This is what it means to live, now begin to live as I do." What is the only reason why God revealed this mystery to us if it is not to stress that life is not life at all unless it is shared? If we would once begin to share life in all its aspects, we would soon understand what the Trinity is all about and rejoice.[43]

Hence Mwoleka does not want to speak about the Trinity as a kind of intellectual exercise nor in abstract ideas but in "concrete facts of our human earthly life," which means to "present the Life of the Trinity as shared and lived by us Christians here and now ."[44] In short, Christianity must be presented as "participation in the life of the Trinity."[45]

The Trinitarian community with its pattern of sharing is seen as a model for all authentic human life, also in political and economic matters. Significantly, the Trinity is viewed as "the model of African Socialism."[46] In particular, Mwoleka has repeatedly argued for the Trinity as a model for the community of the Ujamaa villages. This emphasis on community in Ujamaa theology will be labeled "communitarian," to emphasize the interrelation between spiritual community and socioeconomic structures.[47]

Undeniably, such a socioeconomic interpretation of the Trinity is not very common in the First World churches but it has a clear affinity with a common stance in the Orthodox church in Europe. In fact, a leading Orthodox theologian affirms: "Our social programme is the dogma of the Trinity,"[48] explaining this challenging thesis as follows:

> Man, so the Bible teaches, is made in the image of God, and to Christians God means the Trinity: thus it is only in the light of the dogma of the Trinity that man can understand who he is and what

God intends him to be. Our private lives, our personal relations, and all our plans of forming a Christian society depend upon a right theology of the Trinity.[49]

Notwithstanding the obvious differences between Orthodox and African theologies, the quotation may substantiate similarities between theologies which do not fit into Western paradigms.[50]

God and the Experience of the Poor

Having established the central role of holism and community in the concept of God advocated by Ujamaa theology, we must ask, How does the "African" concern for wholeness relate to the option for the poor as interlocutors of theology? Since the texts are fragmentary we shall not attempt to give a comprehensive answer to the question but limit the discussion to the academically most articulate theologian, Charles Nyamiti. In his treatise on the concept of God in an African context there is an extensive discussion on liberation in reference to the new paradigm as presented by the founding meeting of EATWOT.[51]

In Nyamiti's exposition there is an explicit parallel between the concept of God and politics. The triune God is presented as a model of African socialism, since in God there is "perfect harmony, equality of persons, solidarity through unlimited sharing of life, and participation."[52] On the basis of this theology Nyamiti advocates a society based on dialogue and mutuality without economic, sexist, or racial oppression.[53] Generally, there is a strong egalitarian ethos in his writings where the commitment to liberation and the common good are central issues.

The quest for "perfect harmony" *hinc et nunc* may, however, vitiate the option for the poor. In fact, Nyamiti is clearly opposed to conflictual analysis; the ideal is a "peaceful struggle for development," a paradox which expresses the dual commitment to social justice and consensualism.[54] The possibility of a conflict between a perspective "from above" and "from below" in the Tanzanian context is not contemplated in this theology. Similarly, there is no discussion of the ambiguity of the consensualism of Ujamaa, even though it is documented by social scientists.[55]

The theological implications of this lacuna are apparent in Nyamiti's exposition on liberation theology where he discusses concepts of God based on the experience of the oppressed.[56] Even though he endorses many aspects of such concepts of God, he has great difficulties with a theology "from below." In fact, Nyamiti recurs to a dichotomic conception in his critique of conflictual analysis, in spite of the prominence of wholeness in his theology.[57]

If one compares Nyamiti's position with the EATWOT process in which he has participated, two comments are justified. First, the interpretation of

God in terms of wholeness and community corresponds with the experience of the poor as interpreted in the new paradigm. Second, there seems to be a tension between the epistemological privilege of the poor and the search for unanimity and consensus in Ujamaa theology.

Humankind as Community

In the analysis of Ujamaa anthropology, which is basically the same in the Tanzanian theology and philosophy, the focus will be on Nyerere's writings, since the humanist "values" of Ujamaa are more elaborated in the "political texts."

"The Purpose is Man"

"The purpose is Man" Nyerere boldly asserts in an important essay, where he explains "the philosophy of the Arusha Declaration."[58] This is another expression of the anthropocentrism with which we dealt above. Similar declarations recur in Nyerere's writings. "What is a socialist society? What should we look for when trying to determine whether a particular society is socialist?"[59] he asks in another essay. The answer to these questions is emphatic. "First, and most central of all, is that under socialism Man is the purpose of all social activity. The service of man, the furtherance of his human development, is in fact the purpose of society itself."[60]

From a theological point of view the *Fragestellung* is of fundamental importance, since the strong assertion of "Man's central position in socialism" is not formulated in opposition to a religious faith in God. Characteristically, the above quotation continues: "There is no other purpose above this; no glorification of 'nation,' no increase in production—nothing is more central to a socialist society than an acceptance that Man is its justification for existence."[61]

The humanistic concern of the philosophy of Ujamaa is not a critique of theocentrism but of such social systems whose national glory and economic profit are deemed more important than the welfare of human beings. Similarly, when Nyerere calls the Arusha Declaration "Man-centered," he makes the following statement:

> Inherent in the Arusha Declaration, therefore, is a rejection of the concept of national grandeur as distinct from the well-being of its citizens, and a rejection too of material wealth for its own sake. It is a commitment to the belief that there are more important things in life than the amassing of riches, and that if the pursuit of wealth

clashes with things like human dignity and social equality, then the latter will be given priority.[62]

Ujamaa anthropocentrism will be called transcendental in order to emphasize that Tanzanian humanism is compatible with theocentrism.[63] Obviously, what is at stake in the "concentration upon Man" is not a denial of theocentrism—even though the new paradigm not rarely is interpreted in such categories by critics—but a denial of ideologies that sacrifice human dignity on the altar of idols. In other words, the emphasis on human dignity is compatible with the search for union with God. "Concentration upon Man" clearly involves a concern for the spiritual as well as the material welfare of humankind. Consequently, "concentration upon Man" is also presented as a distinctive characteristic of the vocation of the church.

> The purpose of development is man. It is the creation of conditions, both material and spiritual, which enables man the individual, and man the species, to become his best. That is easy for Christians to understand because Christianity demands that every man should aspire towards union with God through Christ.[64]

It should therefore be clear that the alternatives in Nyerere's humanism are not anthropocentrism or theocentrism but "concentration upon man" or an economistic idolatry, that makes development identical to the building of new factories, increased output, or greater national income statistics.[65]

In the spirit of the same humanism, Magesa pleads for an "African spirituality" which is based on a "total commitment to the will of God"—corresponding to what Nyamiti calls theocentrism—and at the same time deeply concerned about the material and spiritual well-being of one's neighbours. "Our action in the world must lead us to prayer, and prayer and contemplation must be sources of encouragement to act continually for human liberation."[66]

It should be noted, however, that there are differences between the Christian Ujamaa theology and the philosophy of Ujamaa, since the former is related to an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, while the latter is not related to any religion. Consequently, when the philosophy of Ujamaa here is called transcendental, it does not mean that Ujamaa necessarily implies faith in God but that it is open to such a faith. Hence, there is no obligation for Tanzanian politicians to hold a certain conviction in religious questions. When some Ujamaa theologians claim that Ujamaa builds on faith in God, this is an expression of their theological interpretation of the roots of human solidarity and not an account of the official self-understanding of Ujamaa.

In other words, the main point of the political philosophy of Ujamaa in matters of faith is to create space for religious convictions but not to

prescribe a certain religious conviction, with the important exception that a spirituality in the Ujamaa context must be humanistic.

Equality and Religion

While "Man is the purpose" is the most central of the values which shape socialist institutions and organizations, according to Nyerere, equality is given the second place. In fact, there is a close interrelation between these two values in Ujamaa. "Man" is interpreted in reference to "all human beings," in spite of its sexist ring.[67]

In other words, "Man is the purpose" and the demand for equality are the "two basic characteristics of a socialist society," serving as a basis for other principles such as human dignity, democracy, critique of exploitation, or the demand for popular control of the production.[68] Equality, however, is not only a socialist but also a religious value in the context of Ujamaa. Nyerere can even claim: "The human equality before God which is the basis of all the great religions of the world is also the basis of the political philosophy of socialism."[69]

The quotation is significant for two reasons. First, it is extraordinary that Nyerere describes "the human equality before God" as the basis of socialism, even though such assertions recur in other theological texts. Second, the quotation bears out the central place of an egalitarian ethos in Nyerere's conception of religion. Naturally, this egalitarian interpretation of the Tanzanian religions is of importance in order to understand the interrelation between Ujamaa and religious faith. In this context one should not forget the Muslim contribution to Ujamaa which sometimes is overlooked in Western studies. It is important to remember that African (as distinguished from Arabic) Islam in Tanzania has been shaped by the sufi fraternities with their strong egalitarian ethics. The Ujamaa emphasis on equality may, in part, be explained in reference to Muslim influence. This point is convincingly argued by Westerlund who asserts that "Islamic socialism should be regarded as one of the sources of inspiration for Ujamaa," because of its stress on equality and brotherhood as religiously motivated ideals.[70]

Undeniably, the Muslim fraternities have contributed to the formation of the concept of *ndugu* (sibling) which, in the political language of Tanzania, has a meaning similar to that of "comrade" in European socialism and is used to emphasize human equality. Literally, "*ndugu*" means: (1) sibling, (2) children from the same extended family or clan, (3) a great friend, (4) a person who joins in *kushiriki* in religious or political matters. Hence *udugu*, the abstract noun of *ndugu*, and Ujamaa are virtually synonymous.[71]

There are certainly also elements of the Christian tradition that have contributed to the emphasis on equality in Ujamaa. The social teaching of the Catholic church has been interpreted in different ways but it is obvious

that a radical interpretation of this teaching has been formative for Nyerere.[72] Hence he refers to *Populorum Progressio* to explain his own stance, quoting the papal plea for justice and for "the human and spiritual progress of all men, and therefore the common good of humanity."[73] This interpretation of the Christian faith, which will be analyzed in greater detail later, has obviously been of importance to Nyerere when he claims that "human equality before God" is the basis of Christianity and other religions. The Christian revival movement with its emphasis on *udugu* could be mentioned as another source of the egalitarian ethics of Ujamaa, as well as the pre-colonial culture and religion.

Two comments are justified on the basis of these observations on religion and equality in the Ujamaa setting. First, even though the philosophy of Ujamaa is clearly religiously inspired, no single religion is its source in an exclusive sense. This fact presents a problem. On the one hand, the spiritual motivation is obviously central for many proponents of Ujamaa. On the other hand, a political leader publicly confessing to his or her religious conviction could be offensive to people of other faiths. This accounts for the fact that Nyerere always has avoided to speak about Christian faith in ways that could be discriminatory of adherents of other religions.[74]

Second, Tanzanian socialism is secular and therefore faith in God is no part of the official Ujamaa thought as represented by the political party of Tanzania. Yet, it is obvious that for many of its members, not least for many of its articulate interpreters, the equality of *udugu* has been inspired by a religious vision where humankind is seen as a flock of siblings under God.[75]

A Germinal Epistemology of Participation

Nyerere is widely called *Mwalimu*, referring not only to his original profession but also to his role as a politician. What does it mean to be "*mwalimu*"? The kiswahili word has an Arabic root and was introduced by the Arabs to denote a teacher within the Muslim system of education. Hence the term has had a clear religious connotation and is an amalgamation of political and moral-religious authority.[76] During the German period *walimu* (the plural of *mwalimu*) represented a radicalism expressed in Islam. "The Germans regarded the *walimu* as potential leaders of revolt. It is likely that some of them were involved in the great Maji Maji rebellion."[77] So the term also has a ring of the struggle for liberation.

As a political leader Nyerere has discussed pedagogical issues within the framework of cultural and economic liberation. In fact, many of Nyerere's most important writings on anthropology deal with education, such as "The Role of Universities" (1966), "Education for Self-Reliance" (1967), "The Intellectual Needs Society" (1968) and "Relevance and Dar es Salaam University" (1970).

In these writings Nyerere also deals with theoretical issues, advocating what could be called a germinal epistemology of participation, similar to the *epistemologica ruptura* advocated by EATWOT. A main concern in Nyerere's pedagogics is the egalitarian relationship between intellectuals and "the rest of the community," as is evident from his essay with the programmatic title "The Intellectual Needs Society."

> We have to be part of the society which we are changing; we have to work from within it, and not try to descend like ancient gods, do something, and disappear again. A country, or a village, or a community, cannot be developed; it can only develop itself. For real development means the development, the growth, of people.... In order to do this the educated people of Africa have to identify themselves with the uneducated, and do so without reservation.[78]

The assertion that "the intellectual needs society" is based on a community-oriented anthropology in which the interdependence between different professional groups is stressed.

> We are all members of one another. Educated and uneducated are all citizens of one nation, one continent, and one world. Our future is inextricably linked, and intellectuals above all are dependent upon the society of which they are members.[79]

Two notions in this germinal epistemology are of relevance in an analysis of the new theological paradigm. First, knowledge is analyzed in relation to society, not to the individual knowledge-seeking agent. Participation is also an epistemological principle, since "life is a single whole, and ... knowledge is not gained if we hug it to ourselves like a prized personal possession."[80] Second, Nyerere advocates a holistic view of knowledge and claims that "no aspect of knowledge is unrelated to the others; past and present are fused, and the different academic disciplines are but segments of one whole."[81]

The profile of Nyerere's pedagogical philosophy may be clarified by a comparison to the Western tradition of education and to Marxism-Leninism. In his writings, Western individualism is juxtaposed to the concept of *kushiriki*. In "The Role of the Universities" he argues for commitment to the welfare of the whole community as a necessary dimension of academic training in a developing society. Students, he suggests, should regard themselves as "servants-in-training." The notion of intellectual servanthood can be explained with reference to the anthropology of Ujamaa which affirms that to be human means to live within a community. Hence also academic education, according to Nyerere, must aim at a situation where

> the whole atmosphere of the university is one of giving service, and expecting service from all its members and students.... And

this must not be the idea of giving 'aid to the poor.' That arrogance has no place in Tanzania at any rate. It must be an attitude of wanting to work, in whatever work there is to do, alongside and within the rest of the community, until finally there is no more distinction between a graduate and an illiterate than there is between a man who works as a carpenter and his fellow who works as a brickmaker. Graduates and illiterates would then accept their tasks as distinctive, and as making different demands on them, but as being in both cases but a part of a single whole.[82]

Western education of the colonial era, Nyerere maintains, perpetrated false values, which led to an "intellectual arrogance."[83] As an alternative to the values of colonial education Nyerere points to "the National ethic" where three principles are emphasized: "equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts; work by everyone and exploitation by none."[84]

Our educational system ... has to foster the social goals of living together, and working together, for the common good.... Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community, and help the pupils to accept the values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past.[85]

Even though Nyerere never has devoted an essay exclusively to epistemological issues, some salient features in his philosophy are yet apparent. One distinctive feature is the assertion that there is an interrelation between the search for truth and servanthood. It seems reasonable to interpret Nyerere within the framework of an epistemological rupture where ethics and epistemology are interrelated. Participation is conceived of not only as the way to a human life but also as the way to knowledge.

Obviously, the participatory epistemology has some similarities with the "partisanship" of Marxist-Leninist epistemology with its emphasis on involvement but the differences may be of greater importance. Even though this issue is not explicitly dealt with in the pedagogical writings, one can infer from Nyerere's critique of scientific socialism and from his plea for equality that there are substantial differences between the two varieties of socialist epistemology.

In Marxism-Leninism, it is the task of the intellectual to enlighten the people who cannot understand reality without the education of the political élite. The social differentiation between the intellectuals and the people corresponds to a party structure, that admits the élite only, and to an epistemology where the supremacy of abstract knowledge is emphasized. This line of thought is obviously different from the participatory ethos of Ujamaa where it repeatedly is stressed that the intellectuals must be willing

to learn from people who do not have theoretical education.[86] When Nyerere insists that people cannot be developed but must develop themselves, this may be understood as an implicit critique of the Leninist conception.[87]

The Common Good as Criterion

Theologically, the Ujamaa anthropocentrism may be summarized in the principle of the common good, which is well-known from Catholic social teaching.[88] The aim of Ujamaa, Nyerere insists, is "to create a society in which all citizens work together in freedom, dignity, and equality, for their common good."[89] The continuous theological debate on what is the common good reveals, however, that this principle is not unambiguous. Two interrelated points are emphasized in the Tanzanian interpretation.

First, in the definition of personal rights and duties, which is intrinsic to any interpretation of the common good, a human being is understood as a social being, rather than an individual. In his address to the Maryknoll sisters, Nyerere declares:

> Man lives in society. He becomes meaningful to himself and his fellows only as a member of that society. Therefore, to talk of the development of man, and to work for the development of man, must mean the development also of that kind of society which serves man, which enhances his well-being, and preserves his dignity.[90]

While the common good is sometimes defined in Catholic tradition in a way that emphasizes individual rights as the right to private property, the Ujamaa interpretation stresses the human interdependence. In contradistinction to individualism with its emphasis on the political and economic independence of the individual, the notion of *kushiriki* implies sharing both as a right and as a duty. Actually, in the perspective of *kushiriki* it is hardly possible to separate individualism and selfishness: to refuse to participate is understood as a kind of selfishness.

Second, the option for the common good is in the context of Ujamaa defined not only as matter of personal attitudes or deliberate ethical decisions but also as an option for certain socioeconomic structures. Since "men are shaped by the circumstances in which they live," the structural analysis is intrinsic to the search for the common good.[91] "Kindness is not enough; piety is not enough; and charity is not enough."[92] In fact, Nyerere's main criticism of the church is that it has neglected the structural dimension in its service of the poor.

> The representatives of the Church, and the Church's organizations, frequently act as if man's development is a personal and 'internal'

matter, which can be divorced from the society and the economy in which he lives and earns his daily bread. They preach resignation; very often they appear to accept as immutable the social, economic and political framework of the present-day world. They seek to ameliorate intolerable conditions through acts of love and of kindness where the beneficiary of this love and kindness remains an 'object'. But when the victims of poverty and oppression begin to behave like men and try to change those conditions, the representatives of the Church stand aside.[93]

Consequently, Nyerere's message to the Maryknoll Sisters—and to the First World Christians—is that the church should "participate actively in the rebellion against those social structures and economic organizations which condemn men to poverty, humiliation, and degradation.... The poor and the oppressed should come to you not for alms, but for support against injustice."[94] Yet, it is acknowledged that in recent theology, there is a greater awareness about the structural dimension of poverty. The structural concept of peace in the *Populorum Progressio* is quoted with consent:

> To wage war on misery and to struggle against injustice is to promote, along with improved conditions, the human and spiritual progress of all men, and therefore *the common good of humanity*. Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever-precarious balance of forces. No, peace, is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men.[95]

The present economic system is evaluated with the common good as criterion. In this assessment advocates of Ujamaa try to give a fair treatment of the achievements. "Under capitalism the greatest advances in technology and economic growth have been achieved," claims Nyerere.[96] It is also admitted that there were different problems in the pre-colonial societies. "Ignorance, poverty and disease characterized tribal history," says Magesa.[97] In spite of these nuances, which could be multiplied, there is a sharp critique of the dominant economic system. Three arguments recur in this critique.

First, profit is the purpose of capitalist economy, while, as we recall, Ujamaa affirms that "Man is the purpose." The profit-orientation of capitalist economy is cited as an explanation of the shocking inequalities of the present economic world order. In other words, capitalist economy is criticized in reference to its criterion of decision making, capital accumulation (as opposed to the satisfaction of basic human needs).

> The determining factor in all their decision-making is whether the activity will yield a monetary profit, or power, or prestige

to them as owners of the land or capital. The needs of mankind are secondary, if they are considered at all. There is 'no profit' in producing cheap houses, so they are not produced; there is 'no money' for schools and hospitals. But luxury apartments can be built and six-lane highways; for these things money can be found.[98]

The quotation bears out that the Ujamaa critique of capitalism differs from the critique by classical Marxism, where the ethical issue may be less dominant. For Nyerere, the present international economic structure is "a system based on greed and selfishness" and ruled by the "law of the jungle, in which the weak are always eaten by the strong."[99] This does not necessarily mean, however, that the economic decision makers deliberately opt for greed or "the law of the jungle" in Nyerere's eyes. Rather, it is "a result of the normal workings of the social and economic systems men have constructed for themselves."[100] The alternative to this system is to organize "society in such a manner that people live together and work together for their common good," which seems to be Nyerere's definition of socialism.[101]

Second, the capitalist system is conceived of as a concentration of economic power. The basic economic "decisions as to what goods shall be produced, and how they shall be produced, are made by a small number of people who have obtained control over land and capital."[102]

Third, colonialism and neo-colonialism has meant a cultural up-rooting which has created what Magesa calls "psychological wounds."[103] "If colonial rule committed sins and crimes in Africa, this was the gravest of them all: to destroy in the African that sole characteristic which links him most closely to his Creator — *Creativity*."[104] These psychological wounds from the period of colonial rule are not only described as historical facts but also as a reality which is still a formative factor in the African psyche.

> The Tanzanian was made to consider himself an inferior being. Psychologically he was, so to speak, permanently in trauma. He distrusted himself and lacked initiative. The truth was always the master's. The master was always right.
>   This situation is far from completely gone. Political independence alone does not bring self-confidence to a people to whom human dignity and self-respect have been denied for almost a century. More important is psychological independence and it takes a cultural evolution or revolution to make a people psychologically free.[105]

Possibly, the three arguments against capitalism may be summarized in the kiswahili saying: *Ubepari ni unyama* (capitalism is bestial). *Unyama* (bestiality) is here the opposite of *utu* (humanity). Differently put, the advocates of Ujamaa criticize capitalism in reference to humanistic criteria.

Ujamaa, we conclude, is intrinsically anthropocentric but not antitheistic. The emphasis on human liberation is accepted also in the theology done in the context of Ujamaa. In this theology, the main contradiction is not between theocentrism and anthropocentrism or between the sacred and the secular, but rather between Ujamaa and *ubinafsi* (selfishness). The critique of capitalism illustrates the combined theocentric and anthropocentric approach. In theo-logical terms, capitalism is criticized as a system where mammon, not God, is the ultimate concern. In terms of anthropology, it is argued that the system of capitalism neglects the common good of all human beings, because it has other priorities.

Church as Community

The Identity of the Church

What is the identity of the church in Ujamaa society, if the traditional dichotomy between the church and the world is rejected? This is a question that has been of great importance for all Christian denominations of Tanzania for the last two decades. The question may also be phrased in view of the relationship between salvation and human liberation. "What does it mean to be liberated by Christ in a context where the Christian Church is challenged to participate in promoting human life?"[106]

An opinion survey of 1966-1967, which had a nationwide coverage, indicated that many Tanzanian Christians were alien to an "African," holistic conception. In fact, the predominant position, both among Catholics and Protestants, was "that the Church should confine itself to religious matters only…. Temporal affairs by their nature do not fall within the concern of the Church, whose preoccupation is religious affairs."[107]

Similarly, a Lutheran church leader no less than ten years after *uhuru*, could say, "It is a fact that we badly need de-colonization of the Church."[108] An anecdote, which is "immensely popular" in East Africa,[109] may exemplify the paradox that dichotomic theology is quite influential in Africa, even though it is labeled "un-African":

> The missionary gathered a group of people around him and opened his Bible. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven," he pleaded with his African listeners. He then asked them to pray, telling them to bow their heads and shut their eyes. The Africans dutifully followed instructions, and the missionary earnestly prayed that the things of this earth would not prevent anyone from reaching the joys of heaven. When the prayer was over, and the Africans opened their eyes, they were alarmed to see that

their land had been stolen. "Never mind," said the missionary, "these earthly things are not really important," and he led them in singing, "This world is not my home."[110]

"The quest for new role clarification is still sought," claims Peter Kijanga in *Ujamaa and the Role of the Church in Tanzania*, two decades after *uhuru*.[111] The main thrust of his thesis is a critique of an ecclesiocentric theology.

> A place where religion may become an enemy of the Christian faith is when the Christian Church becomes preoccupied with its own institutional stability and with defining its precise position as a centre of power over against the rest of society.[112]

Obviously, this statement presupposes several controversial propositions. First, Kijanga insists that only a holistic theology is an appropriate expression of the Christian witness. Therefore, he wants to emphasize "the biblical vision of wholeness": "To speak of the theology in its religious sphere only is to limit the work of salvation of the whole man and in fact is to create dualism."[113]

Second, the missionary theology is characterized as a dichotomic theology. "Christianity as we have received it, appears to separate religious values from the so-called humanistic concerns."[114] In reference to the holistic interpretation of Christianity he criticizes severely the missionary theology.

> Christian theology presented a dualism to the Christian Church in an African society. Conversion, especially in the Protestant Church, meant also an acceptance of the view that life can be divided into two antagonistic realms. God is presented as the Father who is interested in and controlled the spiritual realm. Now society is looked at as an entity which is independent of God, and in fact, it is given an unlimited independence in a way that the Bible does not warrant. Such a dualism has left a permanent impression [on] many Christians that social responsibility in this world is not part of the spiritual realm.[115]

Third, paradoxically as it may sound, Kijanga argues that a more profound reflection on the traditional, pre-Christian heritage may contribute to an appreciation of the holistic character of Christianity. He is especially attracted by "the apparent absence of the separation of the sacred and the secular" in traditional religion.[116] In its search for a renewed holistic conception "the Christian Church may have to review the traditional African religions which hold the two together and thereby asserting the oneness of spiritual and humanistic concerns."[117] Specifically, the precolonial religions are of significance also in a Christian theology, since they stress the comprehensive character of faith in God.[118]

Fourth, the holistic conception is the starting-point for an analysis of the Christian ministry in Ujamaa.

> The Christian Church may recognize that though the values in Ujamaa philosophy are essentially humanistic, they are values which are embraced by Christian social concern and make a significant contribution toward goals in line with the Christian Church's social and spiritual objectives.[119]

As the quotation bears out, Kijanga acknowledges the secular character of Ujamaa, which will be discussed below, but claims that notwithstanding its secular humanism it is "embraced by Christian social concern." Hence Kijanga, for theological reasons, advocates a Christian participation in Ujamaa.

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss these four propositions but Kijanga's theologically reflected argumentation could be a caveat for those students who too quickly explain the Christian acceptance of Ujamaa anthropocentrism as mere opportunism or a capitulation to political forces. This does not say that Tanzanian theology has been prophetic and critical.

In the first generation of academic African theology there was a "theology of continuity," stressing the similarities between Christianity and precolonial religions. Similarly, Tanzanian theologians have stressed the affinity between the "African plausibility structure" as expressed in Ujamaa and Christian ethics.[120] Even though this may be true, we have also found that the ideal of consensualism is ambiguous. Although there is ample evidence of how the voices of industrial workers and peasants may be silenced in the name of unity, as noted above, this problem is virtually absent in Tanzanian theology. Laurenti Magesa is one of the few theologians who have discussed the prophetic ministry of the church in the Tanzanian context, warning against an idolization of Ujamaa. In spite of his positive assessment of African socialism, he emphasized its limitations in the heyday of Ujamaa.

> While commending the genuine effort which is being made by various governments in Africa to humanize unjust and oppressive political, social and economic structures, and while applauding this same effort as the work of the Spirit of Christ himself, one must at the same time sound a warning against the danger of making an idol of the new situation. African Socialism is not an end in itself; it is not the Kingdom. Well pursued it is at best an excellent way towards the partial realization of the Kingdom of God here on earth.[121]

Hence there is a dialectical structure in Magesa's account of the Christian vocation. It is important to participate in the struggle for liberation but at the same time there must be a "vigilance against turning this struggle

into an idol," since the gospel is "liberating any system (African Socialism included)."[122] The affirmation of the prophetic identity of the church is inspired not only by a theocentric concern but also by anthropocentrism in Magesa's view. For the welfare of the citizens, there is a need for a far more thorough critique of the political abuse of power, he repeatedly claims.

> [The Church] must take Ujamaa for what it is: a human reality which in the absence of mature criticism and correction, could easily be a tragedy and trample on the very man it claims to liberate.... The danger that is so real and under which some countries in Africa have succumbed is to use the name and appeal of African Socialism as a blanket cover for oppression and domestication of the people as bad in degree as that under any other system by those in power. As easily as anything else, African Socialism can [be] (and in some cases has been) turned into an instrument for political dictatorship, economic exploitation of the masses by the powers-that-be, and social indoctrination and domestication.[123]

Yet, it must be stressed that Magesa is not very representative in his insistence on the limitations and dangers of any policy, including Ujamaa. With the exception of the problem of corruption, the churches have been rather cautious in their prophetic ministry.[124] Also in Magesa's writings one looks in vain for a social analysis which could serve as a basis for a prophetic ministry, analyzing, for example, the socioeconomic conflicts on the village level. In Tanzanian theology, such an analysis is still wanting. While this theology reflects the experience of the underprivileged in a global context, it has, by and large, failed to express the grievances of the poorest of the poor and their experience of power abuse within the Tanzanian system.[125]

Small Christian Communities

Naturally, in a theology concerned about participation (*kushiriki*), the community in the parish (*ushirika*, *shirika*) will be of basic importance. The common root of *kushiriki* and *ushirika* indicates the focus of ecclesiological reflection, the church as local communities. As is well known, such Christian communities are found in different countries with names such as "Basic Christian Communities" (hereafter BCC), "house churches" and so on. According to the conference of Catholic bishops in Eastern Africa, "systematic formation of small Christian communities should be the key pastoral priority in the years to come within Eastern Africa"; this option has been characterized as "a decisive landmark in our pastoral policy in Eastern Africa."[126]

"The cradle of the Ujamaa Theology is not going to be the academic armchair of the theologian, but the small Christian communities in the Ujamaa village," it has been said.[127] In fact, the purpose of the small Christian communities (hereafter SCC) in Tanzania is often formulated in terms that seem to be influenced by the philosophy of Ujamaa. Occasionally, it is stated that the aim of establishing the communities is to live "a true and authentic 'Ujamaa life'."[128] However, the community of the SCCs is more often defined as the opposite of *ubinafsi* (selfishness). Accordingly, the struggle against selfishness is seen as a main aim of the SCCs.[129]

What, then, has been the shape and structure of the SCCs? The main constitutive elements seem to be (1) community of faith, of prayer, of fraternal charity, and of mission; (2) sharing in the Word of God and the Eucharist; (3) testimony of life; (4) active participation in seeking a proper order of civil society.[130] In less assuming terms, the SCC could be described as a prayer group with small development projects and certain pastoral responsibilities. The activities of an SCC may consist of a weekly Bible service and practical tasks such as working on the small farm of the SCC, taking water, firewood, and food to a sick person, helping a neighbour by cultivating his fields, and taking up collections to sick persons. Therefore, the SCC must be formed by people who live closely together in everyday life.

> Those worthy to be one small community should be people who not only know each other and meet regularly but those indeed, who get themselves involved in the lives of one another. So a small community must consist of not more than twelve families who are real neighbours to one another. Neighbours in a geographical sense or belonging to the same village on a hill side; or neighbours in a place of work like a factory, a big office, or a hospital in a city. People who normally do not see one another except once a month for some meeting or function cannot form one small Christian Community.[131]

The dialogue on a Bible text, often the Gospel for the coming Sunday, may at its best represent "a life-centred catechesis," encouraging "the village people on the local level to reflect on their situation, and to discuss and analyze the different forces at work in their communities."[132] The communitarian aspect is emphasized both in relationship to the life inside the community — seeing the SCCs as "families in the image of the communion of the Trinity" — and in relation to other village members.[133] Community life in the villages is closely related to the *imani* of Ujamaa, understood as a "training of attitudes."[134] The identity of the communities is assumed by a set of interrelated concepts, like "soul" and "animator," suggesting that the SCC is the soul of the village and an animator in the training of Ujamaa attitudes.[135] "The government is busy making the structures of our villages but the villages will be soulless if

they are not oriented by God. Our job is to put the soul into the village."[136] Even though this approach acknowledges the difference between the task of the political government and of the church, it is squarely opposed to "the traditional dualism of life." Instead of "the illusion of dualism" the aim of the communities is "to unify men's lives."[137]

> The Ujamaa village offers an opportunity to unify one's life. In the Ujamaa village, it is by one and the same activity that the members supply their material needs, by which they create their mutual concern, and by which they are plunged into God....
>
> Members of the Ujamaa village work with the same objectives, sharing the hopes, the hardships as well as the joys. The activity, therefore, by which they supply their material needs becomes the medium through which they knit the texture of their relations into mutual concern. This mutual concern when sustained becomes a training which prepares them for that experience which is our destiny. Members of the Ujamaa village will then need little help in order to discover and rejoice in the fact that God is already in their midst. This activity unifies the material and the spiritual.[138]

In their quest for wholeness, the SCCs draw both from the African traditional communalism and from Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition. The community is described as a successor of the African's traditionally extended family or clan. The SCC is a "family," where different lay ministries are given to the members according to their charisms, but not limited to biological relationship.[139] At the same time, the SCCs should also "be salt to the rest of society."[140]

If one compares the Latin American and the East African experience of Christian communities, one notes that they differ significantly.[141] While the typical Latin American BCC emerged in the struggle for liberation and was created by the oppressed poor, the SCCs in Eastern Africa, by and large, were initiated by the bishops. The emphasis on community, harmony, and solidarity in the SCCs obviously correspond with values which are stressed in the African context but analysts have self-critically asked: "Has our theology been too much 'theology from above'?"[142]

> Most Eastern African SCCs have not developed an effective reflective process. Most communities remain prayer groups that start with Scripture and apply the Gospel more or less successfully to daily life (basically a deductive method). The practical action chosen is often generous help for the poor, sick and needy without affecting the root causes of poverty or injustice.[143]

In conclusion, we note that the SCCs, similarly as the philosophy of Ujamaa, advocate consensualism. Moreover, it should be observed that the SCCs

opt for a holistic theology, even though they presuppose a differentiation between the institutions of the church and of the government.

Church and State in the Context of Ujamaa

What is the relationship between religious and political institutions in the context of Ujamaa? In answer to this question, we will distinguish between three distinct ways of perceiving the sacred-secular relationship, that we shall call the monistic, the dichotomic, and the dialectical.[144] Characteristic for the monistic conception that was predominant in the pre-colonial modes of production is that it does not recognize any difference between spiritual and secular issues, while, by contrast, advocates of the dichotomic view understand these issues as two separate categories. In the dialectical view, finally, it is possible to make a conceptual distinction between spiritual and secular issues, even though they are seen as intrinsically related to each other and therefore inseparable. The point of this categorization is meant to clarify the argument of this subsection, suggesting that Ujamaa theology does not represent a monistic or a dichotomic but an emerging dialectical conception.

As has already been noted, in modern Tanzania, religious worshippers, such as Christians and Muslims, form communities with a religious identity, while the government has organized institutions with a political identity. Yet it should be noted that even though within the Tanzanian society one can differentiate between religious and political types of communities, they cannot be separated in the same way as in the Western societies. In spite of the differentiation between religious and political affairs, there is an interrelation between the two which is difficult to translate into Western categories. In other words, we would argue that Ujamaa theology corresponds neither to a monistic nor a dichotomic conception, which may explain why it has been misunderstood by quite a few Western scholars.

In what may amount to be the most comprehensive study of Ujamaa and religion, Westerlund's *Ujamaa na dini*, it is argued that there is a fundamental contradiction in the Tanzanian religious policy: the Christians who have been rather slow in political involvement have repeatedly been told: "Play your part." The Muslims, on the other hand, have been warned: "Don't mix religion with politics."[145] This alleged contradiction in Ujamaa policy is interpreted as a consequence of the power politics of the government.

> On the one hand, religious organizations and religious believers were supposed not to mix religion with politics, and, on the other hand, they were supposed to play their part in the politically determined socialistic development of the country. However, this contradiction is not unintelligible. It will be argued in the following account that *the regime needed* both to buttress its own position.[146]

Three arguments seem to be central in Westerlund's argumentation in support of this thesis. First, in the address to the Maryknoll Sisters Nyerere analyzed contemporary Christianity under the heading of "Man is the Purpose," and criticized scathingly a dichotomic faith. On this basis, he argues that a church which becomes identified with injustice "will die—and, humanly speaking, deserve[s] to die."

> Unless the Church, its members and its organizations, express God's love for man by involvement and leadership in constructive protest against the present conditions of man, then it will become identified with injustice and persecution. If this happens, it will die—and, humanly speaking, deserve to die—because it will then serve no purpose comprehensible to modern man.[147]

Westerlund interprets Nyerere's anthropocentric declaration within a dichotomic *Fragestellung*, where the sacred and the secular are juxtaposed: "When the Church became 'too religious', i.e., too much concerned with purely religious matters, such as spiritual salvation and the here-after, and neglected earthly matters, it deserved to die."[148] Referring to the previous analysis of Ujamaa theology we would, however, argue for a different interpretation, suggesting that the alternatives in Nyerere's statement are community and selfishness, not sacred and secular. According to our interpretation, Nyerere suggests that a church deserves to die when it neglects its commitment to the common good. In other words, his criticism is of institutional selfishness, not of spiritual concern. Such a dialectical interpretation gives better coherence to Nyerere's views on church and society than a dichotomic conception. Obviously, Nyerere's critique of the church is motivated by a liberationist interpretation of its ministry: "The purpose of the Church is man—his human dignity, and his right to develop himself in freedom."[149] The ministry of the Christian community is defined in terms of the common good, arguing that the church should be "on the side of social justice and helping men to live together and work together for their common good."[150] Consequently, the scathing critique of the church is due to the contradiction found between its ministry and its praxis.

> It is the institution of the Church, through its members, which should be leading the attack on any organization, or any economic, social, or political structure which oppresses men, and which denies to them the right and power to live as the sons of a loving God.[151]

The attitude "Play your part" has to be understood in the light of Nyerere's conception of the ministry of the church. If this conception is accepted, participation in the struggle for social and economic justice is not an

extrinsic demand, as suggested by the juxtaposition of religion and politics in Westerlund's study, but a task which is intrinsic to the church.

Second, when the religious symbols are used in a political context, e.g., opening a political meeting in a village by prayers, they are expressed in a language that Christians, Muslims, and Traditionalists have in common. Westerlund interprets these public prayers as evidence for his thesis that religion in Ujamaa is subordinated to "political ends as a factor of national integration."[152] Since the prayers in the political context lack references to "a divine Jesus or the prophet Muhammed" it is argued that they are an expression of a "civil religion."[153] The notion of "civil religion" is borrowed from D. E. Apter, who claims that "it is a characteristic of mobilization systems in many new nations that they employ the sacred 'to aid in mobilizing the community for secular ends'."[154] In other words, secular issues are the goal and religious symbols a means in Tanzanian policy. Logically, this concept of "civil religion" presupposes a dichotomic conception, separating the secular from the sacred.

In fact, an analysis of the worship in a political context shows that it lacks reference to controversial religious symbols, as is evident in the parliamentary prayer and the national anthem, *Mungu Ibariki Afrika* (God Bless Africa):

> Almighty God, merciful and full of splendour, Lord of all creatures, Creator of heaven and earth, we humbly beseech Thee that our country, the United Republic of Tanzania, be under Your eternal guidance and protection. Bless our dear Tanzania to be a peaceful country, so that all people living in it may have unity and charity towards one another. Deliver us from all sorts of vice, protect us from those enemies who regard the United Republic of Tanzania with evil intentions. Grant to our President health, long life and wisdom, so that, helped by those who rule under him, he may govern with justice and peace for the good and prosperity of the United Republic of Tanzania. Amen.
>
> 1. God Bless Africa
> Bless its leaders.
> Let Wisdom Unity and
> Peace be the shield of
> Africa and its people.
> Bless Africa
> Bless Africa
> Bless the children of Africa.
>
> 2. God Bless Tanzania.
> Grant eternal Freedom and Unity
> to its sons and daughters.

> God Bless Tanzania
> and its People.
> Bless Tanzania
> Bless Tanzania
> Bless the children of Tanzania.[155]

Is the use of religious symbols in these texts best explained as an attempt to employ the sacred for secular ends? Against such an interpretation there are several arguments. First of all, the national anthem, which originates from a South African Methodist church, was not created in the context of civil religion but at the ordination of the first African minister in this church.[156] More importantly, the spirituality of the traditional religion seems to be a more relevant explanation for the Ujamaa pattern of prayer than the theory of a civil religion. Aylward Shorter in his study of prayer in African traditional religions gives an account of their spirituality which has many similarities with the public devotion in the political context of Ujamaa. As central prayer themes in this pre-colonial spirituality one could mention the divine governance, the transmission and continuity of life, health and healing, mediation and reciprocity, protection from evil, internal and external peace.[157] Consequently, if public devotions in Tanzanian politics should be characterized as "attenuated religion" because of their preoccupation with "secular" issues, the same verdict would apply to the spirituality of African traditional religion. Then one must ask, however, if not such a concept of religion is ethnocentric.[158]

Third, the secular character of Ujamaa is, according to Westerlund, incompatible with the attitude "Play your part." The main issue here is how to interpret the notion "Ujamaa is secular." If one accepts a *Fragestellung*, where the sacred and the secular are juxtaposed, Westerlund's conclusion is valid. It seems, however, that Nyerere has a different use of secular. We have argued above that the secularity of Ujamaa is a demand to treat all human beings as equal, irrespective of faith. It will be recalled that "socialism is secular" is quoted as an argument for an egalitarian anthropology, opposing "a religion of socialism" where Marx, Lenin, or others were seen as infallible authorities. Differently put, "socialism is secular" for Nyerere means that socialism must not legitimize discrimination of a person due to his or her religious conviction. Similarly, he attributes "secular" to the work of Holy Ghost Fathers, who serve people regardless of their faith. "Serving the needy because they are needy, regardless of race, tribe or religion ... may be termed secular, but it is by no means irreligious."[159] Thus, "secular" in the philosophy of Ujamaa has a different meaning than in a Western context, as is also clear from the fact that prayer plays an important role in the public life of Tanzania, notwithstanding the secular character of Ujamaa.

As arguments for a dichotomic interpretation of Ujamaa and religion, Westerlund refers to three texts which here will be quoted at some length

for the benefit of our analysis:

> *As a member of TANU*, I neither ask nor am asked whether or not I believe in God. *As a member of the Church*, I stand on the firm belief that there is a God. What we, as a political Party, are very much interested in is the problem of the distribution of material wealth—in all its aspects, but especially land. Neither as a politician nor as an individual do I know if there are going to be any questions asked about this kind of thing in the next world, or even if there is going to be such a man as political man there! In fact, as a socialist I do not know whether there is a God, or a next world at all. As a Catholic I do "know" there is a God. This means I believe, because these are questions of belief, not of scientific and provable knowledge.[160]

> Once a man has fulfilled his responsibilities to the society, it [has] nothing to do with socialism whether he spends his spare time painting, dancing, writing, writing poetry, playing football, or just sitting. Nor is it any business of socialism if an individual is, or is not, inspired in his daily life by a belief in God, nor if he does, or does not, attend a place of religious worship—or pray elsewhere.[161]

> God—any God—has a relationship only with the individual who has faith in Him; no religion presupposes a God who has a relationship with an abstract noun or only with a collective unit. And certainly our worship of God is itself for the benefit of man, not for the benefit of God. For while worship can do some good for man, or can be believed to do some good for him, it obviously can do no good to perfection—that is to God. An individual's social living may, of course, be regulated to some extent by his religious beliefs, but these beliefs are not the purpose of his social living, even if a man regards them as the purpose of his life. The purpose of society is in all cases man, although in some cases the institutions of the society will be shaped according to men's beliefs about the requirements of their spiritual development.[162]

Obviously, the sharp distinction between a person's individual and social being in these texts is not unproblematic. Moreover, the discrimination between the purpose of a person's social living and the purpose of a person's life is difficult to comprehend, especially when presented under the heading "A New Synthesis of Man and Society." It seems that the notion of religion as a private matter, which fits into a liberal conception of the individual and the society, is cited without consideration of its incompatibility with the communalistic anthropology of Ujamaa. The thesis of a fundamental contradiction between "Play your part" and "Don't mix

religion with politics" goes, however, one step further. The three above texts are cited as unequivocal evidence for "a politically determined attempt to *compartmentalize* religion."[163]

> The result inevitably had to be an increasing importance of *ujamaa* at the expense of religion. Man, not God, became the centre of the universe, and the social living was first and foremost intended to please man. Under the primacy of *ujamaa*, religion therefore became attenuated and treated as something of subordinate significance.[164]

Possibly, such an impression may arise, if the texts are quoted out of context. However, the two first texts are part of a discussion with the religious policy in communist countries. The distinction between the private and the social aspect of humanity is introduced to legitimize the right of being religious without state interference. The third text, finally, belongs to an argument for "the principles of love, sharing, and work as a basis for [a religiously divided] society."[165] The notion of the person as "the purpose" affirms that humanity is a project, while God cannot be a project, since God is "perfection." Clearly, "purpose" is here used in the meaning: something that one sets before oneself as an object to be attained. If defined thus, it seems obvious that God in Christian faith cannot be defined as a "purpose."

Arguably, the sharp distinction between a person's individual and social being is not introduced in order to subjugate religion under politics but to defend the equality between adherents of different faiths and ideologies. In fact, the attitude "Don't mix religion with politics" is most clearly seen in the election campaigns where it has been a fundamental rule not to say anything which may encourage divisions on grounds of race, tribe, or religion.[166]

What we want to say is this. The contradictions noted by Westerlund may be explained in reference to a fundamental theological problem: how can Christians express the wholeness of the Christian kerygma without patemalizing people of other faiths?

On the one hand, it is important for Nyerere to emphasize the equality of all human beings and the secularity of political work. Far from advocating a resacralization of Tanzanian politics, he pleads for an interreligious cooperation within the institutions of Ujamaa and in the struggle for a new economic world order. Christians, he suggests, must be willing to cooperate with Muslims, traditionalists, and atheists, in the pursuit of justice and humanity.

> What right, then, have we to reject those who serve mankind, simply because they refuse to accept the leadership of the Church, or refuse to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus or the existence of God? What right have we to presume that God Almighty takes no notice of those who give dedicated service to those millions

of His children who hunger and thirst after justice, just because they do not do it in His name. If God were to ask the wretched of the earth who are their friends, are we so sure that we know their answer? And is that answer irrelevant to those who seek to serve God?[167]

On the other hand, Nyerere suggests that the commitment to political and economic justice is intrinsic to Christian faith. Politics and spirituality are not seen as two separate tasks but rather as two aspects of the same vocation, the metanoia from the idolatry of mammon to "the service of God and man."[168] Accordingly, persecution because of one's political commitment may be part of the Christian *martyria*.

> Friends: there was a time when the Christian church was persecuted and its members held in contempt and derision. Are the societies in which the Catholic church now operates so just, or so organized for the service of God and man, that it is unnecessary to risk a similar rejection in the pursuit of social justice? I do not believe so. I believe with Teilhard de Chardin that: "A Christian can joyfully suffer persecution in order that the world may grow greater."[169]

A comparison between the two above quotations suggests that many theological questions are unanswered in Nyerere's writings. What is the identity of Christian faith in a plural society? How may Christians affirm the uniqueness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and, at the same time, acknowledge the liberative and revolutionary potentials of non-Christian religions and philosophies? How is the holistic character of Christian faith safeguarded without relapsing into theocratic and ecclesiocentric positions? How can theocentrism and anthropocentrism be integrated? It is a well-known fact that many theologians in different parts of the world wrestle with such questions today. Whereas it should be clear that Nyerere has not resolved these issues, we have argued that he has perceived the problem of resacralization—a problem that is neglected when the openness to cooperation is viewed as extrinsic to Christian faith.

We have here dealt at some length with Westerlund's analysis since it seems that such a discussion is of paradigmatic relevance in a dialogue between First and Third World theologies. First, the *Fragestellung* of the interpreter obviously has a central role in the interpretation of texts, specifically when it concerns texts produced in different contexts. The *Fragestellung* decides the horizon, i.e., what is seen and what is not seen in the textual analysis. If one presupposes the sacred-secular dichotomy, certain structures in theologies of the new paradigm will be invisible.[170] Second, in the First World critique of the new approach there seem frequently to be unanalyzed systematic-theological assumptions, as is obvious from the

phrase "attenuated religion." This observation highlights the problem of the absence of First World systematic studies on African theology. Third, even though Nyerere's writings generally elaborate a counter-hegemonic conception, it is not difficult to find hegemonic concepts and phrases also in these texts. In this regard Nyerere seems to be typical for liberation theology. In a liberation theology text one may find phrases and methods pertaining both to the established and the new approaches. A scholar coming from a context where the established approach is generally accepted may be tempted to overemphasize features in the texts which correspond to this approach, while we propose that the counter-hegemonic aspects should be given priority in the search for a coherent interpretation.

This does not mean that the aspects emphasized by Westerlund—the concern for national unity, the concern for power among politicians, or the sensitive relations between Christian and Muslim influence—are without importance. What is questioned here is the dichotomic *Fragestellung*, separating political concern and religious spirituality as two separate and even competing concerns, which seems to distort the internal logic of the analyzed texts. According to our interpretation, the insistence on Christian participation in socioeconomic issues, the concern for human equality irrespective of faith, and the disinterest in a specific Christian content of *public* prayer should not be explained as extrinsic factors which attenuate religion but as consequences of a new paradigm, which combines theocentrism and anthropocentrism.

African Identity and the *Oikoumene*

Finally, we shall discuss a common criticism of African theology in the First World context, namely that the geographical epithet denies the universal and ecumenical character of theology. The concern for African identity has, then, been interpreted as a plea for isolation. In view of this criticism one may ask, What is the relationship between universality and particularity in Ujamaa theology; how does it conceive of the African identity in the context of the *oikoumene*?

In fact, one of the most significant methodological debates on Tanzanian theology has dealt with the relationship between African identity and universalism. In this debate Nyamiti has been criticized by Western theologians for being too dependent on Western theology, even to the point of calling him "a species of African neoscholasticism.''[171] According to the critics, the abstract language used by Nyamiti is inappropriate in the African context where a "mythopoeic" approach may be more fitting. A scientific language, it has been argued, is understandable only to the intellectual élite and therefore irrelevant in the villages.

In response to this critique, Nyamiti has advocated a dialogue between African symbolic mentality and the modern scientific way of thinking, since "Africa already belongs to the technological and scientific age."[172] In reference to Yves Congar and Edward Schillebeeckx he proposes a distinction between kerygmatic and scientific theology. On the village level kerygmatic theology may be more relevant, but it needs the systematic and critical work of scientific theology as its basis. Also in Africa, Nyamiti suggests, a scientific treatment of the classical theological themes is necessary.

> If we accept, as we do, the critical and scientific approach, started by Westerners, in other domains connected with African cultures (e.g., anthropology, sociology, history, psychology), why should we not also accept it in African theology or philosophy?[173]

In Nyamiti's view, Western influence is unavoidable in Africa of today. Moreover, he does not regret this fact. "I fully agree that, like any other African theologian, I am much influenced by Western theology," he admits, arguing in response to his critics that foreign influence is not necessarily bad.[174] "The fact that we are all influenced by Westerners does not in itself alone imply deformation in us. In our times, dialogue among theologians of different cultures is imperative."[175] An exclusion of foreign influence, by contrast, would lead "to cultural isolation and false particularism."[176] Consequently, "dialogue" is a key concept in Nyamiti's discussion of the relationship between African and Western theologies. His hope is that African theology may contribute to the global church and be enriched by her.[177] His vision of a "reciprocal influence" may be characterized as a quest for "conciliar fellowship," to borrow a phrase from recent ecumenical discussions.

So the central question for Nyamiti is, Has the Western influence vitiated the "African way of approach."[178] However, the criterion proposed as a means to answer the question is somewhat vague, "the African soul."[179] Needless to say, such a criterion is not unproblematic. In fact, when Nyamiti warns against "African theology according to Western models" he presupposes that the African identity is not an unambiguous matter.[180] Moreover, the actual debate on African theology reveals that "the African soul" may be perceived in different ways and also be mystified.

Before we discuss the problem of African identity, we shall, however, first elaborate the dialectic between universalism and particularity in the Tanzanian context, since it is an underlying theme of much Ujamaa theology and, moreover, of relevance in the analysis of "blackness" in South Africa. It seems that this dialectic is most extensively developed by Nyerere, who defines the relationship between African identity and the commitment to humankind as follows:

> We shall draw sustenance from universal human ideas and from
> the practical experiences of other peoples; but we start from the
> full acceptance of our African-ness and a belief that in our own
> past there is very much which is useful for our future.[181]

As the quotation bears out, the African identity is one pole of a dialectic
between universalism and particularity. The Arusha Declaration "is first
of all a reaffirmation of the fact that we are Tanzanians and wish to remain
Tanzanian as we develop."[182] Even though development implies change,
this change "must come out of our own roots, not through the grafting
on to those roots of something which is alien to our society."[183] Thus, it is
important for Nyerere that "the national growth [remains] organic."[184] It
may be somehow surprising to read such a declaration from a socialist,
since—in the political spectrum of the First World—the notion of organic
growth could be termed as a conservative rather than as a socialist idea.
Moreover, in the Western context the plea for cultural continuity often has
been used to oppose policies of equality.

For Nyerere (different from Latin American liberation theology),
"development" is a word with positive connotations, a fact which may be
related to this organic view of history and to the ambiguous attitude to
conflictual analysis.[185] "We are what all our past, known and unknown,
has made us," Nyerere asserts, interestingly enough in an essay about "The
Future of Africa."[186] Past and present cannot be separated, he affirms in
another context. "We and our ancestors are linked together indissolubly."[187]

If African identity is one pole of the dialectic between universalism and
particularity, the other is humankind. Therefore, the concern for cultural
identity does not exclude an openness to other cultures in the quest for
"The Future of Africa."

> We and our grandfathers and great grandfathers, have learned
> and adapted from nature, from ourselves, and from the peoples
> of Europe, America, and Asia. This we shall continue to do, just as
> men and civilizations throughout the world have always done. In
> determining our future out of the lessons of our present and past,
> we shall be working out a new synthesis, a way of life that draws
> from Europe as well as Africa, from Islam as well as Christianity,
> from communalism and individualism.[188]

The quotation bears out that for Nyerere the concern for "roots" is combined
with international relations based on equality and mutuality. This dialectic
may be explained in relation to our previous analysis of *kushiriki*: to be
human is to participate in the community and therefore neither individuals
nor nations can find their identity outside the communion with others.[189]

The underlying concept of communication may be expressed in reference
to the dialogue between "the elders under the tree," a simile which plays

a central role in the Ujamaa setting. In traditional African society—we are told—the elders met under a tree to discuss and listen to each other before making necessary decisions. The meeting took its own good time. Each participant had a chance to contribute his insights and ideas. When everyone had had his say, the task was to find a solution that could incorporate the wisdom brought forth by the different interlocutors. The meeting never ended with a vote where a majority defeated a minority. What happened was probably that one of the eldest men in the meeting, after listening carefully to the different ideas, made a proposal which summarized the valid points of the different contributions. The dialogue under the tree was not merely a means to reach a decision but also entertainment, cultural activity and, most importantly, a means to solidify the community in the village. In reference to this simile, Nyerere's *Democracy and the Party System* (1963) took as its theme Guy Clutton-Brock's aphorism on African village politics: "The Elders sit under the big tree, and talk until they agree."[190]

In spite of its romantic flavour, the simile of "the elders under the tree" may clarify the ideal of human communication in Ujamaa. In view of this paradigm of communication, African theology at times is presented as "a theology under the tree."

It should be noted, however, that "the elders under the tree" was not a comprehensive community since young villagers and women were excluded. Similarly, we must ask for the social function of this ideal in the world of reality. How inclusive is the consensualist paradigm of "the elders under the tree" in practice? While the African identity is often discussed in ahistorical terms it seems, in view of the *epistemologica ruptura*, more appropriate to clarify it in terms of social relations. It appears to us that "African-ness" is not seldom used as a means to silence dissenting voices. Two groups may be especially exposed in this respect, non-Christians and advocates of a conflictual analysis.

Concerning non-Christians, there appears to be a difference between Nyerere's definition of African identity and that of some of the academic theologians who define African socialism in a way which, taken to its utmost limits, would imply a kind of resacralization.[191] While Nyerere, as we have seen, is well aware of the pitfall of religious discrimination, the same is not true for all varieties of Ujamaa theology. Specifically, there is a tendency to describe Africans as inherently religious by nature, suggesting, by implication, that atheists are less "African" than theists.

Conflictual analysis is also a problem in Ujamaa theology, as we have seen. When consensualism is identified with "African-ness," social critics may be dismissed as "un-African." In fact, this argument is not seldom used against militant socialists, suggesting that, for example, Marxist class analysis is "un-African."

Therefore, critics have asked, How African is the African identity as expressed in African socialism and African theology? Is the Ujamaa consensualism really inspired by the African, pre-colonial culture or maybe by foreign sources such as Catholic social doctrine, Muslim "Arabic" socialism, or British Fabianism? Do we not find "African values" as community, equality, and wholeness in any subsistence economy all over the world?[192]

In different parts of Africa, philosophers and theologians have sensed a need to "demythologize" the concept of "Africa."[193] Also those who are committed to the search for an African identity have found it necessary to "attempt to articulate within a historical context what has happened to that nebulous and undefinable thing variously dubbed as 'African personality/ 'African integrity,' 'African identity,' 'African dignity.'"[194] In fact, this problem has been an important dimension of the discussion between theologians in South Africa and in independent Africa, as we shall see in chapter 5. Some students conceive of the African identity in reference to the socioeconomic situation in Africa before colonialism. The communalistic anthropology may then be viewed as a part of the African cultural heritage, even though one does not exclude the possibility of similar views of humanity in other pre-capitalist societies, e.g., among American Indians.[195] It may be necessary to redefine African identity in such historical terms, lest it not be mystified.

Ujamaa theology, by means of conclusion, is a new voice in the oikoumene, even though it may not represent the experience of all Tanzanians. In view of the new paradigm, we may note that Tanzanian theology represents the underprivileged part of humanity but not in a comprehensive way. The experience of the poorest of the poor in the villages and in the factories is not yet reflected in academic African theology. The same is true for the experience of women. In our quotations we have not amended the sexist language of the original texts, since it is a powerful reminder of the fact that the voices of the women are still suppressed in the Tanzanian "theology under the tree."

In terms of theological content, we have seen that the relationship between God and humanity in Ujamaa theology must be interpreted in view of an emerging, dialectic approach in which the difference between community and selfishness is a basic *Fragestellung*.

Black Theology in South Africa

Chapter 3

The Black Experience

While in the previous chapter we studied theology in the context of Ujamaa with special emphasis on community as a central theme in African culture, we shall choose a different focus, namely methodology, in our analysis of black theology, since this focus will allow us to follow its process of theologizing.

For Westerners, the methodology of liberation theology may be most accessible as it was used in the EATWOT dialogue between First and Third World theologians in Geneva. The conference was designed as a three-stage process. The first stage, and the point of departure of the dialogue, was an account of the participants' own experiences of struggle and oppression. Prior to the meeting, each participant had been asked to compose a story of his or her experiences in the struggle for liberation, highlighting two issues: (1) Who are the ones struggling? How are they struggling, what for, against whom, with whom? (2) What theology is emerging from their struggle and how is it being articulated (language and literary form used)?[1]

The storytelling was followed by analysis and theological reformulation. The three steps illustrate how academic theology in the new paradigm is defined as "a second act," based on experience that is mediated in analysis. Accordingly, the material in this part will be arranged in three sections.

- The experience of blacks living in apartheid (chapter 3).
- The analysis of the apartheid system, according to black theology (chapter 4).
- The theological reformulation, which grows out of the black experience (chapter 5).

Needless to say, a clear-cut division between experience, analysis, and theological reformulation is hardly possible, but this organization of the material may nevertheless clarify the process of black theology. Consequently, the first chapter of this part will deal with the black experience, the importance of which can hardly be overstated. "The great presupposition with which black theology operates is that there is something like a unique, authentic black experience of faith."[2] Black theology is not a conventional scholarly exercise *per se* and can only be fully understood in relation to the black experience. Therefore, a discussion about its positions must include a discussion of the interpretation of the black experience.[3]

The Concept of Blackness[4]

"There seems to be no doubt that central to the concerns of Black Theology stands the category of 'blackness'."[5] Yet, the concept of "blackness" has frequently been misinterpreted because of a confusion with the apartheid concept of "black," it seems.

The South African legislation focuses on the question of *volk,* a concept which is difficult to translate since it combines aspects of the English "people" and "nation." According to the official *volk* ideology, South Africa is inhabited by different peoples, each with its own culture and with a distinct territory. Thus, apartheid legislation places South Africans in four main ethnic categories: white (or European), black, coloured, and Asian.[6] "Coloured" is usually defined as "of mixed origin," i.e., neither belonging to the category "white" or "black." For practical purposes such a definition may be acceptable, even though the racial legislation is far more complex and inconsistent, loaded with juridical niceties which can only be explained by the need for ideological justification of white domination.[7]

Furthermore, the black population is divided into ten different "nations" with different "homelands." Strangely enough, all Europeans coming from different nations in Europe are counted as one "nation" in apartheid legislation (including Japanese who were classified as "honorary whites," when economic relations increased with Japan), even though they have different languages (Afrikaans and English). The Xhosas, however, are divided into two "nations," even though both "nations" use the same language.[8]

This ethnic legislation is a cornerstone in apartheid policy. It permeates all aspects of the social and economic life of South Africa. Furthermore, it is instrumental in fragmentizing the 24 million "non-whites" and thus facilitating the dominant position of the 4.5 million whites. To put it in other words: the complicated ethnic legislation can be explained as a fundamental device in the divide-and-rule-policy of apartheid.[9]

Not surprisingly, "black" in black theology has a fundamentally different meaning than "black" in apartheid legislation.[10] First of all, the two concepts have different *denotations.* In terms of denotation, "black" in the black theology may rather correspond with "non-white" in the apartheid terminology, i.e., black, Indian and coloured. Yet, in terms of *connotation* the black theology concept of blackness differs fundamentally from "non-white." The latter term is a negative concept, since it defines people from the perspective of the white person, emphasizing what they do not have (white skin colour). "Black," as opposed to "non-white," is a positive description that defines people in their own terms, not in terms of others. In fact, Boesak can even speak about "the non-white mentality" as the opposite of black

consciousness, because as a "non-white" the black person accepts that the whites define blackness as a deficiency of white skin colour.[11]

Moreover, it should be noted that in a racist society, concepts related to the mythology of the races will be bearer of different layers of meaning. Specifically, "white" and "black" in South Africa do not only have a genetic significance. Blackness defines socioeconomic status, place of living, educational facilities, and job possibilities, as has repeatedly been testified to by the proponents of black theology: "Blackness is a reality that embraces the totality of black existence"; or in the words of a black poet: "My beingness oppresses me."[12]

In fact, "black" in black theology is not primarily an ethnic designation but rather a socioeconomic and cultural one, denoting the oppressed in a white racist society.[13] "Blackness (a state of oppression) is not only a colour, it is a *condition*."[14] Even though the term is used in slightly different ways by different black theologians, it is quite obvious that it always transcends the ethnic boundaries of apartheid legislation.

There are some similarities between the concept of blackness and the Hebrew words for the poor, *ébyôn* (the one who desires), *dal* (the weak one), *ani* (the one labouring under a weight), *anaw* (the humiliated one), as they are interpreted in Latin American theology of liberation.[15] The interpretation of "black" as a synonym of "oppressed" explains the expression "the black Messiah," a provocative phrase, which often is misunderstood. In this phrase "the literal colour of Jesus is irrelevant."[16] What matters is the social orientation, to take sides with the oppressed.[17] Boesak quotes a statement by American black theologians to bring home this point:

> Black Theology symbolizes Jesus Christ as the Black Messiah to remind black people, in the most forceful manner, that God, through Christ, takes upon himself the badge of their suffering, humiliation, and struggle, transforming it by the triumph of his resurrection.[18]

So, the concept of blackness is related to the epistemological break. Black theology is defined as "a theology of the oppressed, by the oppressed, for the liberation of the oppressed."[19] Consequently, there are close affinities between the two concepts, black and oppressed. Both refer to "the irruption of the poor" and have the same epistemological perspective, looking on reality from "the underside of history." What is more, both concepts emphasize the bonds between those who have been divided by the ruling ideology, calling for a unity from below.

Some, then, may ask: Why do black theologians prefer "blackness" to "oppression," even though the former concept obviously causes confusion? Three arguments could be quoted in support of the black theology vocabulary. First, oppression is an abstract category while blackness concretely relates

to daily experience in South Africa; in the words of a Catholic priest: "Blackness is an issue since it hurts."[20] Second, the fundamental cause of misunderstanding, strictly speaking, is not different concepts of blackness but different theories of racism, as we will establish below. Third, in view of the divide-and-rule policy of the government, blackness is a powerful symbol of unity for those who protest against the fragmentization of the oppressed into different racial and ethnic categories.

The concept of blackness is a focal point in defining black theology and the related concepts of black consciousness and black power. Allan Boesak opens his thesis with a set of definitions, which will be quoted in full since they are of basic importance in our study:

> Black Consciousness may be described as the awareness of black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It means that black people are no longer ashamed that they are black, that they have a black history and a black culture distinct from the history and culture of white people. It means that blacks are determined to be judged no longer by, and to adhere not longer to white values. It is an attitude, a way of life.
>
> Viewed thus, Black Consciousness is an integral part of Black Power. But Black Power is also a clear critique of and a force for fundamental change in systems and patterns in society which oppress or which give rise to the oppression of black people.
>
> Black Theology is the theological reflections of black Christians on the situation in which they live and on their struggle for liberation. Blacks ask: What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ when one is black and living in a world controlled by white racists? And what if these racists call themselves Christians also?[21]

Black consciousness is the starting-point in this set of definitions, which indicates its importance for black theology. Its role in this theology may be elucidated by Boesak's phrase "alternative consciousness," where "alternative" has a meaning similar to "counter-hegemonic."[22] In other words, black consciousness represents a counter-hegemonic perception of reality. In the SASO policy manifesto, issued in 1971, black consciousness is presented in terms that have affinities to the emphasis on cultural liberation in the philosophy of Ujamaa:

(i)   Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind, a way of life.

(ii) The basic tenet of Black Consciousness is that the Black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity.

(iii) The Black man must build up his own value systems, see himself as self-defined and not defined by others.[23]

"Black Power" is a demand for a structural, not only an attitudinal, change of society. In other words, the concept signals a disagreement with Senghor's spiritualizing concept of culture. According to the advocates of black power, new political and socioeconomic structures are an intrinsic dimension of a new consciousness.

Naturally, in our study the definition of black theology with its dual emphasis on Christian identity and contextual analysis is the most central.[24] In short, black theology is a theological reflection on the black experience of oppression and liberation.[25]

What, then, is the relation between black *theology* and black *consciousness?* Although there are different opinions, few would deny the close relationship between the two concepts.[26] Some use black consciousness as an umbrella term, encompassing different forms of black self-affirmation, one of them being black theology. Others describe them as interrelated entities. "The relationship between Black Theology and Black Consciousness is that one is a genus of the other."[27] A third position, which may be the theologically most advanced, advocates a critical relationship, understanding black theology as a theological reflection on black consciousness and black power.[28]

The South African Context of Black Theology

While the black experience is the focal point in the self-understanding of black theology, this view is disputed by some commentators. A popular saying has it that black theology was imported from the U.S.A. to South Africa and, what is more, that the agent of this import was a white man, Basil Moore by name. Not surprisingly, this interpretation has a strong support in the South African government, which gave it official sanction in the report of the so-called Le Grange-Schlebusch Commission. The main points of the report are aptly, albeit ironically, summarized by Manas Buthelezi:

a. 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.

b. The corollary of the above point is that Black Theology is neither traceable to the dynamics of the South African situation nor is it the spontaneous and constructive contribution of South African black preachers and theologians. At most it is white South Africans like Dr Basil Moore and Beyers Naudé who have mediated its spread in South Africa. Hence there is no need for any reference to what black people in South Africa have said about it.[29]

In short, a logical consequence of "import," as conceived by the Le Grange-Schlebusch Commission, is that South African black theology is not interpreted in reference to the context of its authors, but in relationship to external factors such as American black theology, World Council of Churches, Western political theology, or even the so-called communist onslaught. Since such views have gained certain circulation also in academic circles[30] and since, from a theoretical point of view, they represent an alternative to the argument of this study concerning the role of the Third World experience, they may deserve some comments.

First, it may be justified to clarify the actual setting for the introduction of the phrase "black theology" in South Africa in order to understand the import theory. In 1971, the University Christian Movement (hereafter UCM) initiated the Black Theology Project through its director of theological concerns, Basil Moore.[31] The first seminar on black theology in South Africa was organized by the first director of the project, Sabelo Ntwasa, and it was held at Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre in 1970.[32] At the seminar the participants listened to a tape-recorded speech by James Cone that made a deep impression on them. In the words of a participant: "I can remember how Cone's ideas dominated our Black Theology seminar at Wilgespruit in 1970 and became a useful basis for developing a Black Theology arising out of the South African context."[33] In other words, the American black theology contributed in an important way to the intellectual articulation of the South African black theology.

Our interpretation of South African black theology within the context of the dynamics of the South African situation does not deny James Cone's contribution to the South African black theology, nor does it deny Basil Moore's role as facilitator in this process.[34] As we will establish below, the South African black theologians could be characterized as participants in a conciliar process, where they explicitly acknowledge influence from traditional theology, U.S. black theology, Latin American liberation theology, etc. The notion of import, however, does not suggest a conciliar fellowship but rather a relationship between a producer and a customer. In particular, the import notion suggests that South African blacks have "bought" a commodity produced by others.

Three arguments, which will be elaborated below, could be quoted in critique of such a view. First, the notion of import neglects the important structural similarities between, on one hand, black consciousness and black theology, and on the other hand, earlier forms of black resistance in South Africa, represented e.g., by the African Independent Churches or Albert Luthuli (President-General of ANC, 1951-1961).[35] Moreover, when South African black theology is interpreted as imported, the interrelation between popular and academic theology is neglected.[36]

Second, there is a distinctive South African profile already in the black theology texts from the early 1970s, e.g., in the interpretation of reconciliation, African identity and contextuality. In fact, the thesis that seems to be the first academic expression of black theology is influenced neither by James Cone nor by Basil Moore.[37]

Third, the internal logic of black theology exhibits the central role of the South African black experience, as seen in the triade Experience — Analysis — Theological reformulation. In short, rather than seeing South African black theology as an import, it should be regarded as "the product of concrete struggles that were being waged by black people in the late 1960s and early 1970s."[38]

The Emergence of Black Consciousness and Black Theology

The First World critique of apartheid has often been a critique of the Afrikaners[39] and a support of the liberal positions of English-speaking whites. It is no exaggeration to say that the quarrel between the two white "tribes" has been given a dominant place in the First World perception of South Africa. In a Western interpretation of black theology, however, it is of key importance to remember that black consciousness, from a historical point of view, emerged as a protest against the *liberal* understanding of racism.[40]

In the National Union of South African Students (hereafter NUSAS), "a liberal multiracial organization,"[41] white and black students were working together in emphatic protest against the established apartheid policy. For the white liberals this kind of multiracial cooperation was *the* way to the abolition of apartheid. Among the black students there was, however, a growing dissatisfaction with NUSAS. At an UCM meeting in 1968 a caucus of black students and pastors agreed upon the importance of a black organization, which led them to establish South African Student's Organization (hereafter SASO), the first organizational expression of black consciousness.[42] The new organization had a very strong support; about 9,000 out of 10,000 black students joined it.[43]

The reaction among the white membership may be described as confusion and anger. They had seen themselves as champions of racial equality and as advocates of the blacks but were now criticized by black consciousness supporters. Moreover, the multiracial cooperation of NUSAS was destroyed because of the *exodus* of the blacks. Obviously, many of the liberals looked on black consciousness as a sliding back into racist thinking, a racism in reverse.[44] Black consciousness and black theology were, in the eyes of the critics, symptoms of the successful brain-washing of the "Separate Development" politicians.[45]

Why did the supporters of black consciousness refuse to cooperate with the white members in NUSAS? In spite of the facade of multiracialism the organization was "white-dominated," it was argued.[46] In the words of Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, full-time organizer of SASO, 1971-73:

> Indeed, the first main focus of the attack by the Black Consciousness movement was the white liberal establishment itself because we believed that it was the cause of the frustrations that have characterized our struggle. Before the advent of Black Consciousness the white liberal establishment, with a certain amount of arrogance, arrogated to itself the role of the natural leader and pace setters of the Black struggle in South Africa.[47]

In the following chapters we will analyze the conflict between white liberals and black consciousness, which is crucial to the interpretation of black theology, especially in a First World context.

As seen from the history of SASO, religion and politics interacted in the articulation of the philosophy of black consciousness.[48] For instance, Steve Biko, widely regarded as the father of black consciousness, was also committed to the project of black theology.[49] In short, the emergence of black theology as an intellectual discipline cannot be properly understood, if one neglects the context of black consciousness.

During the 1970s, two major conferences on black theology were organized after the initial seminar in 1970, in 1972 (Wilgespruit) and in 1975 (Mazenod, Lesotho). Moreover, "during 1971 the UCM conducted, in various parts of the country, a series of seminars on black theology, which resulted in the publication of the first South African book on the subject, *Essays in Black Theology.*"[50] The book was banned as well as six of its authors; the essays were later published abroad by Basil Moore under the title *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa.*

The early 1970s was a creative phase in the development of black theology. However, after the Mazenod conference, no major seminar on black theology was arranged until the Institute of Contextual Theology (hereafter ICT) convened conferences in 1983 and 1984. Papers from these conferences have been published by Itumeleng J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagale under the title *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free.*

In our analysis of black theology, the emphasis will be on the theological reflection of the 1970s, since the recent development is complex and difficult to assess. Two theologians are of specific interest in the first phase of South African black theology, Manas Buthelezi, the "nestor of Black Theologians in South Africa" (W. O. Deutsch) and Allan Boesak, whose dissertation *Farewell to Innocence* was the first major academic work to be published on South African black theology.[51] Among theologians, who contributed to the first phase, also Desmond Tutu, Bonganjalo Goba, Simon Maimela, and

Mokgethi Motlhabi deserve mention. In the 1980s, the list of contributors has been widened, including Itumeleng J. Mosala, Buti Tlhagale, Frank Chikane, and Takatso Mofokeng.

In spite of its complexity, black theology will, by and large, be treated as one entity, since there is no appropriate categorization available so far.[52] Two types of differences within the movement of black theology should be mentioned, however. The first and most important difference relates to various perceptions of black identity and cooperation with whites in the struggle against apartheid. Because of this dissensus, which still is an important feature of black theology, the 1983 conference became "a combustion chamber."[53] What is the point of conflict in the debate? In fact, it is not easy to describe the argument in a way which can be accepted by all the different parts.[54] There seems, however, to be two major tendencies which may be termed as exclusive black nationalism and non-racial "unity in the struggle."[55] On the level of praxis, advocates of exclusive black nationalism forge organizations excluding whites, while anti-apartheid activists cooperate regardless of racial categories in the organizations of non-racialists. On the level of analysis, "race" is an analytical category of crucial importance in exclusive black nationalism, while the followers of non-racialism may not seldom be more inclined to use the category of "class." In terms of organizations, the crossroad is between the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (hereafter PAC) and Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), on the one hand, and African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF), on the other.

The title "exclusive black nationalism" may, however, be deceptive. Even a staunch exponent of black nationalism such as AZAPO has repeatedly declared that its exclusive stance is only confined to what it terms "the preliberation phase of the struggle."[56] In other words, the main concern in this tendency is not to be anti-white but to emphasize black identity. The exclusion of whites is seen as a temporary measure that is necessary in order to safeguard a platform for black thinking, issues, and programs in a certain situation. Differently put, the protagonists of both tendencies work for an egalitarian society without any racial differentiation. The dissensus is a matter of the structures of organization *before* the liberation. One may here compare with the situation in Tangangyika, where TANU adhered to a kind of exclusive black nationalism during the struggle for *Uhuru* but afterwards opened its ranks for citizens of all races.[57]

The relationship between the tendency towards unity and the tendency towards African identity is complex, however. Influential advocates of African identity such as Nelson Mandela and A.M. Lembede were able to hold the two tendencies together in their political commitment.[58] It should also be noted that, for example, Steve Biko emphasized the unity of the

black struggle and therefore refused to align black consciousness with either PAC or ANC.

The complexity of the relationship between the two tendencies is testified by the fact that quite a few of the black consciousness activists of the 1970s today participate in non-racial organizations.[59] The protagonists of exclusive black nationalism tend to view such a reappraisal as a betrayal of the cause of black consciousness. Those who affirm black identity *and* non-racialism argue, however, that the black consciousness of AZAPO is different from this philosophy during the 1970s, when it "was seen as a uniting force and did not openly indulge in the ideological divisions."[60] Moreover, non-racialists argue, blacks have now been able to articulate their identity thanks to black consciousness; the affirmation of blackness can therefore be upheld in non-racial organizations. A third argument of the non-racialists is that the non-racial cooperation of the 1980s—for example, *The Kairos Document*—differs fundamentally from the liberal-dominated structures of the 1960s.

A second line of division is between different stages in the development of black theology. The year 1977, when Steve Biko died in detention and the black consciousness organizations were banned, was an important milestone.[61] As noted above, it may be premature to define the new trends but we would yet venture to mention five significant issues:

(1) Exegetical and hermeneutical studies on the basis of the new paradigm have become a main priority in the 1980s. While Buthelezi and Boesak were students of systematic theology, the most significant contributions of academic black theology in the 1980s may be some works in the field of biblical studies.[62] (2) The social analysis has become more elaborated and sophisticated but also more controversial, since it is drawing more from Marxism while preserving the concern for cultural identity. The growing interest for Marxist analysis goes together with a more anti-capitalist stance among blacks, both among advocates of non-racial cooperation and exclusive black nationalism. (3) After the suppression of black consciousness organizations, which were working within the narrow confines of South African legislation, an increasing number of the younger Christians seriously question the viability of nonviolence in the struggle against apartheid.[63] (4) The independent churches have more and more been acknowledged as the roots of black theology and as an important resource in theological reflection.[64] (5) The limited social basis of black theology has become a subject of debate.

The final point calls for some comments. Even though black consciousness and black theology changed the political climate among the black majority, the social basis of the new type of intellectual reflection was limited. Already in the first South African book on black theology Goba pointed to this liability.

> So many of us are remote from the everyday experiences of our black people. There is a gap between the black élite and the ordinary black man. We have allowed our acquired intellectualism to separate us from the ordinary people. Today when we speak of the Black Consciousness movement, we immediately think of students in S.A.S.O and a few clerics. The rest of the people are not involved.[65]

In the new debate on black theology, initiated by ICT, the relationship between the grassroots communities and the academic black theology has been a focal point.

> How liberating is liberation theology? [Does] Black theology really play a liberating role in our situation in Southern Africa? Are we able to measure the contribution of this Black theology of Liberation to the struggle of the oppressed masses in South Africa? Or is it just an intellectual exercise for the benefit of the Black Theologian to enhance his/her position in the academic world?[66]

In the black theology of the 1970s, the issues of workers and women were seldom discussed, possibly due to the social context of the theologians.[67] Black theologians have noted that "the voice of the black man is seldom heard in the churches" but arguably this is still more true about the voice of the black *woman.* However, in recent years feminist concerns have been given more place in black theology.[68] Significantly, two of the papers in *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free* deal with black feminist theology.

The Black Experience as a Contrast Experience

The black experience may be defined in reference to Edward Schillebeeckx's term "contrast experience."

> Contrast experience, especially in the memory of the actual human history of accumulated suffering, possesses a special epistemological value and power, which cannot be deduced from a goal-centered "Herrschaftswissen" (the form of knowledge peculiar to science and technology), nor from the diverse forms of contemplative, aesthetic, ludic or non-directive knowledge. The peculiar epistemological value of the contrast experience of suffering as a result of injustice is *critical:* critical of both contemplative and scientific-technological forms of knowing. It is critical of the purely contemplative perception of the whole,

because this form already lives out universal reconciliation in its contemplative or liturgical celebration. But it is also critical of the world-dominating knowledge of science and technology, because this form as such presumes that human beings are only dominating subjects and ignores the ethical priority to which those who suffer among us have a right.[69]

As the quotation bears out, contrast experiences are of "peculiar epistemological value" because of their critical potential. In other words, the experience of the oppressed may serve as criterion in an assessment of dominant ideologies. Contrast experiences are critical of the "scientific-technological forms of knowing" of modernity and we will later return to this important dimension of the black experience. However, we must first clarify the "peculiar epistemological value" of the black experience in view of the South African ideology. Such a clarification may be justified for three reasons.

First, the ideological aspect of apartheid is less noted in First World discussions. While many sources offer information about the physical aspect of oppression—the infant mortality, the split homes caused by migrant work, and so on—the ideological legitimation of this oppression is far less analyzed. Second and more importantly, from a theological point of view an understanding of the ideological conflict is essential in order to understand the role of black consciousness and black theology in the struggle for liberation. Third, the ideological aspect is of significance, if South Africa is to serve as a learning experience for the Western society, as we will argue below.

How is the situation of the blacks interpreted in established South African ideology? The answer could be summarized in one sentence. There is no denial of the difficulties of the black majority but their difficulties are blamed on their inferior ability, thus placing the responsibility for the situation on the blacks, while the white minority in South Africa generally regards itself as beneficial to the black majority in their attempts to uplift and develop them.[70]

This alleged civilizatory mission of the European minority is expressed in the phrase "The Christian trusteeship of the European race," which has been an important aspect of apartheid ideology. In 1948, Dr. Verwoerd explained this principle, quoting from the National Party manifesto:

> The party accepts the Christian trusteeship of the European race as the basic principle of its policy in regard to the non-European races. In accordance with this it desires to afford the non-European races the opportunity of developing themselves in their own fields, according to their natural ability and capacity, and it desires to assure them of fair and just treatment in the administration of the country.[71]

In theological terms it could be argued that the basis of the South African ideology is the conviction that there is no need for a *metanoia* among the white minority in view of its treatment of the blacks. According to the established ideology, whites have no reason for feeling guilt about their treatment of the "non-whites." Mr. M. C. Botha, the then Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, is among those who have stated this opinion "unequivocally."

> I wish to state unequivocally that the whites in South Africa, generally speaking, have a proud record and have no reason whatever to have a feeling of guilt about how they have behaved in helping the non-white peoples in South Africa on their way to self-realisation and self-development and their progress to their own destiny. There are other continents in the world where there is undoubtedly such a guilt complex on the part of certain groups, but we must guard against this blowing over to us as a spirit of the times.[72]

What attitudes will be desirable among the blacks from the perspective of the ruling ideology? If the whites are seen as trustees, it follows that blacks must accept the trusteeship in obedience and possibly also gratefulness. Even though it may be hard to believe, it is an undisputable fact that the apartheid policy has been described as the realization of love and justice, especially in the documents of the Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter DRC).[73]

Some readers may think that the South African ideology is too paltry to deserve analysis. Indeed, the base character of this ideology is no matter of dispute. We would argue, however, that an understanding of the dynamics of the South African ideology is a necessary condition for an interpretation of black theology. Specifically, it is important to compare different perceptions of the South African reality. In black theology, there is no denial that the South African reality observed "from above" may seem reasonable and even compassionate in its attitudes to blacks. Buthelezi, for one, speaks about the "facade of altruism" of the South African system, adding: "One must remember that even the worst forms of paternalism always have a certain degree of naive altruism."[74] In short, the dominant ideology in South Africa is explained as an ideology of the privileged, a "white" ideology.

Such a sociology of knowledge perspective may, however, be interpreted in different ways. In *Perceptions of Apartheid,* Ernie Regehr argues that it is "useful" to examine the South African conflict in terms of incompatibilities of perceptions rather than in terms of justice.[75] Obviously, such a juxtaposition of perceptions and justice will have a relativistic tendency. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that relativism has been a continuous problem in the trajectory of the Western sociology of knowledge. Therefore, the question may arise whether the emphasis on conflicting perspectives in black theology implies

a relativistic "perspectivism." In other words, does the distinction between a black and white perspective suggest an epistemological relativism? In answer to the question we will analyze black theology's interpretation of a specific case of a contrast experience, namely Steve Biko's death in detention. This case has been chosen since Biko's death may be of paradigmatic relevance to an analysis of the South African race policy. In the words of Hilda Bernstein: "Stephen Biko is our magnifying glass. Through him and his fate a whole spectrum of South African reality is exposed. . . In the fate of Steve Biko is encapsulated the truth about South Africa today."[76]

Within the confines of this study, it is not possible to deal with the technical details of the case, the vague accusations which were used to explain Biko's arrest, the falsification of medical evidence when he suffered from brain damage that caused his death, or the refusal of proper medical care in this situation.[77] Suffice it to say here that evidence shows beyond the possibility of a doubt that the Security Police treated Biko with utter arrogance, indifferent to saving his life (obvious from the fact that the dying Biko was transported half-naked on the floor of a military Land Rover, lying on a cell-mat 1,120 kilometres from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria where he died shortly after arrival).

Needless to say, the news about Biko's death and the appalling details about the circumstances in which it took place sent shock waves through the black community. In many places people met for memorial services. Thousands of people attended his funeral in King William's Town, in spite of road-blocks manned by police armed with FN rifles and machine guns at all major roads. Naturally, also among black theologians the reaction was strong. In two important sermons Allan Boesak deals with the issues raised by Biko's death and the subsequent banishment of black consciousness organizations. For him, these two events are of paramount theological importance, raising questions which will be analyzed below. "In what does white, Christian South Africa place its trust?" "After all, on what, and in whom, do we place our trust?"[78]

Also for Tutu, central theological questions are brought up by the news of the death of Steve Biko and "the extraordinary finding of the Chief Magistrate of Pretoria at the inquest on Steve's death that though he died of serious brain damage, no one was to blame for this death."[79] "Out of the crucible of human suffering and anguish" he asks questions such as "Why do *we* suffer so?" "Why does suffering seem to single out us blacks to be the victims of a racism gone mad?" "Oh God, how long?" "Oh, God, but why?" "God, on whose side are you?"[80]

But there was also a different reaction that is important for an understanding of the black experience as a contrast experience. The Minister of Justice, Mr. J. T. Kruger gave an account of the imprisonment, treatment, and death of Steve Biko to the Transvaal Congress of the National Party two

days after his death. His speech was met with "ripples of laughter" according to a press report.[81] In fact, the minister was not very worried about Biko's death, according to a verbatim transcript: "I am not glad and I am not sorry about Mr. Biko. He leaves me cold. I can say nothing to you.... I shall also be sorry if I die (laughter)."[82]

As in many other cases of death in detention, the authorities first explained Biko's death as suicide; in this case a hunger strike was claimed as the cause of death. In congress Mr. Kruger gave the following account:

> It is very true what Mr. Venter said (about prisoners in South Africa having "democratic right" to starve themselves to death). It is a democratic land. We are now asked: "When you say he went on a hunger strike, why didn't you force him to eat?" (laughter)
>
> Mr Chairman, can you imagine that these same people who smear the police day and night because they touched this man and there's a mark on his foot, and there's a mark on his ankle and there's a mark behind his ear and it must be the police—do you think the police must still force that man to eat?[83]

In the wake of Biko's death and the subsequent unrest, all black consciousness organizations and the Christian Institute, altogether seventeen organizations were banned and many persons detained. Obviously the great majority of the white population found both the treatment of Biko and the banning of black organizations in agreement with the Christian trusteeship that equates white rule in South Africa with the best alternative for "non-whites." A few weeks later, 30 November, the National Party scored a landslide victory at the general election, filling 82 percent of the seats in the House of Assembly. Arguably, the white electorate agreed with the Minister of Justice that the available facts about Steve Biko's death confirmed that South Africa "is a democratic land."

The disagreement about the cause of Biko's death shows the importance of the *epistemologica ruptura.* It is obvious that there emerged two different views, differing not only about the ethical evaluation of the news but also about the facts. According to the government and the legal authorities, nobody except Biko himself could be blamed for his death, since his head injuries were sustained in a scuffle with the Security Police. In the words of the Chief Magistrate: "The available evidence does not prove that death was brought by an act or omission involving an offence by any person.[84] Others found, on the contrary, that "the available evidence" proved that the head injuries could not be caused by the alleged scuffle but only by torture. "'They killed Steve Biko' was the chant taken up by crowds of Africans outside the courtroom after the verdict."[85] A similar position was, by and large, taken by the international press. In the words of the London *Times:* "The Biko inquest leads to no other reasonable conclusion than that

he was illegally killed by the security forces and that, following this, the government responsible for those security forces has been returned with a larger majority."[86]

Obviously, the option for one or the other of these two views can, at least in part, be explained sociologically with reference to factors such as race, socioeconomic position, and political opinion. Such a sociological approach is also acknowledged in the emphasis on the black experience in black theology.

This sociological approach does not exclude, however, that there is a truth claim in the black interpretation of the facts about Biko's death. In other words, an analysis of Boesak's and Tutu's writings on Biko's death reveals, that their sociological interpretation does not imply relativism. The different perceptions of the facts of Biko's death are interpreted in terms of justice and injustice. In short, the perception of the black experience reveals "the givenness of a truly harsh reality."[87] Similarly, Tutu's reference to Biko's "serious brain damage" suggests that he understands the medical evidence as a decisive proof against the verdict of the Chief Magistrate.[88]

In epistemological terms, the different perceptions of Biko's death may not be a complicated problem. Also, those who tend to a relativistic epistemology may acknowledge that in this case the "facts" prove the truth of the black interpretation. Even though the South African government, for different reasons, was not interested in a full investigation into the matter, medical evidence of the character of the head injury confutes the official verdict that Biko died because of an alleged scuffle, and leaves no other reasonable interpretation than that "Biko died as a result of brain injury inflicted on him by one or more unidentified members of the Security Police."[89] In sum, it seems obvious that it is possible to verify certain truth claims about Biko's death. Some may think, however, that such a suppression of truth is extraordinary, while liberation theology seems to arrive at the opposite conclusion. Tutu's contribution to the EATWOT conference in Accra makes clear that he regards the dissent about Biko's death as a paradigm for "the genesis of liberation theology in Africa."[90] This observation is of importance in the interpretation of the epistemological privilege of the poor. Underlying this notion, it seems to us, is the proposition that the truth is often suppressed in a context of oppression and may therefore be more accessible to the oppressed.

An argument between Desmond Tutu and the South African Minister of Police, Louis Le Grange, may contribute to a clarification of the truth claim of the contrast experiences. When the latter attacked the South African Council of Churches for making blacks believe that their human rights were being denied, that they were being suppressed and exploited, and that their human dignity was being infringed on in South Africa, Tutu replied:

> If Mr le Grange thinks that blacks are *not* exploited, oppressed
> and denied their human rights and dignity, then I invite him to
> be black for just one day. He would then hear Mr Arrie Paulus
> saying he is like a baboon, and a senior police officer saying he
> is violent by nature. He would be aware that in the land of their
> birth, black people, who form 80% of the population, have 13% of
> the land, and the white minority of about 20% has 87% of the land.
> In this country a white child of eighteen years can vote, but a black
> person, be he a university professor or a bishop or whatever has
> no franchise. A black doctor with the same qualifications as his
> white counterpart is paid less for the same job. Have any whites
> had their homes demolished, and then been told to move to an
> inhospitable area, where they must live in tents until they have
> built themselves new houses? This happened last week to the
> Batlokwa people. I doubt very much that the Minister would still
> be able to say that apartheid was not an unchristian and unjust
> system, where human rights are denied.[91]

As the quotation makes clear, the dissensus between the Minister of Police
and Tutu is not only a difference between two perceptions. Tutu's argument
implies that there is a truth claim in the black experience. Needless to say,
this truth claim is difficult to analyze within the categories of established
epistemologies. An important aspect of our analysis of black theology will,
therefore, attempt to clarify these truth claims, which—it seems to us—have
often been neglected in First World interpretations.

Contrast experiences, we conclude, are of epistemological relevance, since
they embody certain truth claims. If this interpretation of the epistemology
of black theology is correct, it differs from a "relativistic" position, since it
insists on truth claims. It differs, however, also from a "positivistic" stance,
since it argues that the suppression of truth is not very uncommon and
that the experience of the poor, therefore, is of crucial importance in the
uncovering of truth.

The Importance of Contrast Experiences in Black Theology

What then, is, the relationship between contrast experiences and black
theology *qua* theology? Some confusion on this issue may arise from the well-
known fact that "theology" has two distinct uses. If "theology" is defined as
an explication of the contents of the Christian faith, experience—"the first
act"—is prior to theology in the new paradigm. However, if "theology"
denotes community with God, it is not possible to say what is first, theology

or experience. In the words of Allan Boesak, the black experience takes place in a community that shares and experiences history "with God";[92] in such a community with God, theology and experience are synchronic. Consequently, academic theology reflects on an experience in which the community with God is an intrinsic aspect; it is "the result of a painful and soul-searching struggle of Black Christians with God," Boesak affirms.[93] In the introduction to *Farewell to Innocence* he takes a similar stance:

> This book was born out of the black experience in South Africa — out of anguish and deep concern; out of the inevitability of commitment; out of anger and a fragile but living hope; out of an inexplicable joy through faith in Jesus the Messiah, whose refusal to let go of me has been my liberation.[94]

As the quotation suggests, the concept of experience in black theology differs significantly from dominant First World conceptions. We will therefore clarify this concept by a comparison in three points with the theology of modernity.

First, in the modern sensibility, Langdon Gilkey suggests, experience is "the sole relevant and dependable source for valued and meaningful concepts and the sole ground for the testing of those concepts."[95] This position does not entail that it is possible to deduce a theology from human experiences. It implies, however, that theology will be unintelligible unless it can be related to lived experience. This modernist insistence on a language of experience corresponds, by and large, with the distinction between the first and the second acts of liberation theology.

Second, the emphasis on experience implies that the individual subject is the sole seat of legitimate authority in all matters pertaining to truth, according to modernity. Differently put, the individual subject is the autonomous center of decision-making. In the words of David H. Kelsey, "both as knower and as doer, a subject is autonomous, historical, and self-constituting."[96] It should be noted that this individualistic concept of experience differs fundamentally from the liberationist approach. The black experience is a communal experience, as we have seen. In a similar vein, Gutiérrez argues that the notion of the individual consciousness as the starting point of cognition and action is characteristic for "the bourgeois mind," as opposed to the point of view of the oppressed.[97]

Third, the concept of experience does not only presume that something "given" is to be experienced but also an interpretative framework "which co-determines what we experience."[98] It can hardly be denied that all experience is to some extent theory-laden. There is no presuppositionless and totally nonconceptualized experience. Since "experience" in itself is an empty category which must be structured by a set of concepts it is not enough to ascertain that experience is the starting point of black theology.

We must also determine: What is the interpretative framework of the black experience? The question is of relevance, not least for interpreters outside the black community who want to understand the black experience. It must be admitted, however, that such a question is complex and we will only offer a hypothesis which seems to be of heuristic significance in comparing the theologies of liberation and modernity.

In the theology of modernity, the established rationality seems to be the interpretative framework which defines what is understandable in the biblical texts.[99] If one assumes, as liberation theologians do, that one may distinguish between a hegemonic and a counter-hegemonic rationality, the hegemonic rationality is, of course, less suitable for the explication of *contrast* experiences. Boesak's phrase of a black community that shares and experiences history "with God" suggests that the subversive *memoria* (in Metz's sense)[100] of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and of past contrast experiences of the black community is the interpretative framework of the experience that is analyzed in black theology. It seems, however, that black theologians differ about the relationship between these two aspects of the subversive memory, as we will see in the exposition of the theological reformulation in chapter 5.

The profile of "experience" in black theology, as opposed to a theology of modernity, may be further elucidated by studying the relevance of creation faith in black self-affirmation. First, it must be remembered that in the context of apartheid, the affirmation of the equality between whites and blacks is no "trivial statement," to speak with Adam Small:

> We cannot apologise for being ourselves; we will live autonomously as ourselves. Whoever thinks this is a trivial statement does not know the extent to which Whites have goaded and do goad us to humiliations which all add up to our believing that we live by their grace. Now we are rejecting the idea—their idea, which unfortunately has also become deeply embedded in the souls of many of us—that we live even to the least degree by their grace.[101]

As the quotation makes clear, self-affirmation is a counter-hegemonic experience in the black context, since it challenges the established scale of values. In black theology, creation faith is seen as a source of this counter-hegemonic scale of values. At Steve Biko's funeral Desmond Tutu described the black consciousness movement as an expression of this counter-hegemonic anthropology:

> It is a movement by which God, through Steve, sought to awaken in the Black person a sense of his intrinsic value and worth as a child of God, not needing to apologise for his existential condition as a black person, calling on blacks to glorify and praise God that he had created them black.[102]

As the quotation bears out, black self-affirmation is interpreted as a vocation; God calls the blacks to realize their dignity as human beings in spite of the contrary message from the South African ideology. In fact, this theme recurs in black theology writings. Genesis l:26f. has rightly been described as the *locus classicus* of the anthropology in black theology.[103] The notion of men and women created in the image of God, *Imago Dei*—which has played a central role in Christian anthropology—is a cornerstone also in black theology. Creation faith is a critique of white supremacy, Buthelezi suggests.

> What does it mean to the black man when we say that man was created in the image of God and was given domination over the rest of creation? The daily life experience is that the black man is classified as a "non-white" which in effect means that he was created in the image of the white man. Black consciousness which tries to cultivate black identity and a sense of pride for the black man challenges theology to define in a relevant way the meaning of the doctrine of the "image of God."[104]

Buthelezi's argument may be summarized as follows: "The white man" places himself on the throne of God, whenever he tries to mould black people into his own image, glorifying his own values. God, not the white man, is the creator in whose image blacks and whites have been created. Blackness is not a curse. "Blackness, like whiteness, is a good natural face cream from God."[105] The counter-hegemonic character of God-faith is forcefully brought home in a hymnic text by Ananias Mpunzi:

> Black Theology claims that God affirms my uniqueness, and so my blackness. It goes further and says: 'Black person, you are a unique person, and you must express your uniqueness or die, and you must affirm your humanity or become the thing, the object, that others have deluded you into believing yourself to be.' On the one hand you must tear down every man-made barrier that restricts your freedom to be yourself and to live God's unique will for you in vibrantly fulfilling life. On the other hand, you must affirm yourself as a human being no matter what your situation or what others may say or do to you. You dare not believe the lies that others would make you believe by the nature of their non-human relationship with you. You dare only believe the truth that God would have you believe by the nature of his self-affirming relationship with you. You must love the sign of your humanity which others treat as the sign of your lack of humanity. You must love your own black body—your blackness![106]

The choice of the black experience as a starting-point for theological reflection implies, to sum up, a critique of the ruling ideology, combining

epistemological, anthropological, and theo-logical concerns.[107] The self-affirmation derived from creation faith is both theocentric and humanistic; moreover, it has inspired a new perception of reality with certain truth claims. Therefore, the black experience has a crucial role in black theology. In the words of Allan Boesak:

> In this situation Black Christians attempt to answer the questions and to discharge the obligations that confront us in the gospel. It becomes evident, of course, that we cannot content ourselves with either white questions or white answers. Our theological reflection must take into consideration—more strongly still, must emerge out of—that which white theology has never taken seriously: the Black experience.[108]

The quotation makes clear that the fundamental critique of "white" theology is that it has neglected "the black experience."[109] Therefore, a theological dialogue between the First World and the blacks in South Africa cannot only be a discussion about theological ideas but must also interpret these ideas in the light of the contrast experiences.

Chapter 4

Apartheid as Idolatry

Social analysis of black theology—the second phase in the methodological triade—may seem bewildering to anyone expecting an exposition in the sense of First World social science. One student, who describes social analysis as the "basis" of black theology, argues that no such analysis exists at present in black theology writings but only pieces of information and tendencies to theoretical formations.[1] Such a comment seems to be ill-fated, however.

First, the theoretical contribution of black theology in the field of social analysis is produced not on the level of social science but on the level of theology, even though the new methodology transcends the traditional boundaries of systematic theology.[2]

Second, the purpose of the social analysis is to clarify contrast experiences; it is a mediation between the black experience and the theological reformulation. Since the analysis does not originate in a purely scientific interest *per se* but attempts to articulate specific and complex experiences, which claim to represent a suppressed truth, it is still in the making.

Third, the social analysis is an interpretation from within the black experience. Consequently, its connotations may be overlooked by readers in a different context. Therefore, in this chapter we will offer a reconstruction based on three principles. (1) Perceptions of the South African context, presupposed in the black theology writings, will be supplied, when it may facilitate the interpretation. (2) Special attention will be given to the black perception of the social reality as compared to dominant perceptions. (3) Black theology of the 1980s, where the social analysis is more articulated, is used as a heuristic tool.

The criterion of the interpretation of the social analysis will, of course, be the internal logic of the texts, specifically, its ability to explain the theological reformulation. It should be noted that the proposed methodology has some liabilities, for example: (1) Within the confines of this study it is not possible to present an independent research on the South African society, which undoubtedly is extremely complex; the purpose is, more modestly, to supply information of relevance in the textual interpretation. In other words, we will provide information that may elucidate the perception of black theologians but, for obvious reasons, this study cannot supply a comprehensive interpretation of the South African society. (2) Black theology is not a monolith, as we have seen; not least in social analysis, there are

divergent emphases. Even though the subsequent interpretation attempts to offer a *via media,* any such attempt is debatable.

Naturally, the object of the social analysis of black theology is the system of white domination in South Africa. Throughout history this system has been given different labels but it will here be called by its internationally most well-known name, apartheid, since—in spite of the continuous changes—it remains a structure of white domination.[3] In black theology, the apartheid system is defined as a "white power structure" in reference to the black experience.

> The "white power structure" far from being just a term, represents a reality blacks encounter every day. It represents the economic, political, cultural, religious, and psychological forces which confine the realities of black existence. Concretely, for black South Africans the white power structure is manifested in *apartheid.*[4]

Apartheid is, however, a complex phenomenon in which one may distinguish between different sub-ideologies, even though there is no generally accepted typology.[5] In agreement with some analysts, we will here distinguish between four ideo-sets or sub-ideologies—racism, capitalism, Afrikaner nationalism, and the ideology of the National Security State—remembering that they do not form four different ideologies but "one structure or system."[6]

While apartheid undoubtedly is a political and social problem, it is also a theological problem, black theologians affirm. In the words of Allan Boesak:

> Dealing with apartheid means dealing with the integrity of the Gospel, the credibility of the witness of the Church in the world, the essence of the common confession of the Christian Church that Jesus Christ is Lord.[7]

In the black analysis four theological concepts are important: idolatry, heresy, sin, and blasphemy, all with different connotations.[8] When apartheid is described as idolatry, it is suggested that faith in God is denied by allegiances to rival gods. "Blasphemy" suggests that the theological legitimation of the South African system is an abuse of the name of God. When the system is analyzed in terms of heresy, ecclesiology is focused; the unity of the church is threatened by the divisions of apartheid.[9] "Sin," finally, deals with the ethical dimension. It seems, however, that idolatry is the main category. The term is often used explicitly, not least by Allan Boesak, but it is also underlying much of the critique of apartheid. In anticipation of a more thorough analysis in the next chapter, we must therefore clarify some aspects of the interpretation of idolatry by black theology.

A central task in the new paradigm is "to discern the difference between the false gods and the living God."[10] How, then, does black theology perceive

"God" and "idol"? In a First World context, Buthelezi's reference to Luther's definition of "god" in the Large Catechism may be of special relevance.

> What does it mean to have a god? What is God?.... Trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol.... For the two, faith and God, hold close together. Whatever then thy heart clings to … and relies upon, this is properly thy God.[11]

This definition of "god" suggests that Luther—like black theologians—advocates a holistic understanding of Christian faith, which may be summarized in two propositions. (1) Every person has a god, either God or an idol; (2) the choice of god has consequences for all dimensions of life. Hence, idolatry can be detected not only in religious but also in social and economic affairs. On the basis of this definition, we distinguish between "god"—a collective term denoting that which in human life is given the importance of "ultimate concern" (Paul Tillich)—and "God," the only god that according to Christian faith deserves to be regarded as ultimate concern. The holistic definition of "god" accounts for the fact that social analysis has a crucial role in the clarification of the meaning of *metanoia* from idolatry to faith in God. Accordingly, Boesak affirms that

> a Christian's responsible participation in the political realm requires discrimination between the creaturely and the idolatrous, leading to an affirmation of the creaturely (the human) and resistance to the idolatrous (the source of the inhuman) in the power of the Holy Spirit.[12]

If the choice between God and the idols—or between justice and injustice—is related to all spheres of life, neutrality is an impossibility, also in a First World context. Preaching to European Christians, Boesak criticizes

those good Christians who believe they can remain neutral as the poor and the innocent are sacrificed on the modern altars of Moloch and Mammon; those who do not yet understand that neutrality is no longer possible, that it is in fact the worst kind of partiality there is—taking the side of the oppressor without assuming responsibility for the oppression.[13]

Since neutrality is impossible in an idolatrous society, a major task for theology is to identify the false gods. Then, one may ask, Where are the theological criteria by which it can be determined what belongs to the faith in "Jahweh your God" and what belongs to the worship of "other gods." In the anti-idolatrous discernment of black theology, we may distinguish between criteria on three different levels:

- The idols oust God from his rightful place
- The idols legitimize oppression of human beings
- The idols alienate human beings from their own selves

Naturally, the first level is of crucial importance from a theological perspective and focuses on the rivalry between God and idols.

> The world is full of powers and principalities that claim for themselves divine power, and claim from human beings an obedience and allegiance that Christians can and must give only to God. These powers become gods when we follow them blindly and put our trust in them. Apartheid is a false god whose authoritarian audacity allows no room for the essence of meaningful humanity: freedom under God. It is of vital importance that we never forget to whom our ultimate allegiance and obedience are due. Apartheid and all it stands for is not a system that places its fortunes on the political judgment of a people. It demands with idolatrous authority, a subservience and an obedience in all spheres of life that a Christian can give only to God.[14]

The concept of "idol" is here defined in relation to "God," obviously denoting a commitment which wrongfully assumes the place of "the living God."[15] To put it in other words: "idol" is a theo-logical, normative concept denoting a false god and can therefore only be analyzed in relationship to faith in God.

Buthelezi distinguishes between ultimate and penultimate in this context. Idolatry, then, is to pick out an element of penultimate importance and place it on the level of the ultimate. The ultimate-penultimate distinction suggests that an idol is not something intrinsically evil but—in agreement with classical Christian doctrine—a created thing that, good in itself, becomes destructive when it is given ultimate rather than penultimate importance. An example may clarify this distinction. In South Africa, Buthelezi argues, race has become an idol.

> Because of its inherent tendency to attach value judgements to genetic and hereditary factors of race, and by consequently distinguishing between superior and inferior races, racism does not make God's relation to man the criterion for human integrity and dignity: the values of the superior race become the criterion.[16]

Racism can thus be described as a confusion of creature and Creator. Something created, the race, is elevated to the level of the ultimate. Buthelezi compares racism with the Golden Calf, which the Israelites fashioned under the leadership of Aaron.

> The golden calf was made out of the legitimate possessions of the people, the golden earrings. Race is a gift of God. When it is elevated to the level of the ultimate, when it becomes a decisive factor in the manifestation and the direction of public morality,

when it sets the boundaries for the circle of those who qualify to be my neighbours, and when it prescribes what constitutes a congregation in worship, it becomes a god that competes with the Father of Jesus Christ. Racism is a cult of the god of race.[17]

The second level in the anti-idolatrous discernment deals with the consequences of idolatry for human relations. If God is the source of justice, it follows that political injustice and oppression must be defined as a denial of God. Similarly, if God is the heart of authentic community, idolatry causes division and enmity. In other words, when a community is divided, it is due to an option for false gods. Especially Buthelezi has dealt with the relation between heresy — in the sense of "division" — and idolatry.[18] Similarly as in Tanzanian theology, commitment to the common good is a central theological criterion in the anti-idolatrous discernment by black theologians in South Africa, as seen in a question by Boesak: "Do we trust Yahweh and do we choose the cause of justice for all who share this country with us and who should be treated justly?"[19] In short, human relations are connected with the God-relation; oppression in human relations is correlated with a desertion of "the living God."

On the third level, idolatry is described as alienation. When human beings accept an idol, they are alienated from their own selves, according to Boesak. In a way which reminds about Ludwig Feuerbach's critique of religion, idolatry is described as an impoverishment of humanity:

> When we believe that these false gods can, in fact, walk, *we* become lame; when we *believe they* can *see* — *we* become blind; when we believe that *they* can speak — *we* become dumb. When we believe that *they* know, we exchange *our* understanding for the instruction of idols, which is a delusion, empty foolishness.[20]

As the quotation bears out, Boesak suggests that idolatry creates a false consciousness. "The history of Yahweh with the people, the history of a mighty liberation, is exchanged for a false consciousness that denies Israel's past, distorts its present and its future."[21] When Israel exchanges Yahweh for the golden calf "the worship of the living God is exchanged for the worship of a deaf, dumb, lifeless beast."[22] This exchange corresponds to an exchange on the level of consciousness. "The liberated consciousness of a free people" is exchanged for "the slave mentality of Israelites prior to … the exodus."[23]

In sum, idolatry is not only a theological concept but also used as a frame of reference in the social analysis. In order to understand the methodological profile of black theology, we will have to deal extensively with socioeconomic and political issues in their relation to theology. In view of the three themes which run as a red thread throughout this study, we will attempt to elucidate the social analysis in its relation to theological themes such as God and humanity, reconciliation, and modernity.

Chapter 4

A Structural Analysis of Racism

The question of racism is given prominence here, not only because of its place in South African society, but because it has been a formative factor in the articulation of black consciousness and black theology.[24] These black schools of thought "signify a completely new phase in race relations in the world, a new psychological, social, and political reality," it is claimed by their advocates.[25] The claim is not uncontroversial, however. Liberal analysts tend to entertain a different view, questioning the novelty of the black analysis of racism. As we recall, this issue was a major point of conflict when black students left NUSAS.

What, then, is racism? Two different types of interpretation, an attitudinal and a structural, will be discussed.[26] The *attitudinal* analysis interprets racism as an ethical problem that takes place at the level of prejudice and deliberate discriminatory behaviour. One variety of this option is to describe racial segregation as a cultural problem, e.g., an expression of backwardness, which is then seen as the root cause of specific features of racist attitudes. The theoretically most elaborated expression for this option in the South African context is the so-called liberal paradigm of history, emphasizing "characteristically liberal assumptions about the basic unity of mankind, the dignity of the human personality, the fundamental rights of the individual without respect to race or creed, the benefits of education, the power of reason, and the possibilities of reasoned progress."[27]

In sum, the attitudinal analysis describes the South African apartheid system in terms of the relational behaviour of groups and individuals. The *structural* analysis, by contrast, interprets this system with reference to a global structure, historically related to the expansion of the European, and consequently "white," capitalism. Differently put, the use of racial identity as one of the functional factors of domination is explained in terms of structures. The structural analysis rejects a reduction of the problem to the economic dimension, but explains the trajectory of racism in terms of an interrelation between economy and the symbolic structure of society.

In agreement with such a structural approach, some analysts speak about "structural" or "institutional racism," denoting a system of domination based on "racial" criteria by which social attitudes and institutions are affected and which is embedded in the very structures of society, for example, in economy, education, housing, professional life, and pronouncements of justice.[28] This definition makes clear that the structural analysis is no denial of the importance of discriminatory attitudes but suggests that racist attitudes are not accidental but functional factors of domination. Differently put, racism is interpreted as a legitimation of one group's domination of another group. Black theology presents a structural critique of racism, as is evident from a definition proposed by Allan Boesak.

> Racism is an ideology of racial domination that incorporates beliefs in the cultural or inherent biological inferiority of a particular ethnos. It uses such beliefs to justify and prescribe unequal treatment of that group. In other words, racism is not merely attitudinal, but structural. It is not merely a vague feeling of racial superiority, but a system of *domination,* furnished with social, political, and economic structures of domination.[29]

In sum, the distinction between structural and attitudinal analyses of racism may clarify the difference between black theology and liberal approaches to apartheid. It should be noted, however, that the structural critique of racism by black theology is still a theory in the making. Two stages of this process will be presented, the first being one of the first black theology texts, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity" by Steve Biko.[30]

Biko's main argument for separate consciousness is the assertion that the white liberals have a "wrong analysis" and that they dominate the relations between whites and blacks so that the whites "control" the political work of the blacks and lead the political struggle guided by a "wrong analysis." What, then, are the main differences between the liberal and the black theology analysis? Even though Biko gives no comprehensive answer in the essay, his different comments may be summarized in four points.

First, there are important differences in the analysis of the relationship between South African racism and the global economic system. In the liberal paradigm, the alleged colour-blind logic of capitalism is seen as a modernizing force that contributes to the removal of racial prejudices. By promoting economic growth and economic integration, industrialism counteracts the isolationist mentality that is fundamental to South African racism. Pointedly, if South Africa complied with the social and economic system in the First World, racism would disappear.

By contrast, Biko argues that racism in South Africa has its origin in the logic of the economic system. "The colour question in South African politics was originally introduced for economic reasons," he affirms. This dissensus clearly derives from different analyses of the phenomenon of racism. According to Biko, racism is not only related to prejudice but should be analyzed mainly in terms of power relations. The dimension of power is necessary in a definition of racism, he maintains. "Racism does not only imply exclusion of one race by another—it always presupposes that the exclusion is for the purposes of subjugation."[31] Even though racism is now a serious problem in its own right, it "started as an offshoot of the economic greed exhibited by white people," as "a moral justification for the obvious exploitation."[32] Differently put, the blacks were described as inferior in order to justify the privileged position of the whites. Even though this diagnosis of racism acknowledges that apartheid cannot be reduced to economic terms,

it nevertheless affirms that there is a close link between the politics of white domination and the economics of capitalism.

Second, the differences on the level of diagnosis correspond to a dissensus in the question of treatment. From the liberal perspective, the solution to the problem of racism is integration, which means giving the blacks the same opportunities as the whites.

Such a policy is, however, emphatically rejected by Biko. In his view, it is not possible to eliminate racism as long as the system of exploitation remains. Since "the white power structure" is intrinsically exploitative, integration is no viable solution. "This is white man's integration—an integration based on exploitative values…. It is based on the assumption that all is well with the system except some degree of mismanagement by irrational conservatives at the top."[33] In sum, Biko's view is that an abolition of the explicitly racist legislation does not suffice; a structural change of the society is necessary to overcome racism.

Third, there are differences in the categorization of white South Africans. The liberal paradigm focuses on the differences in racial attitudes between Afrikaners and English-speaking whites. The system of apartheid is explained by the fact that the Afrikaners have developed "an unusual degree of cultural and social exclusiveness and a core of anti-progressive racial attitudes."[34] Apartheid is from this perspective defined as a triumph of the rigid, reactionary, and racist ideals of a monolithic Afrikanerdom over the modernizing and integrative imperatives of economic growth.[35] The genesis of apartheid is found in seventeenth-century Calvinist doctrines on Covenant and in the physical isolation at "the frontier" which isolated the Afrikaners from the liberal currents of eighteenth-century European thought.[36]

In Biko's view, however, there is no essential difference in racial attitudes between Afrikaners and the English-speaking people in South Africa; both groups are attached to the values of white supremacy and economic exploitation. Consequently, Biko's critique is of "the Anglo-Boer culture," whose "individualistic cold approach to life" and "capitalistic exploitative tendencies" are present in both groups.[37] In short, "the white man," not only the Afrikaner, is the author of racism in South Africa.

Fourth, in the organization of the anti-apartheid movement, there is no substantial difference in perspective between a white liberal and a black person, according to the liberal paradigm. Consequently, the skin colour of the leadership does not matter. Black experience presents, however, a different picture. In the struggle against racism, blacks, as opposed to the whites, experience the burden of the "internal enslavement." The absence of black experience in the liberal paradigm seems here to be of crucial importance. In the political struggle the white liberals often display a paternalistic mentality, Biko claims. "They do not believe that blacks can formulate their thoughts without white guidance and trusteeship."[38]

Notably, Biko finds ideas of white supremacy and fear of blacks "at the helm of the South African ship", also among the white liberals who participate in the anti-apartheid movement.[39]

> It appears to us as too much of a coincidence that liberals — few as they are — should not only be determining the *modus operandi* of those blacks who oppose the system, but also leading it, in spite of their involvement in the system. 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.[40]

These four aspects of Biko's understanding of racism have continued to be of importance in black consciousness and black theology, even though there has been need for a more specific and profound analysis of "the white power structure."[41] In Boesak's *Farewell to Innocence,* which represents a second stage in the articulation of a theory of racism, the theological, epistemological, and structural aspects are more elaborated. The content of the phrase "white power structure" that plays an essential role in Boesak's theology, may be accounted for in relation to its three constituent words: white, power, structure.

The first word, *white,* suggests that Boesak, equally as Biko, regards the white man, not only the Afrikaner, as the author of apartheid. In other words, when the racist power structure is called "white," it entails that the critique of racism reveals important insights not only into Afrikaners but also into other white people in South Africa — and in the First World.[42] The racism of English-speaking whites differs from the stance of the Afrikaners in degree but not in matter.

Second, the racist system is perceived as a *power* structure. In his analysis of power, Boesak differentiates carefully between two different concepts, authentic power which is "shared *with others*" and estranged power which is "power *over others*";[43] in both cases power is "a relational reality" but the relations will, of course, be different in the two cases, oppressive or egalitarian.[44] While freedom is defined as shared power, racism, by contrast, represents an estranged power.

Third, racism is perceived as a *structure,* implying that it cannot be accounted for solely in individualistic terms, as relations between individual whites and blacks. This stance explains the importance of social analysis in black theology. Boesak's account of Martin Luther King's position may be interpreted as a programmatic description of his own stance.

> [King] also saw more clearly that the struggle in America was not so much a struggle of the "cosmic forces" of good versus evil, but a *decidedly human* struggle against a *demonic* white power structure, a struggle in which the poor of the earth are involved. [45]

As the quotation makes clear, Boesak rejects a moralistic analysis in favour of what paradoxically is defined as "a decidedly human struggle against a demonic" phenomenon. The paradox may be interpreted as a dialectic relationship between two poles which are both central in Boesak's analysis of the apartheid system. On one hand, the theological language including concepts such as "God," "justice," "idolatry," "sin ," and "conversion," are intrinsic to the social analysis of black theology. On the other hand, Boesak insists on the necessity of "a clear, cool-minded realization of the cultural, political, and economic reality of contemporary society."[46] In other words, it is imperative to understand the roots of oppression in historical and structural terms, making use of ordinary human reason. Boesak is clearly opposed to a resacralization of politics. "It is not a Christian struggle I am pleading for, but a Christian presence in the struggle."[47] Since structures, according to Boesak, are created and maintained by people, the structural analysis does not suggest that people could "hide behind the 'system,' blaming the 'structures' as if these existed on their own."[48] Rejecting "the fruitless polarization between the personal and the social, between personal needs and socio-economic needs," he seems to understand *metanoia* as related both to "hearts" and political structures, to use a common phrase.[49] Therefore, he insists that "the church ought to discover ... that conditions of poverty and underdevelopment are not metaphysical but structural and historically explicable."[50]

As a consequence of the insistence on structural analysis, Boesak in *Chapter 4* introduces the concept of class in *Farewell to Innocence.* "The church must discover that oppressed people are not merely unconnected individuals but a class."[51] As we shall see later, the relationship between "race" and "class" as analytical categories is a major theme in the black theology of the 1980s. In *Farewell to Innocence,* the class category is introduced in criticism of the individualistic anthropology of mainline theology, but without any elaborated class analysis.

The comparison between the attitudinal and the structural analyses of racism reveals that they differ significantly, notwithstanding the provisional character of the black analysis. Moreover, this difference is of importance for, at least, two reasons.

First, the theory of the "white power structure" has far-reaching implications in a First World context. If the black theology analysis is valid, apartheid is not only a South African but a global problem. Speaking to Christians in the Netherlands, Boesak states: "I think I must tell you that if the churches in South Africa are confronted by choice, then you too, Christians living in the Netherlands, are involved in that choice."[52]

In implicit reference to the dependency theory, South Africa is not seldom defined as a microcosm in which the black-white relations reflect the global relations between the First and the Third World.[53] Differently put,

the global power structures may be studied in South Africa, since within the borders of this country are included both developed "white" areas and underdeveloped "Bantustans."

> Foreign interest also focuses on Southern Africa for another reason, and this is that so many people feel it is in some way their problem. As matters stand, the situation is a microcosm of the whole world's problems. Here a rich, white, "officially Christian", colonial minority faces a poor, black, "recently pagan", oppressed majority. Although an oversimplification, as I have indicated above; the situation mirrors the global division between North and South. This means that people from outside see themselves and their colonial past, whether as colonisers or as colonised, in South Africa. This arouses a reaction which may be one of guilt, shame or anger, because they feel involved. This leads further, in that many of the problems afflicting the country are underlying ones in other parts of the world too, but are more acute and concentrated in South Africa.[54]

The notion of South Africa as a microcosm is, of course, not an exact description but, as the quotation suggests, a heuristic device which may clarify a crucial aspect of the structural analysis of apartheid. In a First World perspective, the liberal paradigm is a comfortable theory since it describes the racial oppression as a South African problem, specifically, an Afrikaner problem. Certainly, the structural analysis by black theology represents a more disturbing view, suggesting that the economies and also the churches in the First World are accessories in the crime of apartheid.

On what grounds is it argued that the First World is an accomplice in South African racism? Three arguments seem to be of special relevance.[55] (1) It cannot be denied that South Africa is a crucial member of the Western economic system. In fact, roughly half of all foreign investments in the whole of the African continent are directed to the country of apartheid.[56] It may even be argued that British investors profit as much as South African whites from cheap black labour in the apartheid economy.[57]

(2) There is a cultural affinity between the whites in South Africa and in the First World. Undeniably, the white rulers came from Holland, France, Britain, Germany and other Western countries. Moreover, South Africa claims to be a bulwark of the Western democratic tradition in the African context. Even though such a claim certainly is fraudulent, it cannot be denied that the institutions of South Africa have been developed within the Western tradition. "Its constitution, its parliament, its party system, its universal franchise (for whites), its courts, its universities and newspapers: all these things make historical sense, and only make sense, within the tradition of western Europe."[58] More importantly, it could be argued that the black experience is suppressed not only by South African whites but also by First

World whites. In a polemic dictum, Dorothee Solle has dramatized this similarity by describing the Western churches as "an apartheid fortress," since "we do not allow our brothers and sisters from the Third World to live in our thoughts, our songs, our sermons."[59]

(3) The South African government legitimizes its system as a defence of Christianity against an alleged communist onslaught, an argument that will be analyzed in greater detail below. Undeniably, South Africa is an extremely Christian country in church-going terms. More importantly, the apartheid system is upheld by these church-goers and seriously defended in Christian theological and moral terms. Therefore, the credibility of Christianity is at stake here in a way that cannot be the case in other countries of oppression, for example, in certain communist countries.

Needless to say, the structural analysis of apartheid is not uncontroversial in the First World. Neither has it been refuted in political or scientific arguments, it seems to us. Rather one could say that it is denied and hushed up. It could be argued, however, that the implications of this analysis for the First World Christians are so important that it should be placed high on the list of theological research priorities.

Second, the structural definition of racism is also of relevance in the analysis of the recent development in South Africa. Nowadays it is acknowledged in wide circles, also in publications distributed by the South African government, that racist oppression is a problem in the country.[60] Hence, the bone of contention between the critics and the South African authorities is not the actual existence of racial discrimination but the interpretation of the present trend. Is apartheid being dismantled now by piecemeal reforms, as the authorities claim? Or is it the other way round, that the racist oppression today is even more entrenched, as the critics of the government assert?

The position of black theology with regard to this issue will be clarified by a distinction between petty apartheid and grand apartheid, a fundamental distinction in the critique of contemporary trends in South African race policy. "Petty apartheid" defines the set of rules and laws that decrease social relations between whites and blacks, e.g., separate amenities, restaurants, means of transportation, job reservation, etc. Petty apartheid has its roots in the semi-feudal rural economy where the white farmer used it as a device to claim his superiority and rule over black slaves, serfs, and servants. Today it seems to have its strongest support among lower middle class Afrikaners, while the more affluent of the white population advocate its abolishment. The "Whites only" posters, that, somewhat simplistically, have become a symbol of apartheid world-wide are today in an increasing degree removed.

In the South African policy there is, however, no attempt to remove "grand apartheid," which denotes territorial separation between different "nations." The emerging South African system, abolishing petty apartheid

step by step while maintaining territorial segregation, will here be termed *neo-apartheid,* referring to the novelty of certain features and to the continuity of white domination.[61] What here is called *neo-apartheid* is presented by the South African government as a "multinational development," whose aim is a confederation of the Republic of South Africa and those homelands that have accepted so-called independence granted by the government. The proposed structure is described as a system of cooperating democracies within a common economy. According to this official ideology, in the envisaged system each South African will enjoy full political rights in his or her *volk.* The future status of black workers in "white" areas will then be comparable to immigrant workers in Europe, it is suggested. In the words of a theoretician of neo-apartheid:

> While the White man is compelled by circumstance to accommodate the Black man at the spatial, economic and social levels without any form of statutory colour discrimination, he is fully entitled to distinguish against every *foreigner,* be he Black or White, in the manner of the franchise.[62]

Needless to say, many important aspects of the socioeconomic reality are suppressed in the description of the new system as "a confederation of democracies." For example, the white minority has unilaterally decided that the lion's share of the country belongs to them; the so-called "homelands" where the Africans are supposed to enjoy their political rights are not by any means viable states, neither in physical nor in economic terms (some of them consist of several small pieces, scattered over white South Africa); the economic, political, and military structures guarantee that the power remains in white hands also in this "confederation of democracies"; black "guest workers" are excluded from political rights in reference to their citizenship in "homelands," in spite of the fact that there are more black than white inhabitants in the "white" areas; finally, and more importantly, also in the envisaged "confederation of democracies," the principle "one person, one vote"—applied without any ethnic qualifications—will still be anathema.

When analyzing the different aspects of the South African system as a whole, it is difficult not to arrive at the conclusion that the South African government wants "to create the illusion of change, without fundamentally altering the underlying institutionalized structure of white privilege and black exploitation."[63]

If one accepts the above analysis, the attitudinal paradigm is unsatisfactory since it will over-emphasize the removal of petty apartheid, while failing to clarify the dynamics of grand apartheid. In the legal edifice of grand apartheid, each law taken in isolation could be interpreted as non-racial. It is only when the different laws, the facts of South African history, and contemporary society are taken together that their racist character is evident.

On this basis, it is obvious that black theology represents an analysis of racism which substantially differs from the liberal paradigm. Moreover, it could be argued that the attitudinal concept fails to clarify the full scope of racism in neo-apartheid. Even though it is easy to demonstrate the hollowness of the ideological defence of the present South African policy, specifically its claim to dismantle apartheid, such an enterprise can only be undertaken with a holistic structural approach that relates different aspects of the South African reality.

Capitalism as the Root Cause of Apartheid

Having clarified the structural critique of racism, we must now account for its analysis of the South African economic structure. In an argument of crucial importance, Boesak focuses on "the relation between racism and capitalism," suggesting that racism is a manifestation of "a far deeper malady."

> While absolutely not minimizing racism as a demonic, pseudo religious ideology (who, coming from South Africa, can?) we must nonetheless ask: Is racism indeed the only *issue?* It seems to us that there is a far deeper malady in the American and South African societies that manifests itself in the form of racism. The deepest motivation of the Portuguese in Southern Africa was not racism. Nor is racism the deepest motivation of the economic colonialism of the United States in Latin America, or of the multinationals all over the "Third World." [64]

Also, the other black theologians affirm, more or less explicitly, that the white power structure must be explained in terms of greed and economic interest. Steve Biko claimed, as we noted, that the white power structure is based on "exploitative values," and, thus, the "capitalistic exploitative tendencies" are the root cause of racism.[65] Motlhabi gives a similar explanation of the apartheid system. The racist myth grew in an "atmosphere of a power and money struggle," he argues; moreover, it served important social functions to justify a system where a few were having a monopoly of power and wealth.[66] Therefore, the myth of racism cannot be treated separately from the socioeconomic structure. "No radical social change will be brought about by attacking the myth without attacking the causes of the myth."[67]

Buthelezi differs, inasmuch as he does not make use of the concept of capitalism itself, neither does he explicitly discuss the relationship between racial oppression and economic structures. Nevertheless, underlying

Buthelezi's critique of racism is some kind of interrelation between the "ethnic and economic gods," and between racism and "the golden calf."[68] Moreover, his discussion of the economic structure stresses the role of profit, suggesting that he—as Biko—is convinced that racism was introduced "for economic reasons."

In short, even though there exist many politically relevant nuances between black theologians, the basic thrust is that there is a close link between the politics of white domination and the economics of capitalism.

It is obvious that the black consciousness's criticism of capitalism has some similarities with the anti-capitalism of Ujamaa. One similarity is that in both cases the pre-colonial social pattern is an important source of inspiration for the critique of the present economic structures. As in Ujamaa theology, capitalism is censured not only for the physical suffering it inflicts but also for its socio-psychological consequences for society. Just as in the Tanzanian socialism, South African theologians argue that the concern for the common good, not individualistic acquisitiveness, should be the guiding principle of economics. In the words of Desmond Tutu:

> In our African understanding, part of Ubantu—being human—is the rare gift of sharing. This concept of sharing is exemplified at African feasts even to this day, when people eat together from a common dish rather than from individual dishes.... Blacks are beginning to lose this wonderful attribute, because we are being inveigled by the excessive individualism of the West. I loathe Capitalism because it gives far too great play to our inherent selfishness.... So I would look for a socio-economic system that placed the emphasis on sharing and giving, rather than on self-aggrandisement and getting. Capitalism is exploitative and I can't stand that.[69]

Another example of this critique of capitalism is Goba's analysis of the notion of "corporate personality" in ancient Israel and Africa. In both cases he finds a "unique idea of solidarity, a social consciousness that rejects and transcends individualism."[70] The communalism of the precolonial society is pitted against the influence of capitalism.

Influenced by capitalism we have become materialistically self-centered and the emphasis seems to be on individual enterprise and material acquisition for the individual—not for the black masses.[71]

As the quotation suggests, individualism is linked with domination, oppression, and economic exploitation.[72] It is deplored that many blacks "have allowed themselves to be victims of individualism and capitalism."[73] "Capitalistic individualism" stands, in other words, not only for the fragmentation of society into competing individuals but also for the

stratification of society into different classes;[74] it is "a structural manifestation of human sickness," argues Mpunzi.

> But individualism is not finished yet. It is necessary to inculcate a sense that it is right that one person should 'succeed' at the expense of others. Thus, almost everything we do is made competitive — try to be at the top of the class, get elected 'footballer of the year' or president of the club, etc. And the usual bedmate of the competitive society is the acquisitive society. Thus 'success' becomes gauged in terms of 'victory' in the various competitions and also in the amounts of money and objects possessed. The 'successful' person is usually the person with 'position' and wealth.

In this sort of authoritarian, racist, capitalistic society the urge to uniqueness and self-expression has become cross individualism. This is a structural manifestation of human sickness.[75]

In short, there is in black theology a more or less distinct option for "socialism" in the sense of a non-exploitative, egalitarian economic system and a distinct critique of the economics of "greed" and "competitive hatred."[76] The blunt censure of capitalism by black theology has often been interpreted as an expression of an ideological, Marxist, myopia. Discussing this argument, we will first analyze the reasons for the rejection of capitalism and then, in the section about the National Security State, elucidate the relationship between black theology and Marxism.

Which types of arguments are used in the black critique of capitalism? Black theologians have from the outset insisted on a reassessment of South African history in the light of the black experience.[77] The apartheid historiography is inclined to see the present distribution of land in South Africa as a result of an amicable process, where black chiefdoms are holding on to what had been traditionally theirs, while the white settlers were moving into areas which, though previously populated, had been left empty as a result of the wars between African peoples.[78] The African struggle against the white settlers has then been understood as evidence of their "savage" nature. In explicit critique of this view, black theologians argue that

> land and cattle was the bone of contention between [the] indigenous people and the white foreigners, right from the onset. For the most part the wars were not caused by the inborn quarrelsomeness of savage and warlike tribes, but by the keen competition of two groups, with very similar agricultural and pastoral habits, for the possession of the most fertile and best-watered stretches of land.[79]

Not surprisingly, black theologians are convinced that profit has been the main concern for the white minority in the shaping of the economic structures of the country. This stance is substantiated by reference to the motives of colonialization, the "wars of dispossession" between white settlers and Africans, and the migrant labour system.

Already in the first black theology writings on "the history of the process of racism in South Africa," racism was seen as an ideology that justified the white conquest of the land and the exploitation of black labour.[80] From the black perspective, the South African history was described as "a history of continuous plunder of land and cattle by European invaders, of devastation and the decimation of peoples, followed by their economic enslavement."[81]

If the hunger for land is viewed as one of the formative factors in the relationship between racism and economy in South Africa, the desire for cheap labour is the other. The role of black labour in grand apartheid is clearly defined in an oft-quoted policy statement by one Colonel C. F. Stallard, chairman of the Transvaal Local Government Commission of 1921, on the principles of African urbanization:

> The native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is wishing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister.[82]

The principle of "Stallardism" is pervasive throughout the system of migrant labour, which comprises a substantial part of the black labour force. The system implies that the "economically useful" (predominantly men) are given access to "white areas" whilst "appendages" (dependent wives and children in particular) of migrant workers are obliged by law to remain in the rural areas, where they have to sustain themselves. Basically, the employer of a migrant worker pays a single man's wage, while the worker's family has to support itself from peasant production, as explained by the manager of Wenela, the recruiting organization for the Chamber of Mines, in the 1970s:

> Our case has always been that we want peasant farmers as labor. Our wage isn't sufficient to meet the needs of a man and his family unless it is augmented by earnings from a plot of land in the man's homeland. A family man from Johannesburg, for instance, couldn't live on what we pay.[83]

For the investors, the system of grand apartheid has been extremely successful. Naturally, the supply of cheap labour has facilitated extraordinary profits. In fact, a leading economist and marketing consultant gives the following argument for investment in South Africa, in a booklet supplied by South African authorities:

> Returns on investments are 'among the best in the world'
> according to an important USA banker; an average of some 15%
> compared with around 10% in the USA. The leading business
> magazine, 'Business Week', recently reported a South African
> after-tax profit percentage of 24.8% for a select group of companies
> in 57 countries outside the USA compared with only from around
> 4 to 6% in the most important European countries and 13.3% in
> Australia.[84]

The same information is given by analysts of different political preferences.

> South Africa remains one of the world's most spectacularly
> profitable countries. Figures differ, but they all point to the same
> conclusion. A US State Department survey has shown that in
> the five years to 1983 US investment 'outperformed' that in all
> other parts of the world. The rate of return in the manufacturing
> sector was 18 per cent and for mining 25 per cent compared with
> averages elsewhere of 12.6 and 13.7 per cent respectively. The
> average British return has been put at 21 per cent, higher even than
> Hong Kong or Singapore where cheap, abundant, and relatively
> unorganised labour is also present.[85]

In short, the different facets of the complicated apartheid system, including
pass laws, contracts, the compound system, and the migratory work system
may be explained in reference to the economic rationality of capitalism.[86]
If the economic advantages of this system are stressed in the dominant
perspective, the perception "from the underside of history" emphasizes
other aspects, of course. In the migrant labour system, blacks have been
reduced to units of labour.[87] The dehumanization of this policy is widely
testified. In church circles, both white and black, it has been a matter of
concern that family life disintegrates in the shadow of this system.[88] There
are, however, different attitudes to these ethical problems. In the so-called
Landman Report, an extensive report on race relations in South Africa
commissioned by the General Synod of (the white) DRC, the system with
migrant workers is defended, with reference to existing structures.

> The economic structure of South Africa is to a large extent
> dependent on the migrant labor system and if this system should
> suddenly be abolished, it would not only lead to a serious
> disruption of the economy general and that of the homelands,
> but would also cause deprivation for the migrant labourers and
> their families.[89]

Black theologians have levelled two fundamental charges against the
Landman Report. First, even though the report claims to represent a universal,
Christian view, it is based on a perception that excludes the black experience.

"Nowhere is there a sign that black people who suffer under this system have had the right to voice their opinion before the commission."[90]

Second, from the perspective of black theology the system of migrant labour cannot be analyzed within the context of an individual ethic but points to the need for a structural critique of capitalism. Accounting for the disastrous effects of the migrant labour system, for example, on black family life, Boesak insists that the solution to this problem can only be solved in terms of structures.

> So, the question for us is not so much, How do we keep these Black families together. Rather the question is, What do we do with an economic system that necessitates such evils? If this is the price of capitalism, then we need to ask some fundamental questions about that.[91]

The quotation makes clear that the black experience is a major argument in Boesak's critique of capitalism. Similarly, Tutu indicts the economic system *inter alia* in reference to the plight of migrant labour.

> It is a system of institutionalised violence, using migratory labour, which *deliberately*, not accidentally, destroys black family life. It is a system that uses structural unemployment, by having reservoirs of unskilled labour in the 'homelands', to provide cheap labour.[92]

It should be noted that the main point of the controversy between black theology and its opponent is not about the interpretation of the economic system as profit-oriented but about what the implications are for theology and race relations. While economy, theology, and race relations may be treated separately in a compartmentalized analysis, the ultimate concern in economic decision-making is a theological question *par excellence* in the holistic paradigm. Accordingly, black theology argues that the ultimate concern of the economic system in South Africa is profit, not the common good. Moreover, it is suggested that this greed has shaped an ethnic hierarchy that has been justified by an ideology of racism. Theologically, this profit-orientation is interpreted as the cult of an idol, Mammon, in reference to its consequences for the underprivileged. In sum, the black experience seems to be the most rational explanation of the black critique of capitalism.

A Contextual Critique of the "Good Intentions" of Afrikaner Nationalism

Afrikaner nationalism is no central theme in black theology. Nevertheless, it is of relevance in a First World context, where the liberal paradigm seems

to be influential. Specifically, the difference between black and hegemonic interpretations of Afrikanerdom is of theological relevance, since it may clarify the profile of a contextual method. Two typical stances in the debate will be discussed, (1) the theory of "good intentions" behind the apartheid policy and (2) a contextual analysis by black theology. Naturally, such a comparison cannot do justice to all aspects of the complex debate on Afrikanerdom but it may elucidate the difference between the liberal and the black theology analyses.

As the name indicates, the theory of the good intentions starts from an analysis of the stated intentions of the apartheid policy. The religious and moral values invoked in the defence of this policy are understood as a true account of the intentions behind the South African system. As an example of such an approach one may quote William de Klerk's well-known *The Puritans in Africa,* which obviously attempts to interpret the South African situation in the light of Reinhold Niebuhr's theology of history, "Christian Realism."[93] "We Who Should Be as Gods" is the significant title of an essay where de Klerk elaborates the same thesis as in his book: "In our own country our finest intentions are strangely being undermined in a way which still escapes our notices. We of the white establishment have held before us as part of our plan for salvation the Ideal of Separate Freedoms.''[94] In a similar vein, other scholars have argued that the social theology of the DRC is a prime example of how "the best intentions" may result in a disaster, when applied to a wrong situation.[95]

If one wants to do justice to the theory of the good intentions, it may be warranted to account for the Afrikaner discussion on race relations before 1948, a material which is often neglected in a First World discussion. The propaganda of the National Party and the official texts of the DRC emphasized, that "the Christian principle of right and justice" should be the basis of the envisaged apartheid policy. More importantly, both in official DRC documents and in popular expositions one may find blunt criticism of "capitalist exploitation," as in the following quotation from the report of the Commission of Inquiry of the Federated D.R. Churches into ecclesiastical and religious conditions in the cities of the Union of South Africa.

> City life is conditioned by capitalist exploitation. The press ... even social legislation, is mostly on the side of capital; the labourer constantly loses out. He needs an advocate, a patron.... The Church must be his father, his champion; the Church must fight for the cause of the oppressed; the Church must preach social justice and must intercede on behalf of better housing, better labour-conditions. The pulpit cannot promulgate laws, but it can propagate ideals.[96]

In fact, it is not difficult to find anti-capitalist declarations in pre-1948 Afrikaner statements, attacking "Hoggenheimer," the symbol of British profit-hunger. Indeed, the notorious Broederbond declared that it wanted to organize those who were fighting for "the small man" against the threat of "imperialism ."[97] Apartheid was presented as a golden opportunity for non-Europeans to realize themselves, unhampered by the trammels of Western civilization and culture. "Ideal apartheid was intended to prevent the economic exploitation by one nation/race by another."[98] In semi-Marxist terminology D. F. Malan promised that the future Afrikaner-dominated republic would pursue an "anti-capitalist" policy, i.e., "Big capital" would not be allowed to exploit any section of the population.[99]

What lessons could be learned from a study of the beautiful promises of "ideal apartheid"? Some students argue that there are fundamental similarities between Afrikaner nationalism and black consciousness, and between the DRC and black theology.[100] The common denominator is found in "the will to power" absolutized in a theology. Therefore, quite a few scholars argue, the theology of Afrikaner nationalism must be defined as a theology of liberation and as a contextual theology, equally as black theology. Unfortunately, these scholars are not very specific in clarifying their definitions, in spite of the quite controversial matter of putting DRC theology and black theology into the same category. It seems, however, that a main argument for the use of the label "liberation theology" is due to the fact that the Afrikaners were struggling against British domination (which may be termed a struggle for liberation), and that their theology undeniably legitimized this struggle.[101] Similarly, it seems that underlying the use of "contextual theology" is the fact that Afrikaner theology was shaped by the needs of the contexts.[102] Such a glib use of "contextual theology" and "liberation theology" may, however, obscure the meaning of these concepts in the new paradigm, since it neglects their critical dimension.

First, the question about the ultimate concern of the engineers of apartheid is veiled by the theory of the good intentions, since the Afrikaner policy is explained in terms of the expressed ideas, ideologies, and values of its agents. "The key to the Afrikaners is Calvinism," de Klerk asserts, when he attempts to explicate the trajectory of apartheid.[103] In criticism of such notions, it has justifiably been argued that the liberal paradigm "presents but a pale, negative mirror-image of the assumptions of Afrikaner nationalist analysis."[104]

In the perspective of the new paradigm, however, it is important to search for "the text behind the text."[105] When the *Landman Report* declares that the system of migrant labour is economically beneficial and in accordance with the will of God, black theologians ask: What is the *ultimate* concern in this report, profit or the justice of God? Similarly, when Afrikaner ideologists tend to identify the will of God and the priorities of the *volk,* it is asked:

What is the fundamental allegiance, God or the *volk*? Such questions are not accidental but intrinsic to the methodology of the new paradigm.

The answers to these questions seem to present a different picture of the Afrikaner religion than in the theory of the good intentions. Black theologians argue that *volk,* race, and profit have been more important concerns in the project of apartheid than the will of God. The main argument for this proposition is *praxis.* "By their fruits ye shall know them," Boesak argues.[106] Underlying these arguments is the above-mentioned criteria for discerning between idols and God. Social, economic, and political facts related to the black experience are cited to establish that the common good has not been the priority of the government.

The theo-logical analysis by black theologians argues that idolatry, rather than religious zeal, is the main liability of Afrikanerdom.[107] The option for race, profit and, *volk,* they suggest, is the root cause of apartheid, while the Afrikaner theology is described as an *a posteriori* legitimation of an idolatrous socioeconomic system.[108] The religious rhetoric of the South African government is interpreted in reference to the false prophets in Israel.

> The deity has been reduced to no more than a symbol—a vital symbol, but nonetheless merely a symbol—not only of the nation's glorious past (the liberation out of Egypt), but also of its future aspirations (in this case the possession of the promised land). Through all this, Yahweh did no more than play a role designated him by the grace of the nation within a situation where *the nation* had the final word.[109]

Even though it is outside the boundaries of this study to discuss the interpretation of Afrikanerdom, it should be noted that recent research seems to corroborate the need for a demythologization of Afrikanerdom. In particular, O'Meara's *Volkskapitalisme* deserves mention in this context. While the liberal paradigm tends to depict Afrikaner nationalism in terms of "an unchanging, timeless ethnicity," O'Meara establishes that it is a historically specific, often surprisingly flexible, always highly fractured and differentiated phenomenon.[110] Moreover, it is demonstrated that the key myths of Afrikanerdom—for example, the myth of the Great Trek—do not reflect the unity of a monolithic *volk.* On the contrary, a historical and critical analysis reveals that these myths were created to conceal profound class conflicts. The aim of these myths, it was explicitly declared, was to "hammer home [to the] broad masses [that] ties of blood and volk come first and those [forged] in work or industry are coincidental."[111] The *Eufees* (centenary) of the Great Trek was by any standard great political and cultural theatre at parity with Hitler's and Mussolini's propaganda campaigns.[112] Significantly, an Afrikaner philosopher described it as a divine deliverance from class divisions.

> When the nation heard its Call, it was not united. Its children were scattered and divided, and frequently stood estranged and hostile against each other.... In two great camps was the nation divided, rendering our volk weak and powerless ... the tree threatened to split down the middle and wither to its roots. But, the ox-wagon came! It called, and all followed.... The ox-wagon made us one again, and now it is my task and your task to ensure that what has been achieved shall not wither away, and that which has been united will never again be sundered.[113]

The harmonizing approach was not only applied on the *volk* itself but shaped also the perception of the "natives." In the emerging apartheid ideology the relationship between the Afrikaner employer and the black employee was described as a community not without idyllic charm.

> The relationship between the Afrikaner and the Native arose through their learning to know and understand each other and because each knew what his duty was towards the other. The Boer regarded the Native as someone for whom he was responsible and from whom he would receive the labour expected of him. The Native regarded the Boer not only as his Master, but also as a friend and helper to whom he could turn for help and advice in times of difficulty. There was mutual trust.[114]

Of course, such a text says nothing about "the good intentions" of Afrikaners but, analyzed in its context and compared with the black experience, it may illustrate the power of ideology.

Second, in spite of all declared "good intentions," the experience of the oppressed has never been a concern for the DRC theology. Also among the advocates of "ideal apartheid" the belief in "the Christian trusteeship of the white race" seems to have been unquestioned.[115] On this score it may be relevant to contrast de Klerk's and Buthelezi's critiques of Afrikanerdom.

In his comparison of the Afrikaner and the black struggle for justice, Buthelezi acknowledges the legitimacy of Afrikaner nationalism. In spite of the role of Afrikaners in the apartheid system, he does not want to "begrudge the Afrikaner clerics for having identified themselves in a creative way with the awakening of Afrikaner consciousness."[116] The Afrikaner quest for freedom and justice is understood as a thoroughly legitimate Christian concern. "It is the same message of the Bible which inspired and enriched the spirit of the Afrikaner in the great South African wilds which is motivating us to sing the song of Black Theology."[117] Nevertheless, Buthelezi does not want to equate the two theologies. He is quite critical of the "theological excesses" of theologians who refuse to give other groups what they assume for themselves.[118]

The Afrikaner's misreading of his own history, Buthelezi suggests, consists in that he has understood it as a singular and unique experience, which cannot be repeated by others.[119] In other words, the problem of Afrikaner nationalism is not its self-affirmation but its lack of equality and mutuality; the Afrikaner experience of oppression by the "Hoggenheimers" did not create any solidarity with the most oppressed, the blacks.[120]

Equally as de Klerk, Buthelezi is critical of the absolutization of Afrikaner thought. Yet, they differ significantly since de Klerk focuses on the relation between the Afrikaner and certain *ideas* (the blacks are absent in his analysis[121]) while the absolutization for Buthelezi consists in the exclusion of *the experience of other human beings.*

As we recall, the experience of the oppressed is the crucial factor in the new paradigm. In the South African context, the oppressed are predominantly blacks and it is a well-known fact that the dominant Afrikaner theology has never opted for the blacks as interlocutors. Can one then define it as a theology of liberation? Obviously, the answer must be in the negative, since the apartheid project is antagonistic to a theological reflection based on the black experience. In fact, it could be argued that racist legislation in South Africa aims at "protecting" the privileged from the challenge of the experience of the oppressed. In short, when the DRC theology is defined as a theology of liberation, one forgets that this theology affirms a policy that in practice insulates the white minority from the black experience.[122]

Also, in the description of the DRC theology as "contextual" one looks in vain for an adequate definition. Underlying this use of the term is a definition so wide that it will apply to virtually any theology. "In a sense all theology is … notably by the socio-cultural context in which it is developed," according to the proponents of the new paradigm.[123] In the new paradigm, however, the label "contextual theology" denotes a *critical* reflection on the context. In the words of Allan Boesak: A contextual theology remains critical and prophetic as regards the situational experience, because it is critical reflection on the liberation praxis under commitment to the Word of God.[124]

In other words, a contextual theology in this sense highlights the relationship to "the other," since the salient feature of one's own context may only be discovered in the encounter with persons seeing it from outside. Consequently, the privileged cannot be contextual, unless they "discover" the otherness of the underprivileged. In a First World context it is often forgotten that there will be a fundamental asymmetry between the privileged and the underprivileged in the awareness of the "others." The dominated are always conscious of the perceptions of the dominant but the inverse is not true. The implications of this stance for the privileged is clearly spelled out in a detailed scheme by Robert McAfee Brown. Interpreting the hermeneutics of liberation theology as a process between the text—the

reader— "the others," he suggests that it includes seven stages, of which the first three are well-known from Western scholarship:

1. a text (let us say, the writings of a prophet)

2. the context of the text (let us say, a time of oppression)

3. our interpretation of a and b, that is to say, of the text in its context

4. our context *as seen by us* (let us say, not a context of oppression but of prosperity, which will condition how we approach the text, what we look for in it, what we hear it saying, and so forth)

5. our context *as seen by others* (let us say, those who live under an oppression similar to that under which the biblical writer lived, and who feel that our prosperity is made possible by our exploitation of them)

6. our own context as seen by us once we have listened to the others—so that we now see the text in a new way and thus *approach our own context in a newer way still*

7. our own context as seen by us once we have listened to the others—so that we now see our context in a new way and thus *approach the text in a new way.*[125]

The quotation makes clear that a white theology in South Africa cannot claim to be contextual, unless it reinterprets its own context in the light of the black experience.

The Anti-Communist Ideology of the National Security State

If the debate about the intentions behind apartheid policy may elucidate the contextual method, a study of the National Security State (hereafter NSS) doctrine may clarify the place of Marxism in the new paradigm.[126] It will be argued that a proper interpretation of the dynamics of the NSS is a necessary prerequisite for an analysis of the conflict concerning Marxism.

The security doctrine was at first only an element in the dominant ideology of separate development, but it has of late grown into a major theme of Afrikaner thinking. Indeed, the edge of the conflict between black theology and the South African government in the age of neoapartheid may be found in the dissensus on the NSS. From the perspective of the government, the socio-political critique of black theologians is a religious disguise of an alleged communist "onslaught" on South Africa, while black

theology defines the NSS doctrine as a deification of the state. In a First World context this aspect of the South African ideology is of particular relevance for several reasons. First, the argument of anticommunism, which is a dominant feature in the NSS doctrine, clearly serves as a uniting bond between the South African government and influential political groups in the First World. "In its alliances with national security ideologies, racism has acquired a new cloak of respectability and has become even more pervasive," according to Boesak.[127] Second, in the debate on liberation theology the role of Marxism in the new paradigm is a central issue. Third, the central role of anti-communism and the NSS doctrine in neo-apartheid is frequently overlooked in the Western context, also in the anti-apartheid movement. Fourth, the campaign of "hearts and minds," which is central in the security doctrine, elucidates the role of consciousness, culture, and religion in the struggle against apartheid.

Four aspects of the security doctrine may be of special significance in a study on black theology. First, the theoretical basis of the NSS thought is the affirmation that the fundamental conflict in South Africa is not a struggle between apartheid and the democratic movement but between communism and freedom. Claiming that the policy of the government safeguards "blacks against the unnecessary cruel deeds by terrorists," State President P. W. Botha summarized the fundamental credo of the NSS doctrine as follows: "The struggle in South Africa is not a struggle between Black and White but between democratic institutions and communist dictatorship."[128] In fact, the main argument against the liberation movement, especially ANC, is its alleged "communism."[129]

Obviously, "guilt by association" is a very common device in this argument. Also, a very superficial association with communism is taken as evidence for participation in the alleged onslaught instigated by "the Kremlin." An example may clarify this device. Even as staunch an anti-communist as Rudolf Bultmann is officially linked with the "total onslaught" by a sequence of associations: (1) Bultmann was influenced by Fleidegger's existential analysis; (2) Heidegger's philosophy has some affinity with Sartre's existentialism; (3) Sartre was a communist during a period of his life; (4) communists, it is implied, are always agents of Moscow.[130]

Therefore, "communism" denotes in South African government thought a wide spectrum of political dissent from liberal reform to Marxist revolution, as noted by *The Kairos Document:*

> Anything that threatens the status quo is labelled 'communist'. Anyone who opposes the State and especially anyone who rejects its theology is simply dismissed as a 'communist'.... The State uses the label 'communist' in an uncritical and unexamined way as its symbol of evil.... This is a very convenient way of frightening some

people into accepting any kind of domination and exploitation by a capitalist minority.[131]

In theological terms, the main argument for the communist charge against black theology is "horizontalism." The strong commitment to social and political justice is taken as evidence for the proposition that "this theology is employed as a means to an end."[132] Underlying the charge of "horizontalism" is a dichotomy between horizontal and vertical aspects of Christianity.

> It is clear that [Black Theology], under the influence of Communist ideology, will emphasize only the "horizontal aspect" (the relationship between man and his fellow men), doing so at the expense of the "vertical" aspect (the relationship between man and God).[133]

An analysis of the official pronouncements in the reports of the Le Grange-Schlebusch and Steyn Commissions as well as in the trial of the South African Council of Churches (hereafter SACC) corroborates the paramount importance of the NSS doctrine in the religious policy of South Africa today.[134] Similarly, when the government bans black theology writings and in different ways persecutes its protagonists, this policy is legitimized — in accordance with the NSS doctrine — with reference to the alleged "communism" of this mode of thought, not with reference to its antiracist position. Also, in the DRC theology the communist charge is of importance, as seen in the debate between DRC and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. When the Alliance suspended the DRC, it also defined three conditions for a readmission of the church: (1) not to exclude black Christians from church services, especially not from Holy Communion; (2) to support the victims of the apartheid system; (3) to commit the church to dismantling apartheid (or separate development) in both church and politics.[135] In an official statement the DRC refused to accept these three conditions, arguing that they prescribe a political choice, "whereby we become a partner of those forces which... promote the objectives of godless communist imperialism."[136] In sum, the demand for "one person one vote" and any other demand for structural change of the South African system (as opposed to reforms inside the system) are suppressed in reference to an anti-communist ideology.[137]

Second, since the war with communism is viewed as a "total onslaught" there is a need of a *total strategy.* All facets of national life, including the legislature and executive, the business community, the police, the mass media, churches, and academic institutions are organized with one aim, to defend the NSS. The ultimate criterion of a national security policy, claims one of its protagonists, lies in the way in which its constituent functioning parts and processes can be related so that they complement, strengthen, and

support one another and attain, in a total pattern, the strength of unity.[138] Put differently, in a total strategy one may use any means deemed necessary to attain the end of "state security." In South Africa and other security states we will therefore find the following phenomena: militarization of the country; an extremely powerful security police; detention without trial; the banning of people, organizations, and meetings; telephone tapping and the opening of mail; censorship of all mass media; official secrecy about prisons; interrogation under torture; use of informers and spies; people dying in prison or "committing suicide" there; demonstrators being attacked with tear gas or bullets. Paradoxically, these phenomena are legitimized as defence of freedom, democracy, Christianity, and Western civilization against the "total onslaught."[139]

Third, the NSS policy puts special emphasis on campaigns to win the "hearts and minds" of the black population. Warfare is 80 per cent social, psychological, or political and only 20 per cent military, the NSS theoreticians repeatedly argue. Differently put, ideas are more important than weapons in the struggle against "the power of darkness and Marxism." Therefore, religion and culture are of special significance in "the South African conflict and threat situation."[140]

Fourth, the highest aim of the total strategy is the security or survival of the *state.* Consequently, no ethical or theological criteria apply to the state. As a student of the NSS doctrine notes: "Every and any means can be justified if it is deemed necessary for state security."[141]

Black theologians have levelled two charges against the NSS doctrine, questioning its concept of security and the ultimate importance attributed to state security. In Buthelezi's discussion on the NSS doctrine he acknowledges that the need for security is "a legitimate quest."

> But what kind of security? Security from what? Has it ever occurred to you that security is what the Gospel is about, and that theology has a definite role to play in this regard? Black theology has a contribution to make here. The theological basis for security is Christ's atoning work. It is Christ's act of bringing reconciliation between God and man which accounts for security.
>
> Reconciliation is security.... Without reconciliation there can never be security. This is the message which a liberated church must preach to a society that waits to be liberated into a sense of security. It is because whites have rated reconciliation as such a low priority that insecurity seems still to be the order of the day in spite of all laws and arms.[142]

The quotation makes clear that security for Buthelezi is a social relation based on reconciliation. To increase the amount of arms in the hope of achieving security is criticized as a self-deception; authentic security cannot be achieved by arms. "The only sure foundation of security in our country

is mutual forgiveness which yields the security of knowing that the one who was my enemy has now become my friend."[143]

Similarly, as in the discussion on race, the distinction between the ultimate and the penultimate level may clarify the black theology critique of the NSS; security is a legitimate quest but it cannot be absolutized. This brings us to the second point of criticism, that the NSS confuses God and the idols in its quest for security. In particular Allan Boesak repeatedly asks: "In what does white, Christian South Africa place its trust?"[144] Justice and righteousness are necessary for security, he argues in reference to Isaiah 58:6-9. And he continues:

> Instead of this, white South Africans are advised to place their trust in yet more "security" laws, in yet more detentions without trial, in an abominable alliance with injustice and a violence that can only escalate.[145]

The same theme recurs in a sermon in the wake of the so-called Information scandal—which, one could say, brought P. W. Botha and the NSS doctrine into power—where Boesak refers to the "continuing and sharpening clash between the Messiah and the emperor," which is reflected in the Book of Revelation. "The conflicting loyalties were clearly spelled out: God or idol; Lord or emperor; Domitian, the son of the gods, or the Son of God. Which name should be avowed?"[146] In short, the black theology critique of the NSS doctrine must be analyzed in a theological perspective. Also, in this context black Christians ask, What is the ultimate concern of the South African whites?[147]

If one compares the Afrikaner nationalism and the NSS doctrine, some similarities are obvious. The former has always been articulated in confrontation with imagined or real outward enemies (possibly a heritage from the *trekboers* at "the frontier"), especially "the black peril," "the red peril" (communism), and the "Hoggenheimers." Therefore, the emphasis on security in the NSS doctrine fits well into the Afrikaner tradition. Moreover, the absolutization of the *volk* in Afrikaner nationalism has some affinity with the absolutization of the state in the NSS.[148] Yet, there are four basic differences between Afrikaner nationalism and the doctrine of the security state: in the social basis, in the ruling institutions, in the ethos, and in the attitude to petty and grand apartheid.

First, while the Afrikaner nationalism tried to rally all Afrikaners, regardless of social position behind a common policy, the NSS doctrine has a different social basis, addressing the more privileged strata, be they Afrikaners, English-speaking, or Africans. One example of this "flirt" with the Africans in the vein of the NSS doctrine, is P. W. Botha's speech to the Easter meeting of the Zion Christian Church, one of the independent churches, in 1985.[149] In his address, Botha emphasized values such as "law,

order and authority" and therefore called the black Christians, to join hands with the whites in the struggle against "the forces of darkness" and "the messengers of terror," phrases which obviously referred to what here is called the liberation movement. Moreover, Botha called the members of the congregation to combat this movement in the name of God. "Our trust in God must enable us to withstand evil with firmness," he asserted.[150]

Cooperation with African Independent Churches was a low priority in the traditional Afrikaner nationalism, but when Botha calls the members of the Zion church to support the security of the state, it dovetails with the NSS doctrine. Obviously, President Botha hopes that black Christians—in accordance with "the total strategy"—will join hands with the Afrikaners under the banner of anti-communism. As we have seen, the Afrikaner nationalism united Afrikaners from different classes, concealing social contradictions behind the myth of the Afrikaner *volk.* In the NSS doctrine the "communist peril" may have a similar symbolic function in its attempts to unite whites and the black middle class in a joint struggle against structural change.

It may be noted that this propaganda has not been without success. An opinion poll of South African soldiers engaged in military operations revealed that 90 per cent of them said that they were fighting to defend Christianity against the threat by "atheistic communism."[151] Similarly, it is reported that not only white but also black Christians have been influenced by the government propaganda that black theology is "communist-inspired."[152]

Second, "the 'Total strategy' is based on the institutionalisation of a new alignment of political forces in the state."[153] The Afrikaner nationalism was based upon a complex of Afrikaner institutions, such as the Broederbond, the National Party, and FAK (the Afrikaner cultural union). When South Africa develops into a security state the military, however, is given a vitally important institutionalized role in the daily governing of the country, as seen in the significance of the National Security Council.[154] The prominence given to the military in the NSS can be explained both genetically and functionally. Genetically, the NSS doctrine was created among militaries and its rapidly growing influence increases, therefore, their prestige. Functionally, the interpretation of the South African conflict as caused by "a total onslaught" from Moscow places the military at the center, both as a means of defence against the "onslaught" and as model for other institutions in the struggle against the alleged Soviet aggression. In the climate of "total war" against "the Marxist threat," the militarization affects all sectors of civil life.

Third, the traditional Afrikaner moral has conventionally (maybe somewhat exaggeratedly) been described as rigid, moralistic, and individualistic. Now it is replaced by a flexible and pragmatic behaviour, aiming at the defence of the *status quo* at any cost. The military pragmatism

has two seemingly contradictory consequences, increased repression, when necessary to safeguard the system, and a human approach, to "win hearts and minds," when beneficial for state security. In the sustained conflict between the military and the security police, the former has insisted on a pragmatic policy, arguing that it is necessary to modify the existing system to make it "militarily defensible."[155]

The pragmatism of the NSS doctrine may be explained within a military rationality which is similar to the capitalist rationality of costs and benefits. The only constraint in the struggle against the "total onslaught" of Soviet communism, it seems, is that the costs of repression must not exceed its benefits. In this calculation—as we understand it—the costs are mainly of political nature, since repression, if accounted for in mass media, may increase the critique of apartheid in South Africa and in a global context. The Soweto massacres in 1976, for example, had adverse economic consequences for the apartheid system. This interpretation of the South African security policy as based upon a calculation from the perspective "from above," aiming at a maximum of repression to a minimum of political costs, may explain a paradox perplexing to some observers. The neo-apartheid system is a highly sophisticated structure, according to this interpretation, differing from the rigid and easily discernible patterns of oppression in, for example, communist countries. In the South African context an appalling violence may be combined with "reforms," if it is deemed appropriate in terms of state security.

Fourth, while petty and grand apartheid were intertwined in the traditional Afrikaner nationalism, the two types of segregation are evaluated differently in the NSS. The territorial segregation is needed for the continuous supply of cheap labour and, one could argue, for the preservation of the *status quo.* Petty apartheid, by contrast, could be scrapped, since it has no vital function for state security but high political "costs," in relation to English-speaking whites, Africans, and the international opinion.

Paradoxically, this development will give an appearance of deracialization, even though the white power structure may be entrenched, when constitutional safeguards progressively are removed. Equipped with the wide arsenal of means of a "total strategy" the government may ruthlessly suppress anti-apartheid activists.[156] Therefore, black theologians argue, the basic goals of apartheid—white supremacy and the subordination of black economic, social, and political needs to minority interests—remain unchanged in contemporary South Africa, in spite of comprehensive "reforms."

Having clarified features of the NSS doctrine that are of relevance in its conflict with black theology, we shall now elucidate the place of Marxism in this theology. In this discussion three points will be emphasized. It should first of all be noted that underlying the different positions on the role of

Marxism in the South African liberation theology are different perceptions of the actual situation of the blacks. While the protagonists of the *status quo* do not deny that there are certain problems in South Africa, they typically claim that these problems are exaggerated in the black theology critique and in the anti-apartheid movement. As one observer notes, many white Christians saw in the Soweto uprisings "an unjustified outburst."[157] Similarly, black theologians repeatedly are criticized for making mountains out of molehills in their denunciation of the existing system. Differently put, it is argued that there is no reason for the profound criticism of the existing system by black theology, since the existing problems are settled step by step in a process of reform. In sum, the structural critique is not caused by legitimate grievances but due to an ideological seduction by foreign agents.[158]

Certainly, most readers acknowledge that this argument holds no water at all; it should be obvious that the demand for structural change in South Africa is based on legitimate grievances against the apartheid system. Nevertheless, the NSS argument is of importance in a clarification of the significance of the contrast experiences in a discussion on Marxism and Christianity. In other words, the communist charge may be explained as the consequence of a social construction of reality which has excluded the black experience. The protagonists of apartheid need to believe that the blacks—when not seduced by "outside agitators"—accept this policy. By contrast, if one accepts that blacks are oppressed in South Africa, there is no reason to explain their structural critique of the apartheid system as the outcome of an ideological seduction by "the Kremlin."

Some readers may wonder, then, if not the black critique may be legitimate, in part, and caused by ideological myopia, in part. In response to such a comment one must ask, however, for the criterion of ideological distortion. Naturally, a theoretical articulation of contrast experiences will appear as exaggerated for the privileged, since it does not fit into their perception of reality. Therefore, the black critique must be discussed in relation to the black experience. As long as nobody has established that the black theology critique lacks foundation in the black experience, it is unwarranted to explain away this critique by reference to ideological distortions.

Second, the NSS doctrine defines the place of Marxism in quasi-religious terms—pointedly, one is either a communist or an anti-communist—while the use of Marxist analysis by black theology fits in neither of these two categories. In the Tanzanian analysis it was established that Ujamaa is informed but not dictated by Marxism; even though it deviates significantly from classical Marxism, its critique of capitalism reveals that it belongs to the Marxian *Wirkungsgeschichte.* This conclusion applies also to black theology and its blunt rejection of the economics of "the white power structure."

The sustained debate on "class" and "race" in social analysis—arguably the most extensive theoretical argument of black theology—may substantiate this statement.[159] When black consciousness and black theology emerged, they encountered a communist class analysis in which class and race were seen as mutually exclusive categories of interpretation. Faced with the choice between class and race, black theology and black consciousness unequivocally opted for race as analytical category. Praxis seems to have been the main argument for this option. The prevalent interpretation of class analysis suggested that blacks should cooperate with "poor whites" but such a cooperation across the race lines was seen as an unrealistic option by many blacks.[160] However, during the 1970s some started to question the communist *Fragestellung:* class *or* race. In the analysis of the black experience, the class concept was more and more seen as a valuable device.[161] At the ICT conference in 1984, both class and race categories were acknowledged.

> Categories of race and class have sometimes been used exclusively, and therefore erroneously, in an attempt to understand the reality of oppression in South Africa. We affirm that within South African society neither race nor class can be considered primarily or exclusively as a category of analysis. Instead, it is the combination of these categories and others such as sexism that reinforce the oppression of the masses of the Black community.[162]

The quotation justifies two comments. First, the use of class analysis may be defined as a Marxist influence. Second, the multi-dimensional analysis advocated by the conference is incompatible with classical Marxism and, still more, with Marxism-Leninism. If black theology and black consciousness were instigated by "the Kremlin," it would be difficult to explain the complex and heated discussions on class and race. Even though one certainly can assess the positions taken in this debate differently, they do not give an impression of remote-controlled marionettes but rather of a quest for a theoretical clarification of a fundamental experience. The black theology' analysis is an offence both to First World capitalism and Second World communism. Its critique of capitalism and its insistence that racial oppression, though created "for economic reasons," cannot be reduced to economic categories, does not fit into the established East-West categories. In short, a diachronic analysis of the influence of Marxist thought in black theology reveals that the contrast experience, not a political ideology, has been the point of departure.[163] In sum, Marxism has been attractive because it has proved to be one of the devices that may clarify the black experience.

This conclusion accounts also for the growing interest in Marxism, which is obvious in the black theology writings from the 1980s. The bloody suppression of the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and the banning of the black consciousness organizations stressed the need for new theoretical tools.

According to this interpretation, the main cause of the deepened interest in Marxism will not be found in external causes but in the dynamics of the South African situation. To phrase it in experience terms: When the so-called South African Defence Forces are on patrol in the black townships, protected by their *kasspirs,* behaving as an occupation force in an enemy country, they are teaching the need for Marxist analysis in a more convincing way than boring pamphlets from Progress Publishers in Moscow.

Even though it is difficult to assess the relationship between black theology and classical Marxism as long as it is impossible to have a free discussion in South Africa, two aspects may be noted. First, it is evident that Marxism is not accepted wholesale but it is equally obvious that black theologians refuse to accept the anti-communist taboos of the NSS doctrine. In fact, Marxism is of relevance in black theology mainly in the analysis of capitalism as a transient mode of production. Second, there are important differences between black theology and classical Marxism: the black theology critique of capitalism has a theo-logical framework in which the capitalist cult of Mammon is seen as a major obstacle for faith in the true God; not surprisingly, racism plays a much more central role in the black theology analysis than in European Marxism; as a consequence of the importance given to racial oppression, the interrelation between the socioeconomic and the cultural levels of a social formation is emphasized more than e.g., in Soviet Marxism[164]; the experience of the oppressed, also a consequence of the aspires emphasis on the black experience, is far more important than e.g., in Marxism-Leninism; equally as Ujamaa, black consciousness defines itself as an attitude of mind and a way of life, a stance that is defined as "idealism" by orthodox Marxist-Leninists.[165] In sum, even though there are many different positions vis-a-vis Marxism in black theology, it is evident that none of these can be characterized as an uncritical and wholesale acceptance of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Such misunderstandings seem to be caused by the specific dynamics of the NSS doctrine.

Conclusion

The findings of the exposition of the social analysis of black theology may be summarized in four points. First, in view of prevalent misunderstandings the most important finding of this chapter concerns the epistemological status of the black theology analysis of apartheid. As we have seen, this analysis is based on the black experience and open for an intersubjective argumentation. This finding is of special relevance in a discussion about the reason of conflictual analysis and the role of Marxism.

Second, black theology and the liberal paradigm represent different modes of analysis which must not be confused. While racism in the liberal

paradigm is described as the *cause* of exploitation, black theologians understand it as the *justification* of exploitation. Our concern in this study has not been to argue for the black analysis but to establish its independence. This finding is of crucial importance in a First World context, where the black theology perspective seems to be neglected, also in sympathetic studies and in the anti-apartheid movement.[166]

Third, in a First World context the difference between the liberal and the black analyses are of specific relevance since they represent different definitions of the complicity of the West, and also different strategies. In the liberal paradigm, the Western society, by and large, is innocent of apartheid. If one accepts this analysis, "constructive engagement" may be a viable solution. Black theologians, by contrast, insist that the South African racism is the most blatant expression of a "white power structure." This analysis implies that the struggle against apartheid must also be a struggle for a change of the economic and political structures on the global level. The conflict between the two analyses of racism is also of significance since it could be argued that the liberal interpretation of apartheid is dominating both the Western churches and the Western societies at large, not because of a conscious and argued rejection of the black theology analysis but because of ignorance about this option.

Fourth, in spite of its unfinished character the social analysis of black theology is of crucial importance in theology, since it articulates the truth claims of the black experience. In reference to these contrast experiences, it is argued that the ultimate concern of the existing system in South Africa is not the common good but idols as profit, racial identity, *volk,* and security. This proposition is fundamental for the theological reformulation by South African blacks and, in particular, for their concept of reconciliation.

Chapter 5

Conversion to the Wholeness of Life

In the theological reformulation of black theology, we will focus on the theme "conversion to the wholeness of life," which may summarize the dialectics between conflictual analysis and consensualism. In the analysis we will pay special attention to the common argument that black theology promotes conflict rather than love and reconciliation and that it is "too political" and not sufficiently "religious."

While Ujamaa theology and black theology so far have been treated as movements where ideas and conceptions have been synthetized, we will in the major part of this chapter adopt a more conventional method in systematic theology, analyzing the conceptions of two individual theologians. This shift in methodology is motivated by the following deliberations: Buthelezi's dialectics of church and creation and Boesak's discourse on *metanoia* in South Africa are important intellectual concepts whose structure is most easily perceived if treated separately. Moreover, the shift in methodology might contribute to an understanding of the interaction between individual and communal aspects of black theology.

A Theology of the Wholeness of Life

One question recurs in Buthelezi's authorship and is, moreover, given such places of prominence which suggests that the problem must have a structuring function in his theological concept, namely, "But God, why did you create us?" Originally this provocative question was formulated in an essay by another African pastor, the Reverend P.J. Mthethwa, but obviously Buthelezi finds it to be an adequate expression for the black experience and a subject for theological reflection.[1] The question reflects the agony of being black in an apartheid society. Clearly, when a group of people ask, "But God, why did you create us?", the question implies that they have been robbed of something essential in life and therefore they ask *de profundis* about the source and purpose of human life. Commenting on Mthethwa's discussion of the question, Buthelezi states:

> Two things stand out prominently in these remarks: a frustrated search for identity in God's creation and a perplexed search for identity in the company of fellow believers. The existential quest focuses on the concepts "creation" and "church." This is because, as we shall see later, "creation" and "church" are categories through which we apprehend the nuances of the totality of human existence. On the one hand, man, wherever he is and no matter what his particular situation in life, always stands before God in a given creational relationship. On the other hand, the nature of human existence in the church is properly understood and defined to the extent to which it is seen as an aspect of the wholeness of life in the totality of created existence before God.[2]

The dialectic between "a frustrated search for identity in God's creation" and "a perplexed search for identity in the company of fellow believers" expresses the polarity in Buthelezi's theology: creation and church.

Buthelezi's dissertation, "Creation and the Church", is an analysis of "the dynamics of human existence" and the ministry of the church, in response to Mthethwa's question. The first part offers a "theological characterization of the nature of human existence before God in and without faith in Christ."[3] In the second part—entitled "'Creation' and 'Church' as Categories for Describing Corporate Forms of Existence Before God"—this analysis is elaborated in corporate terms. Three topics are covered in this part: the wholeness of life, the relationship between the church and the world, and the difference between the "ethnographic" and the "anthropological" approach.[4]

Creation and the Wholeness of Life

It is a well-known fact that creation is an important locus in Lutheran theology, and this is also true for Buthelezi. The Lutheran theology of creation has often in the past had a conservative tone, as for example, in the idea of the supposedly eternal and unchangeable *Schöpfungsordnungen* (creational orders). Such an understanding of creation has been coupled with a sharp division between the political and the spiritual "kingdom," emphasizing the *Eigengesetzlichkeit* (ethical autonomy) of the former and thereby rendering it illegitimate for a theologian *qua* theologian to evaluate a political or economic system.

When Buthelezi emphasizes faith in God the Creator, his concern is actually quite the opposite, to emphasize " the wholeness of life."[5] To believe in God as the Creator implies that human life in all its spheres is based on a relation to God, also in politics and economics, since the "'created reality' is *ipso facto* an existent before God."[6] Consequently, "it is impossible to grasp this concept of the wholeness of life if one does not take seriously the fact

that God is the Creator of all things."[7] In short, all hum an life is a life *coram Deo,* and therefore a totality.

> In, with, and under the given structures of human existence we receive the gift of life which continually puts us in a state of indebtedness to that which is outside and beyond ourselves. We cannot bypass what is around us and what is already given in life, in order to be at a point where God can bestow his gifts to us. Life in which we participate as men is the point where God meets us with his gifts, e.g., food, children, health, protection, etc. Life is therefore our place of rendezvous with God.[8]

The notion of "life" as the place where God meets humankind with his gifts implies, Buthelezi argues, that human life in all its dimensions has "sacramental character." The empirical life in its social, economic, and political dimensions is the only meeting place with God.[9]

Analyzed within the context of First World confessional traditions, it is not difficult to detect a Lutheran flavour in this emphasis of the wholeness of life and of human existence as life *coram Deo.*[10] Moreover, Buthelezi's explicit critique of a dichotomic "pietism" and his appreciation of "the earthiness of Luther" reveals a clear affinity to certain strands of Western Lutheranism.[11] In a European context it should not be forgotten, however, that Buthelezi's concept of the wholeness of life — even though it is elaborated in dialogue with Western theology — is firmly rooted in African soil.

> It has been rightly said that the African has a sense of the wholeness of life. The traditional African religion was characterised by the wholeness of life; it is even more correct to say that religion and life belonged together. Far from being a department of life, religion was life. As a result of this it lacked institutional symbols which would have marked it off from daily life. There was no separate community of religious people because everyone who participated in the life of the community also participated in its religion.
>
> The continuity of fellowship between the living and the dead was analogous to the interplay between the supernatural and natural worlds. Life was so much a whole that not even death could disintegrate it. Thus, death was not regarded as a point which marked the termination of fellowship among those who had been in communion on this side of the grave. This solidarity between the living and the dead was possible because of the active presence of the Creator of life, from whose presence neither the living nor the dead could escape. His presence was an existential experience on the part of man. The validity of this presence did not depend on the extent to which it was conceptualised. In other

words, it was as one participated in life that one apprehended God's presence.[12]

The concept of the wholeness of life is inspired by the Zulu concept of *impilo*, which means both "wholeness" and "life."[13] Similarly as Peter Kijanga, Buthelezi argues that the holistic conception in African pre-colonial culture is a help for Africans to reappropriate biblical insights that have been obliterated in the individualistic and compartmentalized Western context. Conversion to Christianity, it is suggested, has alienated Africans from the "African insight" of wholeness.[14] Stating this, Buthelezi is fully aware that Christian faith relates to all dimensions of human life. Therefore, he pleads for a re-thinking of Christian creation faith on the basis of insights of African culture. The similarity between liberation theology in South Africa and in other parts of Africa is obvious when Buthelezi quotes in full agreement a West African theologian, who is also drawing from the African heritage in the reclaim of the faith in God as Creator.

> This warping of Christian thought in Africa concerning the relation of God to the world is in opposition to the biblical insight of our day and to the best traditions of the people of Africa. Man in traditional African society never separated the sacred from the secular as he was later taught to do. The routine of daily life, the momentous crises of human experience, both individual and public affairs, have all been seen as realms over which the almighty reigned supreme. Unfortunately, conversion to Christianity has meant, among other things acceptance of the view that life can be divided into spiritual and material, worldly and heavenly; and God has been thought of as being in control only of the spiritual. Society has been viewed as if it were only in the control of man. Catechumens have been led to repeat the Apostles' Creed. 'God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,' and at the same time to behave as if the earth were outside God's sovereign control and better left in the hands of the 'princes of the world.'[15]

Could one, then, say that Buthelezi's holistic theology is a monistic theology? Undeniably, a theology of creation has not seldom been a legitimation of the *status quo*. Buthelezi is, however, quite critical of "a theology of tranquillity," which he considers illegitimate "in times of restlessness" when people are alienated from "the wholeness of contemporary life." [16] Therefore, "a theology of the wholeness of life" is not a denial of the reality of sin. Inversely, sin is interpreted as "the opposite of the act of creation, whose ultimate purpose is the promotion of life."[17] In other words, sin is the destruction of the "wholeness of life," not only in religious but also in political, cultural, social, and economic terms. Consequently, in Buthelezi's

theology "wholeness of life" has two meanings, which both are related to God's creation. First, it is a holistic concept, denoting life in its totality. Second, it is a critical principle which is used to distinguish between sin and God's will.[18]

The critical dimension of "wholeness of life" in this conception derives from the fact that creation faith describes not only the source but also the purpose of human life. In other words, to believe in God as Creator is not only an assertion about the source of human life in a "pre-lapsarian past" but also an eschatological definition of the purpose of life in relationship to God and to other human beings. Since "creation is a dynamic and contemporary event" it should determine all relations in all spheres of life.[19]

> The category of creation makes it possible for us to discern the theological dimension of what appears to be merely sociological and cultural problems. There can never be a violation of human integrity which does not have a theological basis as well as theological implications in as far as man—Christian or non-Christian—is always man before God.[20]

The quotation bears out that in Buthelezi's holistic perspective not only personal attitudes but also the socioeconomic and political structures have to be measured with the yardstick of *the wholeness of life.* "What determines the morality of the act is the extent to which its performance promotes the w ell-being of the neighbour."[21]

What implications does creation faith, using "wholeness of life" as its criterion, have for the analysis of South African society?[22] Buthelezi discusses here the contradiction between the pious declarations of the white minority about love and service of God, on one hand, and its unwillingness to share power and wealth with the black majority, on the other. Theologically, Buthelezi explains this contradiction as a confusion of faith in God and love for the neighbour. In the proud declarations of service of God, the neighbours are not taken seriously, since they are regarded as "proxies" for God. Differently put, there is no real concern for the neighbour's well-being in this kind of love; the neighbour is perceived as a means to an end. On the contrary, when people truly understand the relation between faith and love, they accept their neighbours as the one towards whose welfare all their efforts in this life are directed.

Human creatureliness implies not only a relatedness to God but also to the rest of creation. Differently put, faith in the Creator means that the rest of creation must be recognized as God's creation. "It is a relation of solidarity in creation under God," implying mutual acceptance between his creatures.[23]

Referring to Luther, Buthelezi argues, however, that there is a fundamental difference between the relationship to God and to the neighbours: God doesn't *need* good works; it is the neighbour who needs

them. "Man in faith is man for others."[24] This thought from Lutheran theology recurs in Buthelezi's writings and he has expanded on it to show its bearings on Christian life in South Africa. His exposition of "alienation as an experience of 'dropping' from the wholeness of life" is here of relevance. In this context, Buthelezi focuses on the actual living conditions of the black majority, especially in an extensive but politically cautious analysis of the migrant labour system.[25] Human creatureliness implies that power is an intrinsic dimension of the humanity of human beings. In words that recall the Ujamaa emphasis on participation, Buthelezi insists that to be denied participation in power is to be degraded to subhuman life and to be excluded from one's proper place in creation.[26] As many other African theologians, Buthelezi is weary of a religious paternalism, full of "love" but uninterested in mutuality and equality.

> 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... He will begin to have faith in himself as a man after we have had faith in him as our fellow-man, that is, after we have 'accepted' him as a fellow-participant in the wholeness of life.[27]

If "man 's creaturely relatedness to God" is the basis of human dignity and integrity, it follows that an evaluation of persons according to ethnic criteria is a denial of creation and a sign of idolatry. In apartheid, by contrast, "the values of the superior race become the criterion."[28]

The relationship between this holistic theology and the black theology analysis of apartheid is obvious. Differently put, the social analysis of black theologians cannot be properly understood if restricted to the field of social science but must be examined in its relationship to the black experience and to the holistic theology.

Buthelezi and other black theologians have frequently been criticized for "horizontalism" because of their involvement in "secular issues." The critics have argued that black theology reduces Christian faith to its "horizontal," inter-human dimension while obliterating the "vertical" God-relation.[29] However, when Buthelezi rejects a vertical-horizontal dichotomy, it is not because he wants to reduce theology horizontally, neglecting the vertical, but because of a carefully elaborated interpretation of the faith in God the Creator. In other words, the logical answer of his theology to the above-mentioned critics is certainly not a defence of "horizontalism" but a question whether the critics have seen the full implication of Christian faith in God as Creator. According to Buthelezi, the faith in God as the Creator is denied, when religion is confined to a sector of society.

The Wholeness of Life as an Ecclesiological Postulate

The aim of "Creation and the Church" is to establish the wholeness of life "as a postulate of ecclesiology."[30] In other words, the thrust of Buthelezi's theology is to argue that a necessary condition for a proper analysis of the church is to understand it in its relation to God's creative act. Therefore, in "Creation and the Church" he systematically argues in favour of "an ecclesiology of the wholeness of life, that is, an ecclesiology that takes seriously the dynamics of human existence."[31] The findings of his discourse on the church is summarized in a thesis

> that the nature of the Church is properly understood and defined to the extent to which the solidarity of the Church with the rest of created reality is taken into account.[32]

Consequently, "the created reality" and the church are not viewed as two spheres each with its area of competence but as "categories through which we apprehend the nuances of the totality of human existence."[33] Specifically, creation and church are interrelated within an eschatological perspective. The Pauline theme of "new creation" and Irenaeus's concept of *recapitulatio* are analyzed at some length to clarify Buthelezi's own view on the continuity and the discontinuity between creation and salvation.[34] In reference to Colossians 3:10, it is argued that there is "an inner continuity" between creation and redemption since they originate from the one and the same God.[35] Salvation "is not the emergence of a wholly new being but a renewal of an already existing created man."[36]

The ministry of the church is to interpret the creation and, one might say, to be a tool for the restoration of the wholeness of life, "the new creation." In short, creation and redemption are viewed in an eschatological perspective as two different but interrelated acts of God. Buthelezi is intrigued by Irenaeus's theology, where Christology is the center of a systematic cosmology, anthropology, and soteriology. Also in Buthelezi's own concept Christology is of vital importance, *inter alia* to clarify the theological significance of the "natural" and as a framework which unites the critique of apartheid and the ministry of reconciliation. Its strategic role may be seen in the exposition on incarnation and the cross.

Concerning the incarnation, Buthelezi deals specifically with Irenaeus's critique of gnostic Christology which dissociates "Christ from the Creator and from the created world by explaining the phenomenon of his physical and earthly existence in docetic terms."[37] Thus, he suggests, there was no "inner continuity "between creation and redemption in Gnosticism. The anthropological and soteriological implications of this conception of incarnation are of importance in order to understand the significance of

socio-political issues in this theology. Not surprisingly, the incarnation is cited as the most important evidence of the "inner continuity" between human and Christian existence.[38] Arguing thus, Buthelezi censures "a false unbiblical dichotomy between human life and Christian life."[39] The vocation of the Christian is to be truly human. The social ethics is elaborated on this christological basis to describe the interrelation between creation and salvation.

> We cannot bypass what is around us and what is already given in human life in order to give concrete expression to the impetus of Christian motivation in life. It is as acts of Christian motivation become incarnate in the social, economic and political structures that we speak of Christian life as an everyday phenomenon.[40]

The emphasis on "incarnated" acts is no denial of the eschatological perspective, however. Buthelezi advocates an "ethic of hope," rooted in God's promise of the restoration of the wholeness of life.[41] The concern for *humanum* in black theology has not seldom been interpreted in terms of liberal theology and Social Gospel. In this perspective it is important to note the christological character of Buthelezi's theology of the wholeness of life, which unites humanity and the cross as a symbol of willingness to suffer. "To dare to live for Christ means to be truly human even to the point of suffering in the interests of others."[42]

On a christological basis, Buthelezi distinguishes between "oppressive" and "redemptive suffering." The latter type of suffering is not an end in itself but something that "is endured in the course of a struggle to realize the well-being of fellow human beings."[43] In other words, this kind of suffering is a deliberately chosen step towards liberation, flowing out of love for others. Therefore, "it is suffering after the model of Christ's suffering."[44] Oppressive suffering, by contrast, is a fate which paralyzes and cripples initiative and resolve. "The victim resigns himself to it without making any effort to rise above it." [45] Obviously, the point of the distinction between the two types of suffering is to elaborate a *theologia crucis* without legitimizing suffering. "Suffering is in the first place an evil and no one should be trained to regard as normal the state of being a victim of evil."[46]

Also Buthelezi's concept of *metanoia* must be understood in relation to the black experience and the social analysis. Among the Africans, he argues, the colonial history has generated "a masochistic complex, that is, the realization of personal fulfilment in unconscious self-hatred and the despising and loathing of everything with which their egos are identified in social and cultural life."[47] As many other African Christians, Buthelezi insists that Western Christianity is accessory to this spiritual oppression. In "the bourgeois socio-cultural church life pattern around the mission station" *metanoia* was too easily identified with conformity with the lifestyle of the

missionaries.[48] "The sublimated center of ego-existence becomes the outside human image of the missionary or Westerner." And, Buthelezi adds, "It is very easy to confuse this psychological inversion and depersonalization with conversion and sanctification."[49]

The ministry of the church is also defined in christological terms, as a consequence of the "hidden Lordship of Christ." "As an eschatological reality the hidden Lordship of Christ over the world becomes manifest through the service of the Church in the world."[50] Diaconia is the vital point in this "inner solidarity" between the church and world which in Buthelezi's view is an essential dimension of faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord of the world.[51] As should be obvious from the above exposition, the struggle between God and sin involves not only spiritual questions but the totality of life. Consequently, the church cannot be neutral in this holistic "drama."[52] "The church is either with the struggling people or has succeeded in carving for itself a niche of immunity within the structures of oppression."[53] Emphatically he wants to rule out any attempt to spiritualize the concept of the church. "Church ... describes a historical and a concrete form of existence."[54]

Can there be a spiritual community between white and black Christians in a church which conforms to the structures of apartheid? An affirmative answer to the question is usually based on a theology that distinguishes between a spiritual community and socioeconomic factors, suggesting that the spiritual community in Christ of white and black Christians is not dependent on socioeconomic structures. While earlier one could find theologies explicitly defending apartheid, a more common position today among the supporters of the *status quo* is, as we recall, to exclude a theological discussion on apartheid by separating between religious and sociopolitical issues.

Needless to say, Buthelezi's ecclesiology of the wholeness of life is *inter alia* a critique of such a theology. The church belongs to the human existence in its totality, not to a separate "Platonic sphere," he insists.[55]

Thus, the creation faith must be reflected in the life and structure of the church. Racially segregated worships are not only an organizational problem, as some argue, but an eclipse of creation faith.

The Ethnographic and Anthropological Approaches

The methodological profile of black theology may be defined by an important distinction made by Buthelezi. Starting from the need of an "indigenous theology," he distinguishes between two different approaches, the ethnographic and the anthropological.[56] In common for both approaches is the commitment to a theology for Africans, "an indigenous theology," to quote Buthelezi's somewhat dated phrase. The criterion in distinguishing

between the two methods is the point of departure, the African world view or the African person.

The ethnographic approach considers a reconstruction of the traditional African world view as "a valid postulate for African theology."[57] Only by the means of such an ethnographic reconstruction will it be possible to know the language into which the gospel is to be translated. In other words, ethnographic studies have a strategic role in this hermeneutics. While the "hermeneutical gap" in the Western tradition since Lessing has often been understood as a gap between *then* and *now,* the gap in the ethnographic approach is between two different world views, that of Western theology and that of indigenous people.[58] The theological task in this approach is to translate the "Christian Gospel" into a form which is congenial to the African's world view. It is presupposed that there is a store of traditional ideas that could be studied and used as a frame of reference for African theology.

The "anthropological" approach has a different point of departure, the African people. The difference between the two approaches is described as follows:

> The point of departure for indigenous theology is not an ethnographically reconstructed worldview, but African people themselves. When we speak of an "anthropological" approach we are thinking of the person, not as an object of study—the theme of anthropology as a discipline—but as God's creature who was entrusted with "dominion" over the rest of creation. We are thinking, not of the "colonial person" who is the object of "dominion" by other people, a "black problem" to the white politicians, but a "postcolonial person" who has been liberated by Christ from all that dehumanizes.[59]

Four arguments are brought up against the ethnographic approach, related to (1) its "tendency towards cultural objectivism," (2) its "tendency to overlook present-day realities," (3) the use of a reconstructed world view as theological postulate, and (4) its sociopolitical function.[60]

The first argument builds on a distinction between "person" and "object," possibly inspired by Western existential philosophy. In the ethnographic approach, Buthelezi argues, Africans are treated as objects, not as persons.

> Too much emphasis is placed upon the African world view as if it were an isolated and independent entity apart from the present anthropological reality of the African man.... The human seems to recede to the background, if recognized at all. It then becomes a problem of epistemological entities, of fixed impersonal data— things 'out there', namely the body of categories for interpreting the universe. These categories are static entities which form

something which can be located, studied and defined—thanks to ethnography.[61]

The ethnographic approach, Buthelezi insists, implies an "objectification and impersonalization of the 'African mind '."[62] In the ethnographic studies there is no equality between the white scholars and the African people, since the power to define is in the hands of the white scholar. To explain how " the human factor recedes in the background," Buthelezi quotes a statement in Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* that, he admits, he is "fond of quoting."

> It is we [Europeans] who will be able to tell them [Africans] in precise terms, what their inmost concept of being is. They will recognize themselves in our words and will acquiesce saying: "You understand us, you know us completely, you 'know' in the way we 'know'."[63]

The focus on the world view rather than people reduces the African to "a means to an end."

> Even when it comes to those things associated with the African "world view "one gets the impression that these are in effect objective entities that lie outside the Africans. Some curious student can study these and then go back to the African and ask: "Is this not the way you think?" Then the African will courteously echo the expected answer: "You understand us: you know us completely...."[64]

In missionary theology, Buthelezi suggests, there has been a tendency to regard the African as an object, as one who could be "moulded into something."[65] The African identity is reified, as seen in the phrase "African Personality which in the ethnographic approach becomes something that "can be 'projected,' 'asserted,' 'established' and 'promoted'."[66] The ethnographic type of indigenization is characterized as a "programme" or even "a crash programme," monitored by the missionaries. But authentic theology cannot be created in such a mechanistic way, Buthelezi asserts;[67] it presupposes human creativity, it is an "art form."[68] Indigenous theology must be created by the people concerned. One cannot do indigenous theology on behalf of somebody else.

In the anthropological approach, by contrast, the African initiative in the context of the present existential situation is stressed. Put in a nutshell, the point of departure for this approach is not "the manipulation of objectivized *res indigenae*" but the Africans themselves.[69]

> We are thinking of persons not as "third person" entities: persons who are talked about and discussed and whose "minds" are analyzed and systematized, who become important simply

because their problems provide fruitful material for specialists; we are rather thinking of the "first person " — the Ego. The problem of indigenous theology in Africa primarily consists not so much in what the content of that theology must be (ethnographic approach) as in its *causa efficiens,* the Africans themselves (anthropological approach).[70]

In short, the ethnographic approach is criticized since it treats Africans as objects, not as creative subjects. It may be noted that the critique, if valid, applies not only to missionaries but also to Western theology, as far as it represents an ideal of objectivity which excludes human experience.[71]

The second argument in Buthelezi's critique of the ethnographic approach emphasizes the dynamics of African thought. In the ethnographic approach, "the African past" tends to be romanticized and conceived in isolation from the realities of the present, Buthelezi suggests.[72]

Without actually saying it, the implicit suggestion they seem to be making is that the old traditional insights represent more what is truly African than the insights of the modem Africans. The "true African" is the one who is described in the books of the ethnographers rather than the one whom we see in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town trying to make ends meet in the framework of Influx-Control legislation ... the modem African is a cultural caricature of the "true African" who is the African of the "good old days."[73]

The ethnographic approach tends to neglect the fact that Africa has a history and a development of its own, irrespective of colonialism. African world view and African ideas are not static and unchangeable entities. Therefore, the pre-colonial society cannot be used as the criterion of what is authentically African, Buthelezi argues.[74] Not until the Africans are liberated, economically, socially, and culturally, will it be possible to know what is authentically African.

According to Buthelezi, the ethnographic approach is mainly a missionary project. Why, then, are missionaries tempted "to romanticize the ethnographically reconstructed past," forgetting "the anthropological dynamics of the present situation?" Buthelezi's answer may be of relevance also for First World studies of African culture and theology. In agreement with Hoekendijk's sociocultural analysis he differentiates between three social settings: the old Europe, the modern Europe, and Africa. Spiritually, the missionary belongs to the old Europe and would feel alienated and uprooted in the modern secularized Europe with its liberal theology, Buthelezi suggests. Therefore, the missionary flees to Africa "in order to rebuild and relive the life of the 'good old days' of Christian Europe."[75] When the missionary regards himself as being betrayed by Europe, he turns

his interest to Africa and falls in love with it. The image of a love affair is used to explain the tendency of the ethnographic approach to romanticize "the African past."[76] Consequently, this brand of missionary theology is a kind of "love poetry."[77] The problem, then, is not that the missionary loves Africa or that he needs it as a kind of spiritual refuge but that he wants to dictate what kind of a shelter the Africans should make for him, it is argued.[78]

Buthelezi's critique has been interpreted as an expression of "cultural self-hate" and as a dismissal of " the African past."[79] However, such interpretations seem to neglect an important distinction, made by Buthelezi, where he distinguishes between an oppressive and a liberating use of the tradition.

> There is a difference between psychologically "living in the past" in order to compensate for the virtually existential emptiness of the present, thereby trying to mitigate the conscious awareness of the horror of its oppressive destitution, and "living in the past" because it is able to offer something substantial within the framework of the concrete realities of the present?... Who can blame a person who sees no wisdom in "writing theological poetry" about a past era while our human dignity is being systematically taken from our lives every day in the present?[80]

As the quotation bears out, the dispute is not about the relevance of the past but about its proper interpretation. There is no denial that "in the moments of despair a dignified past can be a source of encouragement."[81] The thrust of Buthelezi's argumentation is to demonstrate the necessity of a contextual interpretation of the past. Consequently, he agrees to "Sundkler's and Taylor's suggestion that African theology, if it is to be indigenous, must use as a conceptual frame of reference the African Weltanschauung."[82] The problem for him is not the use of these concepts but that they are isolated from the "realities of the present," when used in the ethnographic approach.[83]

The third argument leveled against the ethnographic approach is of theological nature, namely, that it is ecclesiocentric and not creational. Occasionally, Buthelezi describes his own approach as "creational," which from a theological point of view may be a more appropriate term than the ambiguous "anthropological."[84] When Buthelezi insists on the understanding of the African as a responsible subject, this is a political and a cultural but also a theological position. The crucial aspect in Buthelezi's argumentation for a new approach to African theology is clearly the interrelation between creation and salvation. This argument is most elaborated in "Creation and the Church," where the methodological discussion is the climax of the analysis of the relationship between creation and church. However, also in the other texts Buthelezi insists on the importance of creation faith

as the theological basis of the anthropological approach. Referring to the interrelationship between creation and salvation, Buthelezi insists that theologians must analyze "the real situation" in which their reflection takes place.[85] In South Africa, this means that "theological honesty cannot but recognise the peculiarity of the black man's situation," the black experience.[86] The critique of the ethnographic approach is therefore, above all, a theological critique.

> The difficulty with an ethnographically constructed African world view is not so much that it is necessarily inaccurate and not true to the original, as that this reconstruction can be readily regarded as a valid postulate for African theology.[87]

In the ethnographic approach, we conclude, there is no place for the experience of modern Africans. This approach neglects the "theological reality [of] present-day people in creation under God."[88] Consequently, it corresponds with an ecclesiology without "the wholeness of life." A valid theology, by contrast, must in part be determined by its *Sitz im Leben* and take the reality of human beings as its point of departure.

Buthelezi's fourth argument is of sociopolitical nature. While the anthropological approach "focuses attention on the removal of the dehumanizing facets of modern life," the ethnographic approach evades politically controversial issues.[89] It is quite possible for Western theologians to indulge in this project without dealing with the socioeconomic reality in Africa and its relationship to the First World. Since it is mainly missionaries who have been concerned with the ethnographic approach of "indigenous theology," Buthelezi quite critically calls it "a current occupational pet-project of m issionaries."[90]

> Who can blame those who have the feeling that the missionaries, with their right hands, are diverting our attention to our glorious past so that we may not see what their left hands, as well as those of their fellow whites, are doing in the dehumanization of our lives in the present?[91]

The quest for an indigenous theology in South Africa is, Buthelezi argues, necessarily also a quest for political freedom for the black people and a fair distribution of material wealth. "The first step is that the Africans should have both the material and spiritual means to be themselves."[92]

Buthelezi's critique of the ethnographic approach could, in conclusion, be paraphrased as follows: When Africans ask, "But God, why did you create us?", this is a question which is deeply rooted in their existential situation and therefore of paramount importance in an interpretation of the contemporary African situation. The ethnographic approach, however, fails to perceive this question, since it focuses on ideas, not on human beings. In

other words, there is no mutuality and no equality in the relation between the investigating subject and the analyzed object in such a kind of missionary theology. "What we miss is the person."[93] Theologically, the main liability of this approach is that it is ecclesiocentric; creation is not a valid postulate in this approach. Politically, it corresponds with a dichotomic theology where sociopolitical issues are excluded.

Having elucidated Buthelezi's methodology, we must now clarify its place in the theological debate. Buthelezi's exposition on the ethnographic and anthropological approaches may be among the most debated texts in African theology. In the South African context, the criticism of the ethnographic approach has at times been interpreted as a substitution of "the concrete particularizing concept of 'the African'" for "the abstract universalizing category of the 'human'."[94] A different critique is presented by François Houtart in the German dialogue with Buthelezi. Evaluating this theology in the context of the development of African theology, Houtart describes how it transcends the boundaries of the first generation of academic African theologians by the perceptive critique of the ethnographic approach. Houtart has, however, some critical questions. Is there not a conflict between the universal character of the anthropological approach and the exclusive theological starting-point? Has not the socioeconomic analysis been inhibited by the emphasis on the discussion of cultural symbols? Moreover, Houtart notes, the context of Western theology is clarified but not Buthelezi's own context.[95] In short, Buthelezi is presented as an "intermediate stage" on the way to a sociologically mediated theology.

A somewhat different interpretation is proposed by those students who have argued for a dichotomy between African and black theology in reference to Buthelezi. The distinction between ethnographic and black theology has then been interpreted as a distinction between African and black theology.[96] Such a dichotomic view must, however, be questioned for three reasons. First, it confuses two different issues: (1) Does black theology meet the requirement of an appropriate definition of African theology? (2) Do black theologians agree with the ideas and methods proposed by the theologians who first used the phrase "African theology"? One reason for this confusion may be that "African theology" is not clearly defined, neither in Buthelezi's earlier writings, nor by those who separate black and African theology.[97] Second, in Buthelezi's exposition the anthropological approach represents a method which is recommended not only in South Africa but also in other parts of the world. In other words, black theology and the anthropological approach are not identical but black theology is *one* example of this approach.[98] Third, underlying the separation between African and black theology seems to be another misinterpretation of the theology of the wholeness of life, describing it as sociopolitical and *eo ipso* not a cultural theology. The *Fragestellung* in Buthelezi's distinction, however,

is not the choice between cultural or sociopolitical commitment but the role of experience in theology, as seen in the emphasis on Mtethwa's question.

It could be argued that the limited resources and the corollary problems of theological communication in the periphery are major causes of the misrepresentations of Buthelezi's theology. The most detailed exposition of the distinction between ethnographic and anthropological approaches is unprinted and among the printed texts the most comprehensive version is available in German only. Buthelezi's position is predominantly known, it appears, by his three essays in *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa.* In this volume one of the essays deals with humanity and the wholeness of life, another with eschatology, and the third with the ethnographic and anthropological approaches. In other words, the arguments which form one train of thought in the thesis are in the South African volume divided into three essays which, moreover, are placed in different parts of the book. This may account for the fact that many students obviously have failed to perceive the systematic relationship between these three complexes.[99]

Another cause of the misunderstandings seems to be the fact that Buthelezi could not refer to an established terminology, since he was a pioneer of academic black theology. In hindsight, one might question some of his neologisms. For example, "creational" might have been less susceptible to misunderstandings than "anthropological," as noted earlier.

It may also be justified briefly to discuss Buthelezi in the context of Third World theology. It should be noted that Buthelezi's anthropological approach has an undeniable affinity with Shoki Coe's contextualization. For both theologians, the starting point for theological reflection is the context (even though Buthelezi uses Paul Tillich's "situation") rather than ideas. Moreover, the incarnation is in both cases a main argument for the inductive, context-oriented methodology. In short, Coe's distinction between indigenization and contextualization has important affinities with Buthelezi's distinction between the ethnographic and the anthropological approach (which he calls two types of indigenization). In both distinctions, the first-mentioned method is past-oriented, while the latter is incarnational, emphasizing involvement, participation, and critical awareness of the context.[100]

In order to clarify the African profile of Buthelezi's theology, it may also be motivated to compare "Creation and the Church" with Gutiérrez's *Teología de la liberatión* which, in fact, is based on a paper presented in 1968, the same year that Buthelezi submitted his dissertation. Also, Gutierrez insists that "the Bible establishes a close link between creation and salvation."[101] The holistic *Fragestellung* is of crucial theological importance for both theologians, similarly as the critique of dichotomic or "dualistic" approaches. Yet, there are significant differences between Buthelezi's "wholeness of life" and Gutiérrez's "complete liberation." The former expression is rooted in a

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theology of creation and describes salvation in its relationship to creation. Gutiérrez, by contrast, seems to focus more on salvation, seeing creation as " the first salvific act."[102] Even though both theologians may describe salvation as "new creation," the term has a more eschatological and critical ring in *Teología de la liberación*. Clearly, for Gutiérrez, salvation is not a return to an original Eden but "the conquest of new, qualitatively different ways" of being human.[103] Also in the social analysis there are different emphases. For Buthelezi reconciliation between whites and blacks is a major theme and it seems, moreover, that notions of harmony and continuity are more important for him. Arguably, these differences between Buthelezi and Gutiérrez are, at least in part, relevant also in a comparison between African and Latin American liberation theology.[104]

A Holistic Theology of Conversion

While both Buthelezi's and Boesak's conceptions may be characterized as theologies of conversion to the wholeness of life, there is an important difference in emphasis between them.[105] At the risk of over-simplification, one might say that whereas Buthelezi reflects on the dialectics between creation and church as mediated in Jesus Christ, in Boesak's theology "the Word of God" is a call to *metanoia* for whites and blacks.[106]

> Preaching ... is a call to *metanoia,* conversion, to a restoring of our lives and the societies we live in. It is the proclamation of the word of him who is Liberator whose will it is to make human life human, and to keep it human in the world.[107]

The distinction between Boesak's and Buthelezi's theologies may to some extent be explained by the difference between the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions. When criticizing "the departmentalization of life," Boesak starts not from the faith in God the Creator but from "the lordship of Christ over all of life."

> The confession of the lordship of Christ over all of life must be heard again in our preaching, as a protest against the departmentalization of life, and as a plea for faith in the God of the Bible who cannot be divided, and whose power can be neither deferred nor denied.[108]

The difference in emphases may be seen in the different ways of arguing for "wholeness of life" as a central theological criterion. Pointedly, a main argument for Buthelezi is found in the confession of God as "the Creator of all things," while Boesak rather cites God's revelation in Jesus Christ as

the fundamental criterion for the holistic concept. "The wholeness of God's liberation ... was characteristic of the ministry of Jesus."[109]

Boesak and Buthelezi differ, however, not only in confessional accents but also in social analysis. In the emphasis on *metanoia* the counter-hegemonic character of theology is stressed. Differently put, Boesak places more emphasis on the urgency of structural change. The importance of these differences should, however, not be exaggerated. Also for Boesak "wholeness of life" is a "a liberating and humanizing Word," as is evident from many texts.[110] "To 'keep politics out of religion' (or out of preaching) is to break up the wholeness of life."[111] This sentence by Boesak could as well be formulated by Buthelezi.[112] Again, Boesak argues, similarly as Buthelezi, that "to contrast God's actions as Creator and Sustainer and his actions as Redeemer and Reconciler through Jesus Christ" is to break up the wholeness of life.[113]

> The theology of liberation contends that Yahweh, Creator and Sustainer of the world, is the same God who, in bringing Israel out of slavery, created for himself a new people. His acts in history are repeatedly described as acts of recreation, a re-creation which finds its consummation in Jesus the Messiah. Black Theology denies the kind of separation that one is forced to make if one accepts [the] dualist pattern of thought.[114]

It seems that the relationship between creation and salvation is a crucial issue in the discussion between the old and the new paradigms in theology. In reference to this relationship, Boesak stresses the fundamental difference between dichotomic and holistic theologies, arguing that an "excessive spiritualization [which] stems from a western, dualistic pattern of thought [is] foreign to biblical mentality."[115] Such a compartmentalization of life is denounced as "the essence of heathenism."[116] Even though one sphere is kept for Christianity and the Christian God in this compartmentalization the totality may be called "a pagan way of life," Boesak argues.

> This is the way too many Christians live. God is for our religious life. But then there is another god for politics, another for the economy, and still another for the sphere of private life. These persons (who still call themselves Christians and who still go to church) want the preacher to respect this pagan way of life, and woe unto the preacher who dares to break down these sacralized walls!
>
> The result is predictable. The well-known argument "business is business and politics is politics" acquires the authority of a biblical axiom. In the end God is tolerated in his area: that of religion. The other areas become completely autonomous, with their own laws, their own way of doing things, completely shut off to the Torah and the prophets.[117]

For Boesak, as for Buthelezi, the wholeness of life implies that one cannot separate politics and religion. Such a separation puts "an impermissible limitation on the restorative and renovative work of the Holy Spirit," he suggests.[118]

> The prophets of old never hesitated to speak God's word for the whole life. They were unflinching and uncompromising in their confrontation with kings and rulers with regard to social justice issues. Moreover, the words and actions of Jesus the Messiah even today have profound political ramifications. The astounding concreteness of his demands does not leave us much room for the privatization of Christian faith.[119]

Boesak's writings and sermons suggest that the prophetic tradition is of central importance in the struggle against apartheid. "True prophecy is much less predicting the future than contradicting the present."[120] The prophet has, one could say, a counterhegemonic task, to oppose idolatry. On this score Boesak quotes Jeremiah 10:5, where the idols are compared to "scarecrows in a cucumber field" and agrees with the prophet's bold assertion: "Do not fear them, they cannot do harm, and they lack the power to do good." As we recall, the struggle against the idols is not only a theocentric but also an anthropocentric commitment. The dialectics between theocentrism and anthropocentrism is explicated in reference to Jeremiah 22:15-16, a *locus classicus* of liberation theology.[121] According to some commentators, this text identifies fraternal justice and the knowledge of God.[122] The anti-idolatrous discernment is a commitment to God and humanity. While Boesak draws from the theocentric concern in the Reformed tradition, he insists that God's activity should be interpreted in terms of the restoration of humanity.

> True love and justice ... enable people to realize the full potential of their humanity…. Humanity is an important concept: it functions in the context of God's activity among us. At the center of this activity of God is the Christ-event.[123]

The quotation makes clear, that Jesus Christ is the criterion of "true humanity."[124] "The false gods of the age are pseudo powers that have already been exposed by the crucified Christ."[125] In view of the power of the idols, "Jesus Christ is Lord " is a subversive confession since it embodies "the refusal to bow down to the false gods of death, that is the strength of the Church."[126]

It should also be noted that this holistic conception is conceived as intrinsic to African identity. Similarly as in many other varieties of African theology, African culture is viewed as a help to rediscover the essential dimension of "the biblical mentality."[127]

> Blacks detests the way western theology has departmentalized life and forced upon the African mind its dualistic pattern of thinking — an element completely foreign to the biblical mentality and African traditional thought. Therefore, Black Theology proclaims the totality of God's liberation and in the total liberation seeks the realization of the wholeness of life. This wholeness embraces the total existence of human life in the present; it embraces the total meaning of black *being* with regard to past, present, and future.... Black theology ... must mean a search for a totally new social order, and in this search it will have to drink deep from the well of African tradition.[128]

As seen from these quotations, for Boesak, equally as for many other African theologians, the socio-ethical commitment is based upon a holistic conception of the will of God, rooted in reflection on the Bible and the African tradition.[129] In other words, when Boesak's theology is characterized as a theology of conversion, this characterization should not be misunderstood in a pietistic sense but as referring to a conversion from the idols to God in all spheres of human life.

Innocence and Pseudoinnocence

Boesak's *Farewell to Innocence* is a critique of white and black pseudoinnocence. In other words, the title does not refer to authentic innocence but to pseudoinnocence, which Boesak defines as a denial of guilt and "an inability to repent which in its turn makes genuine reconciliation impossible."[130] As a motto for the introduction to his book he has chosen a quotation from James Baldwin: "It is the innocence which constitutes the crime."

There seem to be three different motifs that are fused together in Boesak's critique of pseudoinnocence: theology, politics, and epistemology. (1) Theologically, *Farewell to Innocence* is an analysis of sin and a call for *metanoia.* Pseudoinnocence is a shield behind which people foster a sense of childishness (which Boesak distinguishes from childlikeness, authentic innocence). "Thus they remain 'unaware' of the evil they themselves have created and help to maintain."[131] In short, pseudoinnocence is a kind of self-justification.[132] The doctrine of justification by faith seems to be underlying the critique of self-justification. "The root of the evil does not lie with the principle of guilt as such, but with the guilt that is veiled."[133] *Metanoia,* by contrast, presupposes an awareness of one's complicity and a farewell to pseudoinnocence which is invented by human beings "to convince themselves that they were guiltless."[134]

(2) Politically, the dismantling of the hegemonic ideology of guiltlessness is seen as intrinsic to the struggle for liberation, since the defenders of the *status quo* need an ideological legitimation.

> In order to maintain the status quo, it is necessary for whites to believe, and keep on believing, that they are innocent…. It is absolutely imperative for the oppressors to preserve their innocence just as it is imperative for the oppressed to destroy it.[135]

(3) Epistemologically, *Farewell to Innocence* is a critical theology, analyzing how religion is used to legitimize the existing power structure. Underlying Boesak's argument seems to be the concept of rationalization, the provision of ethically legitimate reasons to explain for oneself and others political actions for which the real motives are different and unconscious. In particular, Boesak analyzes how human beings rationalize guilt and injustice. Truth is too painful, since it reveals one's guilt. Therefore, the painful truth is hidden behind an ideology that creates the impression of innocence. Pseudoinnocence is, to put it in other words, a kind of ignorance. "When people face issues too horrendous to contemplate, they close their eyes to reality."[136]

The opposite of pseudoinnocence is awareness, to acknowledge the truth, even when it is painful. The "childishness" of pseudoinnocence is abandoned when people confess their complicity. In short, Boesak's argument of pseudoinnocence presupposes certain truth claims.

The three motifs are summarized in Boesak's concept of ideology. In this context, "ideology" is not a neutral but a critical concept, which is explicated in reference to Albert Stüttgen, *Kriterien einer Ideologiekritik.* Stüttgen has formulated five criteria by which to recognize an ideology and these are quoted by Boesak as the basis for his definition of "ideology," which is elaborated in reference to Marx's and Mannheim's sociology of knowledge.

1. It claims absoluteness and exclusiveness—a holistic pretension, Stüttgen calls it, to know all of reality, an unwillingness to be corrected, and a certainty that it could never be wrong.

2. There is a complete schism with the real world, the world in which people have their daily experiences. The experiences of others do not affect the ideology; neither do the results of scientific research.

3. The third is complementary to the second: the ideology does not allow for the possibility of new experience. It lives within a closed, isolated, fossilized system of ideas and has a mortal fear of change.

4. The ideology lives on presuppositions, but these are purposely kept unclear and vague. They are neither illuminated nor subjected to honest criticism.

5. The ideology needs prejudices and clichés to survive….

> We understand ideology as an idea or system of ideas, a doctrine or theory or system of doctrines used to justify and perpetuate existing structures of injustice. We note furthermore that ideology does not only constitute theory but also praxis, that the self-justifying character of an ideology is usually hidden from the group using the ideology, and that there is a relation between the ideology and the socio-political reality in which power is legitimized.[137]

The concept of ideology is important for Boesak since "Black Theology is a critique of theology and ideology."[138] In other words, a main task is to separate theology and ideology by unveiling the ideologization of different theologies. It is "of great theological import," Boesak asserts, to see "the strange resemblance of ideologies to religious faith, [a] similarity [which] makes religion extremely vulnerable to an ideological takeover, something which has happened often enough in history."[139]

The expression "ideological takeover" does not imply a complete exchange of Christian ideas for idolatrous ones. As a theme for his chapter on ideology Boesak has chosen a quotation from the Mission Conference of the World Council of Churches in Bangkok, 1973: "Every church, all Christians, face the question whether they serve Christ and his saving work alone or at the same time also the powers of inhumanity."[140] Boesak's key question therefore is: When does Christian theology become an ideology?[141]

When analyzing "the tension between theology and ideology," Boesak starts with "the struggle of the true prophets in Israel against the ideological onslaught on the faith of Israel by the privileged and the false prophets." The theoretical conflict between theology and ideology is here coupled with the social conflict between true and false prophets.

A theology that follows the pattern of the false prophets allows a privileged group to use the gospel to defend its own interests and its own position in society. Such a theology is censured in reference to "biblical revelation" and the common good.

> Such a theology has severed its relation with biblical revelation and stands primarily in relation to the particular group or nation it serves. It loses sight of the central message of the Bible and becomes intent on the preservation, perpetuation, and justification of existing oppressive structures, because they serve the interests of the particular group.[142]

As we will analyze in greater detail below, the subservience to interests of a particular group is a crucial factor in Boesak's analysis of ideology. It seems that this problem is related to the emphasis on the experience of other human beings in Stüttgen's criteria of ideology. Boesak's critique of ideology stresses the transcendent character of Christian faith.[143] Critics have asked: Is not

this transcendent theology a return to a traditional, dichotomic theology? Boesak would, however, deny this. He wants to emphasize the political relevance of Christian faith and at the same time reject any identification of a political program with "the gospel of Jesus Christ."[144]

> Christian faith ... is eschatological, rooted in the promises of Christ and the liberating deeds of Yahweh and in the knowledge that these promises, in a real sense, have had their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Faith continually tests programs by the criteria of the gospel of Jesus Christ, discerning where they serve liberation, justice, and the wholeness of life within every situation.[145]

White Pseudoinnocence

We will first deal with Boesak's exposition of white pseudoinnocence. As we recall, a major issue in the debate between whites and blacks in South Africa deals with the responsibility of the whites for the sufferings of the blacks. Boesak's analysis of white pseudoinnocence refers to this debate; he builds on quotations by political and religious leaders in South Africa in which they argue that the white minority is innocent of the difficulties of the black population. For example, the South African government has officially accused the Christian Institute of "trying to inculcate a feeling of guilt among whites of South Africa."[146] Similarly, the ecumenical program to combat racism has been condemned as an inverted crusade giving "support for unrighteous deeds *against the innocent*."[147] In reference to these quotations Boesak analyzes white pseudoinnocence in terms of rationalization. The white minority, he suggests, has a historical responsibility for the situation of the black population in South Africa. In the pseudoinnocence, however, this historical responsibility, guilt in theological terms, is denied.

It must be emphasized that Boesak's critique of the white "innocence" questions established Western patterns of thought. In particular, the argument of pseudoinnocence combines theoretical and ethical issues, while it seems that the Western critique of apartheid often deals only with the ethical issues, possibly due to a dichotomy between theoretical and practical reason. This observation is of importance, since the sociology of knowledge perspective, as we have noted, not seldom implies a relativistic stance. The pseudoinnocence argument, by contrast, implies the proposition that there is an objective reality of oppression in South Africa.[148] Differently put, the black experience of oppression is not defined as a perception with the same truth value as, for example, a "white" perception that there is no oppression. In contrast to a relativistic "perspectivism," Boesak claims that the dominant perception "does not stand the test of rational enquiry nor the searching light of reality."[149]

The suppression of certain truths in the dominant perception is explained in sociopolitical and theological terms. "In order to maintain the status quo, it is necessary for whites to believe, and keep on believing, that they are innocent."[150] Structure is a key concept in this sociopolitical discussion. Black theologians may agree with the defenders of the *status quo,* that whites have done what they can *within the framework of the existing system.* The thrust of their argument is, however, that it is possible and necessary to change this system. In particular, the pseudoinnocence of the South African whites is seen in their unwillingness to explore possibilities of a different sociopolitical and economic structure based on equality between whites and blacks and to participate in the creation of such structures. Thus, the structural analysis does not reduce but widen the field of human responsibility. "Historical structures are created and maintained by people," Boesak argues.[151] Therefore, by implication, they may also be changed by humans.

In theological terms, the white defence of the *status quo* is defined as sin and guilt. Moreover, the distortion of the social reality in the white perception is explained theologically as idolatry. The theology in defence of apartheid "tries to cover up one's real relations to others and the world and to falsify the facts of human existence by deifying, romanticizing, or idealizing them."[152] In the dominant ideology the white minority rationalizes guilt and sin "for its own justification."[153]

The theory of the good intentions is also interpreted as one variety of pseudoinnocence. "The horrendous reality of racism in South Africa is hidden behind the innocence of the *Apartheid* ideal, the 'goodwill' or good 'intention' of the oppressor."[154] If apartheid is due to absolutization of "the best intentions," there is no need for *metanoia.* It may be more justified, then, to keep the intentions but to modify and relativize them.

These two points may be elucidated in view of Boesak's analysis of the exposition of the migrant labour system in the *Landman Report.* It will be recalled that the Report justifies this system in reference to the existing socioeconomic structures of South Africa. Boesak's critique of this argument is both sociopolitical and theological. In particular, it seems to us that the theological critique presupposes the truth claims of the social analysis. In reference to the black experience and research, it is argued that the Report disguises and veils reality.[155] Why? Boesak's answer is that the pseudoreligious ideology of apartheid, not "the Word of God," has become the norm for the DRC.[156] In other words, a theology of pseudoinnocence is viewed as an epiphenomenon; it does not question the basic structures of society but accepts them as matters of fact.

The pragmatic character of white pseudoinnocence is expounded in a comparison with the debate on the slave trade in the eighteenth century and the contemporary debate on apartheid. Boesak quotes the defence of the slave trade that was presented by Mr. Grosvenor in the British House of

Commons in 1791: "The slave trade was not an amiable trade, but neither was the trade of a butcher an amiable trade, and yet a mutton chop was, nevertheless, a very good thing."[157] Analyzing the arguments in favour of slavery, Boesak notes the references to the needs of the economic system. The impossibility of doing without slaves will always prevent this traffic from being stopped, it was suggested. "The necessity, the absolute necessity, then, of carrying it on, must, since there is no other, be its excuse," some argued.[158] Characteristic of pseudoinnocence—we conclude—is that it refuses to see the structural dimension of oppression.

The dynamics of the white pseudoinnocence in South Africa is of particular significance in a Western context, since Boesak uses this matrix also in his critique of the churches in the First World. Western theology, it is suggested, has anxiously ignored

> the realities of rich and poor, of white and black, of oppressors and oppressed, of oppression and liberation from oppression. Until now, the Christian church had chosen to move through history with a bland kind of innocence, hiding these painful truths behind a facade of myths and real or imagined anxieties.[159]

In reference to structural similarities between the apartheid society and the global economic system it is argued that neocolonialism is a kind of innocence which "must be exposed, for it forms the shield behind which continued exploitation hides itself."[160]

Black Pseudoinnocence I: The Temptation of the "Privileged Underprivileged"

It should not be forgotten that *Farewell to Innocence* is an exhortation not only to whites but also to blacks. In fact, the main focus of Boesak's study is on black pseudoinnocence. He deals especially with two types of black acceptance of the *status quo* and we will use two of his phrases here: the temptation of the "privileged underprivileged" and " the false security of slavery."[161]

The discussion of the "privileged underprivileged" is of special relevance in view of the ideology charge levelled against liberation theology in general and black theology in particular. Many theologians have asked questions such as the following: Is there not the danger that liberation theology becomes a rationalization of a position already taken? Does not a project of liberation conceived from an eschatological perspective—related positively to God's kingdom—run the risk of idolatry? Cannot black theology, equally as "white pseudoinnocence" be characterized as an ideology? Such questions are discussed at length in *Farewell to Innocence* under the headline: "Haven't we heard all this before?"

> Is Black theology not really (or is it more than) an ideology of
> blackness? Or put another way, does not Black theology repeat
> the mistakes of white theology by operating within an ideological
> framework?[162]

Generally, Boesak answers these questions in the negative. He argues for
a non-ideological black theology.[163] Yet, he admits that "the danger of a
contextual theology being overruled by the situational experience and
as a result succumbing to absolutistic claims is very real."[164] Two types
of arguments are put forward in critique of such an absolutization. First,
Boesak insists that "the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ" is the criterion
of any theology, including black theology. Differently put, this type of
argument may be described as theological, insisting that a theology must
be theocentric. A contextual theology should remain critical and prophetic
with regard to its own situational experience, as we recall. Theology, Boesak,
insists, is critical reflection under the Word of God. "This means that the
liberation praxis is finally judged not by the demands of the situation, but
by the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ."[165]

Significantly, also blackness can become an idol, in Boesak's view. The
culture of a nation may not be absolutized, he insists, and this rule applies
also to black culture.[166] "Black theology deals with Black realities *in the light
of,* and under the critique of, the word of God…. Black theology itself falls
under the judgement of the word."[167] Therefore, Boesak censures "Black
Christian Nationalism." As examples he quotes one black theologian from
the U.S.A., Albert Cleage, and one from South Africa, Simon Maimela (this
critique is based on Maimela's earlier writings). He finds the fusion of black
nationalism and theology "totally unacceptable," because

> 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.[168]

And Boesak concludes: "We for our part can no more accept Black
Christian Nationalism than we can accept the Afrikaner's white, Christian
Nationalism."[169] Similarly, in his doctoral thesis he ventures to cross swords
with James Cone, widely regarded as the father of black theology, on the
issue of ideology. In his definition of theology, Boesak cautions against
Cone's notion of reflection "in the light of the black situation." He fears

> that Cone attaches too much theological import to the black
> experience and the black situation as if these realities *within
> themselves* have revelational value on a par with Scripture. God, it
> seems to us, reveals himself *in* the situation. The black experience

provides the framework within which blacks understand the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. No more, no less.[170]

"No more, no less" suggests *two lines of demarcation.* Against an alleged universal theology Boesak claims, on one hand, that "the revelation of God in Jesus Christ" always is understood in relation to a specific context; the black situation is such a context for blacks. On the other hand, he rejects an absolutization of the black experience; it is a necessary framework for the black reception of the revelation from God but it is not a revelation in itself. Hence, he is eager to emphasize *both* the theological importance of the black experience *and* its limits. "The black situation is the situation within which reflection and action take place, but it is the Word of God which illuminates the reflection and guides the action."[171]

The second type of argument against the absolutization of the black experience is of anthropological and political nature. An ideologization of blackness excludes the experience of other people and conforms with the existing structures, also when it appears militant and revolutionary. Two groups of "others" seem to be of special significance in avoiding an absolutization of black theology, oppressed who are not black and the poorest part of the black population. Concerning the first category Boesak repeatedly argues that it is necessary for black Christians to communicate with other oppressed groups. Black theology is a legitimate theology, he insists, "only within the framework of the theology of liberation," i.e., in dialogue with theology done by other oppressed groups. On this score Cone is questioned.

> Cone's mistake is that he has taken Black theology out of the framework of the theology of liberation, thereby making his own situation (being black in America) and his own movement (liberation from the white racism) the ultimate criterion for all theology.[172]

If God is identified with black nationalism, this may lead to division between blacks and other oppressed groups. Will the Indians or the Latin Americans accept blackness as *the* symbol of oppression, Boesak asks. When absolutizing the black experience and making it a universally valid norm "Cone makes of a contextual theology a regional theology which is not the same thing at all."[173] And, Boesak asks rhetorically, in making blackness "the ultimate criterion for all liberation, is Cone not wide open for an ideological takeover?"[174]

There is, however, also a second important group that, paradoxically, may be excluded in the process of absolutization, the poorest classes of the blacks. In the discussion of ideology, "class interests are involved," Boesak insists.[175] In other words, the "privileged underprivileged" may be tempted

to sacrifice the solidarity of the oppressed for individual benefits.[176] "Many of us believe that all our unhappiness would disappear if only we could have a larger slice of the capitalistic pie and not ask whether the advantages are derived from the suffering of others."[177] The theological critique of the pseudoinnocence of the "privileged underprivileged," is of significance in view of the fact that the South African government wants to create a black bourgeoisie in the defence of the *status quo.*

> And even in South Africa there are signs that should circumstances but allow, some whites would be quite willing to replace the insecurity of institutional racism with the false security of the "black bourgeoisie."[178]

This argument may be of particular relevance, since, as we have seen, also in the news paradigm there is the danger that the "privileged underprivileged" may fail to listen to other oppressed groups, be they women, poor peasants in Ujamaa villages, or black workers in South Africa.[179] Also, inside the community of the oppressed the voice of the most underprivileged may be suppressed, when the partial experience of a vocal group is taken to be the whole truth.[180]

This issue is emphasized, so it seems, since all black theologians are not equally aware of this temptation. This may be especially true of American black theology and Boesak discusses at length Preston Williams, Joseph Washington, Major J. Jones, James Cone, and Deotis Roberts. We will here quote at some length Boesak's critique of Roberts where he analyzes Roberts' ideas "in structural terms."

> Once more, we see a black theologian ask for nothing more than to get "into" the existing American structure. Roberts sees no need to criticize the system in depth. What he wants for blacks is "a better share." He pleads that the white Establishment should "hunt for better talent" in the black community so that the masses can benefit.... We cannot help but ask, better talent to do what? To even better exploit the poor? Roberts apparently fails to see that the masses cannot benefit precisely because the socio-economic structures that exist in America today are not created and maintained to serve these masses, and "new talent" to be still better agents of that system will not change the situation at all! A solution cannot be sought by imitating the American white capitalist system, or by creating a "better" kind of capitalism in the black community.[181]

In short, the structural critique is a crucial factor in Boesak's concept of black theology. However, also an ideology of blackness may conform with capitalism, it is suggested. On this score, Boesak questions Cone's

analysis, fearing that he leaves the American capitalistic system intact, in spite of a revolutionary rhetoric.[182] Without a structural critique the black self-affirmation will be "nothing more than an emotional catharsis for blacks and a spiritual masochistic experience for whites—nothing new in the black/white relationship."[183] Paradoxically, also a militant ideology of blackness may become "a justification for a black bourgeoisie" and an "ethic of revolution" may become "an Establishment ethic."[184]

It should be noted that Boesak's interpretation of Cone is not beyond criticism.[185] More importantly, the interpretation concerns Cone's earlier writings. In recent texts Cone acknowledges the importance of a structural critique of capitalism and declares explicitly that he has learned this from "Third World theologians."[186] In view of Boesak's extensive discussion with Cone on this subject, it seems likely that Boesak is included in this acknowledgment. This observation is of importance in an analysis of the relationship between American and South African black theologies within the framework of a conciliar fellowship. Moreover, it seems that Boesak in his critique of Cone draws from insights from dynamics of the South African liberation struggle.[187] If the South African black theology is defined as an import from the U.S.A., it is difficult to explain how, as early as the 1970s, it could contribute to the American black theology.

In a First World context one should not forget that Boesak's critique of ideology differs significantly from the *eschatological proviso* in Western theology, equally as Buthelezi's critique of Afrikanerdom differs from that of de Klerk. In Western theology, "religious disinterestedness" (Reinhold Niebuhr) has often been proposed as a means of avoiding an identification of a specific political movement with the kingdom of God. In implicit criticism of "the eschatological reservation," as he calls it, Miguez Bonino proposes a different way to safeguard the transcendence of the Christian faith.

> A project of liberation is freed from the danger of absolutization not by being relativized from the outside by some extrinsic principle or perspective—which in the final analysis always becomes reactionary—but by being related to its own inner meaning, which is love.[188]

"Love" may in this context be translated as "willingness to listen to people of another colour, sex, class, or culture."[189] Thus, Miguez Bonino's insistence on "love," by and large, is tantamount to Boesak's argument that black theology must not be taken out of "the framework of a theology of liberation." Differently put, black theology, Boesak argues, must not absolutize its own experience of oppression; it is credible as a Christian theology as far as it is open to the experience of other underprivileged communities.

Since the social level of Boesak's critique of ideology often is overlooked, we have here separated the theological and the social arguments, even

though they are integrated in Boesak's exposition. If one neglects the social aspect of ideology, the *farewell to innocence* may appear as a resacralization. However, notwithstanding the holistic character of his theology, Boesak does not make a monistic stance. Christian theology, it is suggested, should not be particularistic but transcendent in the sense of transcending "all ideologies and all nationalistic ideals." This applies also to the black experience. "Black Theology should continue to cultivate self-critical reflection under the Word of God within the situation of blackness."[190] Boesak pleads, in other words, for "a critical differentiation between the church and the world—that is, adhering to the criteria of the gospel of its Lord."[191] As we recall, Boesak pleads for a Christian presence in the struggle, not for a Christian struggle.[192]

Boesak's position concerning ideology and the Word of God has recently been sharply criticized by other black theologians in South Africa. In the complex debate one may discern at least four different issues: (1) What is the relationship between the revelation in Jesus Christ and the black experience? Whereas Boesak, as we have seen, understands Jesus Christ as the criterion of the black experience, critics have seriously questioned this position, obviously suggesting the black situation as criterion. (2) What is the relationship between theology and ideology? Boesak's distinction between the two concepts has been rejected by critics who argue that theology by necessity is ideological and that black theology should opt for black consciousness as its ideology. (3) What is the place of black theology in the conflict between non-racialism and an exclusive black nationalism? Should it explicitly opt for one of these conflicting tendencies? (4) What is the role of biblical scholarship in black theology? While Buthelezi and Boesak have worked within systematic theology and hardly presented any independent research in biblical studies, some of their most outspoken critics, by contrast, are biblical scholars, not systematicians.

In this limited space we cannot cover this complex debate. We will limit ourselves to a case study: Mosala's critique of Boesak's "universalism." In an analysis of the Book of Micah, Mosala claims to have proven that its central themes are from the monarchic, Davidic ideology: stability, grace, restoration, creation, universal peace, compassion and salvation. "In short, it is a ruling-class document and represents the ideological and political interests of the ruling class."[193] According to Mosala, this conclusion is of relevance not only for the Book of Micah but also for "most of the Bible," which consequently cannot serve as a starting point for a theology of liberation.

> The struggle between Yahweh and Baal is not simply an ideological warfare taking place in the minds and hearts of believers, but a struggle between the God of the Israelite landless peasants and subdued slaves and the God of the Israelite royal, noble, landlord and priestly classes. The Bible is rent apart by the

> antagonistic struggles of the warring classes of Israelite society
> as our life is tom asunder by the class divisions of our society.[194]

As the quotation bears out, Mosala argues that the Bible offers no unequivocal message of God. The proposition that "God sides with the oppressed in their struggle for liberation" is one biblical truth but is contradicted by important statements. Consequently, the Bible cannot be a fundamental criterion. Mosala, as other black theologians, insists that the black experience is "the only valid hermeneutical starting point for a Black Theology of Liberation," but it seems that he also suggests that this experience is the fundamental criterion in theology.[195]

Mosala's argument has commanded much interest but an interpretation is hampered by its limited scope where many questions are still unanswered. It seems, however, that a crucial aspect of the dissension between Boesak and Mosala is to be found in different concepts of "Word of God" and "ideology."[196] When Mosala discusses "Black theology's notion of the Bible as the 'Word of God'," he is primarily thinking of the Word of God as the books of the Bible.[197] If the "Word of God" is the fundamental theological criterion, he argues, the Bible cannot be criticized.[198]

What does "the Word of God" denote, when Boesak calls black theologians to cultivate "self-critical examination under the Word of God?"[199] Even though "Word of God" sometimes is used as a synonym of "Scripture" and the Bible, it is also used in a less biblistic meaning. A close reading of the texts establishes that "the self-critical reflection under the Word of God" demands that one test one's own programs by "the criteria of the gospel of Jesus Christ," defined as liberation, justice, and the wholeness of life.[200]

Also *ideology* is used differently by Boesak and Mosala. In fact, there seems in liberation theology not seldom to be a confusion of two different concepts of ideology, which may be termed critical and universalistic.[201] The critical concept separates between ideological and non-ideological ideas. The most well-known example of this stance may be the writings of Karl Marx. "Ideology" is here defined in terms of the practice of the dominant class and denotes illusory representations that hide social contradictions in the interests of the ruling class.[202] This use of "ideology" is no denial of the obvious fact that human thought generally is socially conditioned but it defines "ideology" as a *particular* case of contextually induced distortion.

The viability of such a distinction is denied, implicitly or explicitly, in a universalistic use, where ideology denotes a general function of human activity. "Ideology," then, becomes virtually synonymous with "perspective." Since human thought is socially determined it is impossible to distinguish between true and false ideologies, it is suggested. Therefore, Karl Mannheim, for one, rejected what he considered as a "particular conception of ideology." This stance seems to be underlying much of Western sociology of knowledge.

Whereas Boesak draws from both Mannheim and Marx in his exposition on ideology, his reference to Stüttgen's criteria and, more importantly, his definition—"a system of ideas used to justify and perpetuate existing structures of injustice"—clearly belong to the Marxian tradition. Moreover, underlying the critique of pseudoinnocence is the assumption that it is possible to distinguish between ideological and non-ideological concepts and between ideology and theology. On the other hand, Mosala clearly advocates a universalistic concept of ideology.

Even though the universalistic concept of ideology may embody a sympathetic humility, it has frequently been noted that it opens the floodgates of relativism. The debate about the relativistic tendency in some of Karl Mannheim s writings on sociology of knowledge may here deserve some consideration.[203] "It seems to be the scholarly consensus that Mannheim's [different] attempts to escape the accusation of relativistic nihilism were far from successful." While a universalistic concept of ideology may be susceptible to criticism in any context, it seems to be particularly problematic in the context of a theology of liberation.

First, the importance of the existing power structure for consciousness is veiled in a universalistic concept of ideology. It seems that all the different varieties of black theology affirm that the perceptions of the oppressed are in one or another sense more "true" than the perception of the South African government. Such a distinction is not possible to make, however, within a universalistic concept which obliterates the difference between the general social conditioning of human thought and the suppression of truth in an ideology. On the contrary, if the black perception is an ideology equally as the white perception, one may wonder why whites should discard their views. In other words, the black call to whites about *metanoia* presupposes that there is in the dominant perception a distortion of reality which cannot just be explained in reference to the social conditioning of human thought in general. Second, When all perceptions are defined as ideologies, it seems that they tend to evade scrutiny by intersubjectively testable criteria. The choice between competing ideologies is sometimes defined as a matter of "faith versus faith."[204] In such a definition the tendency to irrationalism seems obvious. Also when black consciousness is defined as the ideology of the liberation struggle one may get the impression that it should be accepted by all blacks without arguments, precise definitions, and analysis of its limitations. Of course, such absolutistic claims may be questioned both on theological grounds, in reference to idolatry, and of political, in view of the fact that there are different opinions in the South African liberation movement.

Black Pseudoinnocence II: The False Security of Slavery

Besides the temptation of the "privileged underprivileged" there is, however, also a different kind of black pseudoinnocence, which is of paramount importance in Boesak's *farewell to innocence,* the temptation to accept the "slave mentality" of the underprivileged. However, in a First World context this temptation may be misconceived. A common critique against black theology interprets it as a quasi-theological legitimation of selfishness and egotism. Many critics seem to ask: Is it not the temptation of "the old Adam" to glorify, assert, and elevate himself as much as possible so that black theology in fact corresponds to an innate selfishness and pride?

The main liability in the question is that it fails to distinguish between different groups, races, and classes within the apartheid society. Black theology may acknowledge that there are groups, races, and classes for whom self-aggrandizement is a major temptation but, it is suggested, for many blacks self-contempt is a more serious problem.

Self-love is intrinsic to authentic human life, Boesak suggests, in reference to the words of Jesus: "Love your neighbour as yourself." In this saying self-love is acknowledged within the context of love for the other. "Only then is self-love meaningful and authentic, for the neighbor is not served by the elimination of the person who ought to love him." [205] Consequently, Boesak differentiates between self-love and egotism, and between self-denial and self-destruction. Self-love, he insists, is not the same as "egotism, self-interest, and the satisfaction of one's own desires at the cost of others."[206] On the contrary, self-love seems to be a necessary condition for self-denial in the sense of a *theologia crucis.* Therefore, black self-affirmation is intrinsic to a meaningful relationship with others, also with whites.

It follows that the call for *metanoia* in a hierarchical system may have different implications for different persons, depending on where on the scale a person is. Those in high positions must do away with arrogance and domination over others. For those of low positions, by contrast, *metanoia* from the idols to God may imply self-affirmation. "Self hate and self contempt have slayed their thousands in the black community.''[207]

This may account for the fact that black spirituality, both in the U.S.A. and in Africa has had a different face than Western spirituality. As a student aptly observes, when "whites asked Jesus for forgiveness, blacks in the first place asked for recognition."[208]

Why is self-contempt a problem in the black community? Boesak offers two answers. First, submissiveness has been inculcated in most blacks as part and parcel of the socialization in apartheid society. In the white power structure blacks have been inculcated with feelings of inferiority. Within the oppressed there is a conditioned fear of freedom that must be overcome,

there is a decision for freedom to be made, it is suggested.[209] Equally as many First World women in the feminist movements, Boesak insists that the decision for freedom in spite of inculcated feelings of inferiority is a costly decision. "There are ... circumstances that work such destruction of one's self that even this fundamental human drive [to value one's own self] is lacking. People under severe pressure can build up a devastating contempt for their own self."[210] Accordingly, for the blacks the *farewell to innocence* means to get rid of "an implanted slave mentality" of self-hatred and self-destruction. "The affirmation of one's personhood is a powerful act that constitutes a farewell to innocence."[211] Boesak—similarly as many other advocates of black consciousness and black theology—quotes repeatedly the saying: "The greatest ally of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."[212] The courage to reject " the white power structure" with its blatant denial of the black experience is a necessary prerequisite for liberation.

Second, the slave mentality is a temptation not only because a long tradition of inculcalated submissiveness but also, more importantly, because of the powerful institutions in the apartheid society which demand subservience from the blacks. In this context of oppression, self- affirmation is not only a psychological effort but also a physical risk, as, for example, the Biko case testifies. Not surprisingly, the fear of the apartheid machinery is an important dimension of the black reality. In a sermon on Exodus Boesak compares the temptation of black opposition with the fear among the newly-escaped Israelites on hearing the news about Pharaoh's approaching army. Boesak interprets the grumbling of the Israelites to Moses as a "reversal of reality," when "Egypt, the land of slavery now turns into a land of freedom," because of the fear of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and soldiers. Boesak's application of this observation on the South African context deserves to be quoted in full, since it may clarify the temptation of the false security of slavery.

> We should be able to understand the children of Israel, we black people. We know only too well the strange, deadly certainty there is in enslavement. You get to know the oppressor so well. You know when the Baas is in a good mood, good enough to let you get away with something. You understand his needs so well, so you call him "baas," you flatter him, you shuffle your feet, you demean yourself. You tell him how good he is although you don't believe that at all. You agree with him when he degrades your own people. You never challenge his authority. You agree with him that those who fight for justice are "communists," "agitators" who are out to spoil your good relationship. And in all of this you are sure of his reactions. As long as you keep to the fixed pattern of the slave-master relationship, you are safe, but freedom

is different. The road to freedom bristles with contradictions and uncertainties; it is slippery with risk.[213]

This vivid account may reflect Boesak's own experience when, in his childhood and early youth, according to his own testimony, he felt attracted to white values.[214] It will be remembered, that *imago Dei* is a basis for the self-affirmation of black theology. Similarly, Boesak describes *metanoia* as the exchange of the fear of the authorities for the fear of the Lord. The rugged phrase "fear of the Lord" is in this context a message of liberation, since it liberates from the fear of the idols.[215]

But the Christian gospel has often been distorted, Boesak suggests. Theology has been used to legitimize the depersonalization of blacks. This line of thought may be elucidated by a striking example of cooperation between missionaries and slave masters where the gospel was used to make slaves docile. Since this example recurs in Boesak's writings and since it is to the point, we will quote it here in spite of its length. A certain Reverend M. C. Vos reports about his method of persuading white settlers to allow him to preach the gospel to their slaves.

> It is only natural that your slaves through religious education, should become better people, not the other way around. Let me try to explain. Among your slaves, so I have observed, there are different nationalities. Please try to put yourself in their place and try to see things from their point of view:
>
> I am a poor slave, but I was born free. Peddlers of human flesh have stolen me from my free country, from my dear parents, my dear wife, my children, my brothers and sisters. I have no hope of ever seeing them alive again. Tyrants have brought me to this country and even on the journey to this house of bondage I would have preferred to die, were it not that chains rendered me helpless. Here I was sold like a piece of cattle and now I am a slave, forced to do all that my master bids me, knowing that the slightest sign of disobedience will bring severe punishment.
>
> Just imagine this to be your position. What would you do? Would you not refuse to work? Wouldn't you be restless, sad, rebellious, and disobedient? The settler was moved. "I have never thought of it in this way," he confessed. "Who knows to what desperate deeds I would have been driven if I were a slave!" Well (Rev. Vos went on), if you leave your slaves like this, uneducated and ignorant, it won't be long before they will think this way, and who knows what terrible extremes they might resort to! But if we could have the opportunity to teach them that there is such a thing as divine providence, that nothing happens without the will of God, that this God is a God of order and that just as they have to serve their earthly masters, so their masters must serve

God. Just as they are punished by their masters when disobedient, so their masters are punished by God if they disobey him. If we also make clear to them that the things which seem unbearable to us are the will of God for our good; and that indeed, if they had stayed in their free country, they would never have heard about the saving grace of our Lord and on dying would have been lost for ever. Now fortunately they were brought to a Christian country where they have the opportunity to leam to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is able to give them eternal happiness. Once they understand this, they will change. Instead of entertaining rebellious thoughts, they will say: If this is the case, I will be content with what I am and I will do my best to serve my master obediently and with joy.

"Why," exclaimed the man, "have we not been told these things before? I must confess my ignorance and from now on will advise one and all to allow their slaves religious education."[216]

This rather shocking piece of writing is quoted not only as a historical document but also, it seems, as a heuristic device in the analysis of the use of Christianity in "the white power structure" of today.[217] Indeed, a sharp critique of certain varieties of Christianity is an important feature of black theology. Contrasting the black Messiah and the white Jesus, Boesak claims that "the white Jesus taught us subservience and meek resignation."[218] In a similar vein, he criticizes "Christian masochism "and "Christian sadism."[219]

For a First World reader, such criticism may be well-known, since Western critics of Christianity have levelled similar charges. It may, however, be something new to listen to such criticism from a church leader and an acknowledged theologian. Do these quotations suggest that black theology is nothing but "moralism" and "horizontalism," as some critics argue? In fact, an analysis of black theology reveals that such an interpretation must be rejected since it neglects essential parts of the theology under scrutiny. In Boesak's conception, the scathing critique of "the white Jesus" does not exclude a profound commitment to Jesus Christ as "liberator" from black pseudo-innocence: "With body and soul, both in life and death, [I] am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour, who is Jesus the liberator."[220] As in many other varieties of Protestant theology, Boesak insists that "the righteous shall live by his faith." In explicit criticism of a dichotomic theology he argues, however, that "faith" does not denote "an irresponsible other-worldly religiosity" but a "faith rooted in the history of Yahweh with his people."[221] In short, faith in God is the opposite of fear of idols.[222] Therefore, faith is essential in "a revolutionary spirituality"; without faith, Boesak suggests, "the temptations that are part and parcel of the liberation struggle will prove too much for us." [223]

This theology, by means of conclusion, suggests that there is an intrinsic relationship between conversion to God and conversion to humanity. We have here argued that the black experience, mediated by the analysis of the idols of the South African society, is the necessary foundation for an understanding of this relationship. In other words, since Boesak insists that *Farewell to Innocence* "was born out of the black experience in South Africa," it should be interpreted and evaluated in relationship to this experience.[224]

Metanoia—*the Way of Reconciliation*

The ministry of reconciliation is emphasized by different groups in South Africa, both those for and against the present system. In black theology, too, reconciliation is a central theme. The concept is, however, also possibly the most controversial aspect in the debate on black theology, as noted by Boesak. "Whites have difficulty with the concept of reconciliation and love in Black theology."[225]

As we have seen, the dissensus between black theology and its critics is not a question of the validity of the values of love and reconciliation but of the necessary strategy to implement those values. The aim of the process of reconciliation is formulated by Boesak as follows:

> In breaking away from the old oppressive structures of our society, seeking new possibilities, creating room for the realization of true humanity, Black Theology seeks the true purpose of life for blacks as well as whites. Blacks want to share with white people the dreams and hopes for a new future, a future in which it must never again be necessary to make of Christian theology an ideology or part of a particular aggressive cultural imperialism.[226]

Significantly, even a leading DRC critic of black theology can quote this statement with assent, even though they part, of course, in the discussion on *how* to achieve this aim. Underlying much critique of black theology seems to be the notion that reconciliation can be brought about *hinc et nunc* provided that the conflicting parties have an open attitude. Black theologians, by contrast, argue that reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressors is impossible as long as the oppressors insist on their privileged position.[227] The two approaches may be characterized as synchronic and diachronic concepts of reconciliation. The synchronic concept suggests that mutuality can be achieved instantly by a change of mentality and attitudes. Advocates of a diachronic perspective, by contrast, argue that reconciliation can only be arrived at as a result of a process through which both parties are liberated from their different types of alienation. The articulation of a distinct black

identity and the repentance of the oppressors are necessary steps on the way to mutuality and reconciliation.

In black theology, the diachronic perspective frequently makes a distinction between "authentic" and "cheap" reconciliation alluding to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's expression "cheap grace."[228] Underlying this distinction is the black analysis of apartheid as a state of oppression and injustice. In the context of oppression cheap reconciliation denotes a situation where the oppressor and the oppressed recognize and accept each other without questioning the roles each plays in the relationship determined by the structures of oppression. The structural analysis by black theology, by contrast, implies that *metanoia* is a necessary condition for authentic reconciliation.[229] As we have seen, the call for repentance pertains both to whites and blacks, even though it has different implications for the two groups. Black theologians insist that the white minority must acknowledge its corporate responsibility for the black predicament.[230] Or, to use traditional religious language, the confession of sins by the whites is a necessary condition for reconciliation.

> Too long have Christians in this country attempted to avoid genuine reconciliation by proclaiming a "unification" that rests on a cloaking of guilt and on a pious silence about evil.... Forgiveness of guilt is preceded by confession of guilt. As long as white Christian South Africa will not acknowledge its collective guilt and will not confess it, as long as Christians are anxiously exhorted not to have feelings of guilt, so long will the evil that keeps us unreconciled also remain unlanced and unhealed.[231]

> It is not possible for the oppressor who has no intention to cease his oppression to speak about reconciliation. For then he wants to use reconciliation not to demonstrate a fundamental process of conversion, but rather to perpetuate the situation of oppression and dehumanization. In this way reconciliation is not a sign of God's grace which fundamentally changes human relationships and therefore human history, but merely an ideological tool in the hands of the powerful to serve his own self-interest.[232]

Logically, the demand for white *metanoia* is based on the analysis of apartheid as idolatry. Therefore, the black theology concept of reconciliation cannot be properly understood if isolated from the truth claims of its social analysis.

What implications does *metanoia* have for the blacks? "Before black people can become reconciled to whites, they must become reconciled with themselves," Boesak asserts.[233] Similarly, Tutu describes "the Black Consciousness movement [as] a movement absolutely crucial to true reconciliation," since he is convinced that the self-affirmation of the oppressed is a necessary prerequisite for authentic community.[234] Differently

put, in reference to the black experience it is argued that *metanoia* is a challenge also to the blacks but the implications of this challenge may be difficult to comprehend if isolated from the underlying experience of self-contempt.[235] The self-affirmation of the underprivileged is viewed not only as intrinsic to humanity but also as a necessary condition for an authentic reconciliation between whites and blacks.

Underlying this concept of reconciliation is a theology in which reconciliation, liberation, and justice cohere.

> In the ministry of Jesus Christ, his reconciliation was inseparable from his work of liberation.... Without the liberating activity of Yahweh in Jesus the Messiah, the work of reconciliation cannot be properly understood. To deny this, and to remove reconciliation from the framework of liberation, is to make of it an ideology alien to the redemptive purpose of Christ.[236]

As the quotation bears out, black theologians argue for their concept of reconciliation in Christological terms. Accordingly, Boesak states emphatically: "The description of Black Theology as a christological theology, meaning that Jesus Christ is at its center, is correct."[237]

Black theology, by means of conclusion, sees itself as a theology of reconciliation, notwithstanding its militant character. Militancy is not an end in itself but a means to achieve authentic reconciliation, which presupposes *metanoia* among both whites and blacks.

> All this represents ... a process of real *metanoia,* conversion: for blacks, in order to become reconciled with themselves, but also for whites, to become reconciled with *themselves* and to accept blackness as authentic humanity. This is sharing in God's creation, participating in a new Exodus, creating a new black being, thereby demythologizing white superiority and humanizing white living from its own idolatrous absurdity and black living from its own blasphemous non-beingness.[238]

Needless to say, the credentials of black theology as a theology of reconciliation are not undisputed. Three arguments seem to be of particular relevance in the debate. First, the reconciliation envisaged by black theology is considered by many critics as a gain for the blacks and a loss for the whites. It can hardly be denied that this is an accurate description if the matter is conceived in purely economic terms but it is equally clear that an economic perspective is too narrow from a theological point of view. In fact, black theologians have argued, again and again, that whites cannot find their true humanity, if they evade *metanoia*.[239] "Whites are estranged from their own humanity" in the present system of oppression, it is suggested.[240] The oppressor cannot be liberated unless the oppressed are liberated.

A comparison between two scales of values, represented by Adam and Jesus Christ, is underlying this argument. Thus, *metanoia* is considered also as a shift of values. To the unconverted person the privileges of being an oppressor may appear to be a gain, but to the converted person oppression is a deprivation, not only for those who are wronged but also for the oppressor. This argument suggests that whites—in the apartheid structure and in the global "white power structure"—have acted against their self-interest.[241] In the light of Jesus Christ, black theologians suggest, also whites should discover that justice and humanity are more important than the extraordinary economic privileges granted them today. "Almost too late people in the West are discovering that exchanging the quality of human life for money and the victories of technology has been an extremely bad bargain."[242]

Logically, the black argument presupposes a distinct normative theory of humanity. In Boesak's words: "*Motho ke motho ka batho babang.* One is only human because of others, with others, for others."[243] In reference to this concept of *humanum,* it is argued that "Black Theology seeks the true purpose of life for blacks as well as whites" in dismantling the apartheid structures.[244]

Second, since black theology focuses on the black experience it has been suggested that it is unecumenical and particularistic, regionalizing the Christian faith. It seems, however, that this argument distorts the dialectic relationship between contextuality and ecumenicity that is characteristic not only for black theology in South Africa but also for the mainstream of Third World theologies. Moreover, the protagonists of the new paradigm insist that there is no contradiction between contextuality and ecumenicity.[245] Boesak, for one, states that

> [Black Theology] is a theology of liberation and it is this focus on liberation which makes the contextuality of Black Theology truly ecumenical and universal. In this sense, Black Theology is not an exclusive, theological *Apartheid* in which whites have no part. On the contrary, blacks know only too well the terrible estrangement of white people; they know only too well how sorely whites need to be liberated—even if whites themselves don't! Black Theology is a passionate call to freedom, and although it directs its voice to black people, it nonetheless hopes that white people will hear and be saved.[246]

An analysis of the writings of black theologians corroborates that they dialogue with Christians in other parts of the world. It is obvious that other Third World theologians have contributed to shaping Boesak's understanding of Christian faith in the South African context and that he is not at all embarrassed to acknowledge such influence.[247] In fact, *Farewell*

to Innocence is defined as a contribution to a dialogue between Third World Christians.

> I do try to interpret honestly and authentically a black experience within the complexity of the meaning of blackness in South Africa. And it is from within this reality that I wish to respond to the theological articulations of brothers and sisters in North America, Asia, Latin America, and the rest of Africa.[248]

Boesak does not draw so much from contemporary First World theology, even though he at times does quote it. For him and for many other black theologians Bonhoeffer — "The great theologian of the resistance" — is the one who deserves, most credibility in this category.[249] Buthelezi, by contrast, has a rather broad discussion with contemporary Lutheran theologians in the First World.[250]

Both Buthelezi and Boesak draw extensively from their confessional traditions, quoting Luther and Calvin several times, often in critical assessment of the First World reception of these theologians. It is argued that the classical European theologians were alien to the compartmentalization that plays an important role in contemporary Western theology. In a letter to the South African Minister of Justice, Boesak draws from the Scriptures and the Christian tradition, quoting Augustine and Calvin, to argue this point.

> I believe that I have done nothing more than to place myself squarely within the Reformed tradition as that tradition has always understood sacred scripture on these matters.... The believer in Christ not only has the right, but also the responsibility, should a government deviate from God's law, to be more obedient to God than to the government. The definition of government in Romans 13 does not simply point out that civil authority exists. It also suggests that there is proper authority only where there is a clear distinction between good and evil.[251]

To substantiate this critique, Boesak discusses extensively Calvin's view on politics and "spiritual truth," quoting him repeatedly.[252] In short, one may rightly argue that black theology has been articulated within the framework of a conciliar fellowship.[253] In fact, it seems that the dialogue with Christians in other cultures has been given more emphasis in black theology than in the dominant schools.

Third, quite a few critics suggest that black theology condones power and violence. In this context the concept of black power is of particular importance. When this concept frightens, it is obviously due to the ambiguity of the term "power." If the term is defined as "power over others," *Black Power* spells oppression of non-blacks. Differently put, in such a case the apartheid structure remains but the roles of whites and blacks are changed.

It should be noted, however, that the advocates of the slogan affirm that they opt for a different concept of power, shared power. In other words, Black Power is a demand that the black population shall be given its share of economic, political, and cultural resources. If one remembers the meaning of "power" in this context, it seems obvious that the demand for Black Power is an expression for legitimate self-affirmation and self-respect that are intrinsic to authentic community between persons, not an expression for a racism in reverse.[254] If the black self-affirmation is perceived as a threat, Buthelezi suggests, perhaps the only thing a black person can do is to say, "I am sorry for the inconvenience this is causing you. But I continue to be myself and to be my own interpreter."[255]

The question of violence may, however, be still more controversial and complex than the question of power. In fact, it is not easy to analyze the issue of violence in black theology, since an open discussion of these issues, for obvious reasons, is impossible in South Africa. Indeed, as suggested above, any attempt to change the structures of apartheid—with or without arms—is defined as part and parcel of "the total onslaught." Accordingly, leading black theologians have often been associated with "violence," and "terrorism," even though they are dedicated to the strategy of nonviolence. In clarifying these misrepresentations two points must be emphasized. First, black theology is not the religious section of a political movement; our analysis has established that it has a clear theological identity. Second, the democratic aim "one person one vote" and the dismantling of apartheid are a common agenda for the armed wing of the liberation movement and the radical opposition inside South Africa; it is, therefore, misleading to describe them as two opposite alternatives. Even though the debate on violence and nonviolence may be sharp due to the growing commitment to armed struggle among South African blacks, it should be clear that the main line of division is between the *status quo* and liberation.

In view of these two points, we will distinguish between two *Fragestellungen,* nonviolence versus violence, and oppression versus liberation. It should be noted that black theology focuses on the latter alternative as seen in Boesak's description of the black struggle for freedom:

> Black Power found expression in ... Enoch Mgijima's struggle when he and his people preferred to die rather than give up the freedom they had found in the Bullhoek community; in Chief Gonnema and his Hottentot people when they fought their hopeless war against the colonists in the Cape, trying to regain their cattle and their land and with it their dignity as a people. Black people must come to respect this proud tradition, a tradition which produced Albert Luthuli, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr.[256]

In reference to the *Fragestellung* violence versus nonviolence, one may think that Enoch Mgijima, Chief Gonnema, Albert Luthuli, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. are strange bedfellows, since they represent such different attitudes to "violence." From the *Fragestellung* oppression versus liberation, the common denominator is obvious, however; all five have been committed to black liberation. Significantly, Boesak's argument for nonviolence is elaborated within the context of liberation to humanity and power. What does it mean to be human? It has sometimes been argued that retaliatory violence is necessary for the self-affirmation of black people. In response to this argument Boesak insists that the meaning of *humanum* and the corollary decision between different means in the struggle for liberation must be defined by Christ's work of salvation.

> Is it not the essence of discipleship that the Christian is required to react on a completely different level in order to create and keep open the possibilities for reconciliation, redemption, and community? [The decision of the Christian] is born out of the joy over the accomplished reconciliation of the world with God, out of the peace effected by the accomplished work of salvation in Jesus Christ, out of the fullness of the all-encompassing life that is Jesus Christ. This is the source of the action of Christians in the world and this is the conviction on which the action of black people to transform the world should be based.[237]

This Christological perspective implies, it seems, that the opposite of nonviolence is not the use of arms in the struggle but oppression and injustice. This argument has at least two essential implications for First World students. (1) The decision about the appropriate strategy is considered to be a matter for those concerned with liberation. In fact, none of the different alternatives of the violence-nonviolence *Fragestellung* is given absolute validity. Accordingly, Boesak is sceptical about First World radicals who "make violence 'unavoidable' or 'easy' for Christians in other parts of the world involved in the liberation struggle."[258] He is also critical of the classical theory of violence as the *ultima ratio.* Such a calculus may imply an unwarranted intellectualization of the problem, since violence in the heat of the struggle may acquire an autonomy that renders intellectual decisions on ends and means difficult or impossible. Nonviolence, finally, cannot be absolutized. Actually, Boesak acknowledges, albeit hesitantly, that there may be situations where retaliatory violence is forced upon the oppressed and no other avenue is left open to them. Like Martin Luther King, he does not want to make nonviolence an "eternal principle.''[259]

(2) In a First World context it may be important to take cognizance of the criticism by black theology of the "hypocrisy "of white Christians on the issue of violence. Underlying this criticism, it seems to us, is a distinction

between two concepts of nonviolence. For many black theologians the nonviolent option is a costly commitment which may imply personal suffering. The focus of this commitment is liberation. Obviously, those who prefer suasion and "constructive engagement" as their strategies of change in South Africa represent a different kind of nonviolence. According to black theologians, the latter type of nonviolence may be a strategy of defending the *status quo,* not a strategy of liberation.[260]

In the black context, by means of conclusion, nonviolence is no denial of the necessity for tension, conflict, and confrontation. It is emphasized, however, that confrontation is not an end in itself. Even within the conflict situation, confrontation is viewed as a vehicle toward reconciliation.

Conclusion

In conclusion we will discuss two propositions that have been fundamental in this study but are controversial. (1) Black theology is a branch of African theology; (2) Black theology is contextual and at the same time systematic-theological.

African and Black Theology

When South African black theology emerged during the early 70s, some African theologians squarely declared that this new brand of theology could not be regarded as a branch of African theology. The main criticism, however, was levelled at American black theology.

> But Black Theology cannot and will not become African theology. Black Theology and African Theology emerge from quite different historical and contemporary situations. [African theology] grows out of our joy and experience of the Christian faith, whereas Black theology emerges from the pains of oppression.... Black theology ... is full of sorrow, bitterness and anger and hatred.[261]

Many black theologians were equally sharp in their criticism of the narrowness of the first endeavours of African theology, finding it too preoccupied with a static, pre-colonial culture.[262] Specifically, the consensualism was questioned. In the oft-quoted words of Desmond Tutu: "I fear that African theology has failed to produce a sufficiently sharp cutting edge."[263] Moreover, he argued that African theology had to recover its prophetic calling and to be more "concerned for the poor and the oppressed."[264] Specifically, he questioned the silence of African theologians "in the face of the epidemic of coups and

military rule" which have whittled away personal freedom "without too much opposition from the church."[265]

At the EATWOT conference in Accra there was a heated debate on the relationship between African and black theologies. One speaker went so far as to describe them as two different calls between which South Africans had to choose.[266] In the Final Communique the meeting declared, however, that black theology in South Africa was one "among the various approaches in African theology."[267] This position has been maintained by other, similar meetings as well.[268] Today it seems to be a fairly generally accepted position that African theology includes the South African black theology, even though there still are divergent views.[269]

Two arguments could be quoted in support of the position that black theology is a branch of African theology. First, our analysis has established that there are basic similarities between South African black theology and Ujamaa theology, e.g., in analyses of cultural heritage and in anthropology, thus justifying the classification used here. More importantly, there is an obvious affinity between the "selfishness versus community" theme in Tanzanian theology and the South African "conversion to the wholeness of life." In fact, "the wholeness of life" seems to be a central aspect of many branches of African theology. The notion of conversion, by contrast, may be less dominant in "theologies of continuity" but it seems to be important for those theologians in different parts of Africa who focus on the experience of the underprivileged.[270]

Second, from a logical point of view the decisive question is whether the phenomenon of black theology falls under the definition used or not. If e.g., one defines African theology as theology done by Africans (as Mbiti does and as we have done here), it cannot be denied that South African black theology meets the requirement of this definition. But the same is true if one prefers the definition "theology done in explicit reference to the African context," since it is equally clear that black theology is done in explicit reference to the African context. It seems to us that the most lucid account of the relationship between African and black theology is given by Tutu, when he describes black theology as a part of African theology.

> I believe myself to be an exponent of Black theology, coming as I do from South Africa. I also believe I am an exponent of African theology coming as I do from Africa. I contend that Black theology (the South African version) is a legitimate aspect of African theology. African theology is like the outer and larger circle and Black theology is like the inner and smaller circle in a series of concentric circles.… I and others from South Africa *do* Black theology, which is for us, at this point, African theology.[271]

Systematic Theology and Contextuality

The interrelation between theology and social analysis in black theology and in other branches of Third World theologies has caused some confusion. Theo Sundermeier analyzes the contribution of black theology in a way which obviously presupposes Schleiermacher's classical dichotomy between dogmatics and ethics which still, to a great extent, stamps Western protestant theology. In this dichotomy, one could say, dogmatics deals with the exposition of Christian faith and ethics with the Christian life. Sundermeier's claim is that black theology is a contribution to social ethics and *ipso facto* not to dogmatics. It is a contextual theology *(Situationstheologie)* dealing with concrete, political issues. Since it rejects abstractions, Sundermeier claims that it does not understand itself as a dogmatic discipline.[272] Black theology is a kind of hermeneutics, which belongs to the preaching, he suggests.[273] David Bosch follows a similar line of thought, claiming that "Black Theology does not belong among the theological disciplines of Systematic Theology or Exegesis, but in that of *Hermeneutics.* Black Theology has an apologetic-pastoral and socio-ethical purpose."[274]

The main problem in these Western categories is that they function as a *Prokrustean bed* wherein analyzed theologies are cut or stretched to a preconceived pattern. Differently put, alien categories are superimposed on black theology in spite of the fact that these categories destroy its internal logic. As we have seen, in the black concept a "yes" to God cannot be separated from the "no" to the idolatry of apartheid. Similarly, the call to *metanoia* must be explicated in relation to the actual types of "pseudo-innocence." In sum, in the critique of the apartheid system dogmatic and social ethical issues are interrelated. Therefore, both a purely dogmatic and a purely ethical analysis would be off the mark.

Moreover, the argument of Sundermeier and Bosch betrays a fundamental, but not uncommon, misunderstanding of contextual theology. The fact that black theology understands itself as a contextual theology is actually no valid argument for separating it from presumed universal theologies, since the new paradigm argues that all theologies are contextual, consciously or unconsciously.

Chapter 6

The New Paradigm and Its Critics

On the basis of conflictual analysis, modernity and God/humanity—the three issues mentioned in the introduction—we shall now attempt a summary of Ujamaa and black theology, even as we shall benefit from what critics of liberation theology have to add to our discussion. We shall listen to the words of those critics who seem to have been articulate in view of the above-mentioned three issues, also when they have addressed liberation theology in general, not only black and Ujamaa theology. Similarly, we shall expand our treatment of African liberation theology to include Third World theologies in general since a broader perspective clarifies important features in the debate on the new paradigm.[1]

The criticism will in many cases be presented as it is articulated by specific persons and institutions, substantiated by quotations. Admittedly, it may have been more convenient—both for the author and the reader—to present the arguments as ideal types without specific references. Yet, if the critics were represented by ideal types, it would be more difficult to test the common complaint from Third World theologians that their critics in the First World are criticizing without proper knowledge of subjects.

Among texts censuring certain features in liberation theology, it seems that *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'* from the Congregation of Faith of the Holy See is of special significance and that it sums up some common strands of criticism. We will, therefore, pay special attention to this document, even though it should be noted that this document does not have the status of a papal encyclical. Our aim in quoting the *Instruction* is not to present official doctrines of the Catholic church, but to listen to a critical voice, as it is expressed in a certain text.[2]

Conflict and Reconciliation

In the discussion about the social analysis of liberation theology, critics have refuted its conflictual analysis, comparing two ethical ideals: community and polarization. The conflictual analysis is seen by these critics as a vehicle of polarization and consequently as counterproductive to the Christian ministry which is to promote community and love.[3]

However, in liberation theology conflictual analysis is not an alternative to reconciliation but an intrinsic dimension of restoring community

between privileged and underprivileged, as we have seen. The concern for reconciliation and community is found not only among the critics but also in Ujamaa and black theology. Moreover, this concern is obviously deeply rooted in the African culture.

The search for reconciliation, unity, and harmony corresponds to a common interpretation of African identity, as exemplified by "the elders under the tree." In fact, neither in Ujamaa nor in black South Africa has conflictual analysis been easily accepted. As noted above, Nyerere started with a strong criticism of the class struggle, when he distinguished between three types of political philosophies. Even when he later reduced his scheme to two main options, capitalism and socialism, obviously modifying his view of the class struggle, he clearly remained unwilling to analyze internal conflicts, while to some extent he performed such an analysis on the international level, in reference to the experience of neocolonialism.

In South Africa, there is a systematic relationship between the black experience, the social analysis of black theology, and its diachronic strategy for reconciliation. The black experience is the main argument for conflictual analysis, which, in its turn, implies that the diachronic strategy is the only way to authentic reconciliation. Differently put, the option for a conflictual analysis in black theology does not entail that the concern for reconciliation and community is abandoned. According to black theology, the conflictual perspective and the option for separate consciousness are necessary for building a community of whites and blacks where equality and justice are central values.

In short, the deliberations on conflict and reconciliation in African liberation theology could be characterized as a reflected and elaborated way of advocating the values of reconciliation and pre-colonial consensualism, while acknowledging the reality of conflict and oppression and not seeking for revenge but authentic reconciliation, based on justice. In other words, the diachronic perspective combines the conflictual perspective from below with the community-oriented anthropology of "the elders under the tree." The same is true of other strands of liberation theology, but pre-colonial communalism seems to be emphasized more by Africans than by other members in the EATWOT process.[4]

The conflictual analysis in liberation theology has often been explained as an ideological captivity by "concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought."[5] Suspicions of a Marxist bias have been aired to some extent in criticism of theology done in the context of Ujamaa but especially in relationship to black theology.

The interrelation between the issues of conflictual analysis and of Marxism is clearly evident in the above-mentioned *Instruction*, which emphatically asserts that Marxism, in spite of its "various currents," has to be understood as an indivisible unity. "No separation of the parts of

this [Marxist] epistemologically unique complex is possible. If one tries to take only part, say the analysis, one ends up having to accept the entire ideology."[6]

It is not unjustified to say that the *Instruction* describes Marxism as a monolith, in this respect different from all other kinds of social analysis. If you take part of this analysis by using some of its concepts or theories—so the argument goes—then you must subscribe to all ideas and practices that the *Instruction* considers as part of Marxist ideology, including terror, denial of human rights, and atheism.[7]

Similarly, some analysts tend to distinguish between two types of liberation theologies: (1) influenced by Marxism and (2) a legitimate variety that does not use Marxism. So they are opposed to any liberation theology that uses Marxist analysis, arguing that this mode of analysis is incompatible with a Christian theology.[8]

In view of this critique, we have asked: How is Marxist social analysis actually used in Ujamaa and black theology? It is quite clear that Nyerere, in part, uses Marxist concepts and theories. For example, his analysis of neo-colonialism betrays beyond any doubt a certain influence of Marxism. Two notions may be mentioned to substantiate this influence: (1) conflictual analysis of the present economic world order and (2) capitalism as a major cause of the predicament of the Third World. We have also heard Nyerere speak of the German scientist and politician with sincere respect.

Yet, it is equally clear that Nyerere's attitude to classical, European Marxism is not uncritical. The elite party theory and the dogmatic world view of Marxism-Leninism are refuted in no uncertain terms. Moreover, Nyerere's own social analysis deviates fundamentally from that of Marx, notably in the denial of class conflicts in Africa. One can certainly discuss the validity of Nyerere's position, but it does not confirm the interpretation that he should treat Marxism as "an epistemologically unique complex."

In black theology we find a similar picture. Even though black theology is described by the South African government as part of an alleged communist onslaught, it obviously has an independent and critical use of Marxism. Also, in black theology we find references to Marxist concepts and theories, and also occasional quotations from Marx. Yet, the influence of Marxist analysis for black theology is limited, albeit increasing.

If one compares classical Marxism and the social analysis of liberation theology, one may note the following similarities: (1) concepts such as capitalism and imperialism; (2) a methodology and conceptuality to describe conflicts; (3) an analysis of the need for changes on a structural level; (4) a correspondence between actual existence and thought, seeing society as a whole with distinct but interrelated levels (as opposed to a compartmentalized view); (5) the transient character of capitalism; (6) the affinity between the interpretation of capitalism as idolatry and Marx's

analysis of the economic system as fetishism (obviously influenced by the critique of idolatry in the Judeo-Christian tradition[9]); (7) an epistemology where praxis is a criterion of truth.[10]

These similarities may, in part, be explained with reference to the Marxian *Wirkungsgeschichte,* even though none of the seven points are exclusively Marxist. There are, however, also four differences between liberation theology and classical Marxism that are frequently overlooked.

First, in any analysis of oppression it is of crucial importance how one defines what may be called the main contradiction, the principal parts in the social conflict. In classical Marxism the main contradiction is analyzed in terms of classes, which are defined by their roles in production. Hence, capital and labour are the two opposite poles in the analysis of the contemporary "class struggle."

The position of liberation theology is more complex. Even though the opposite poles of conflictual analysis are described in different ways by the EATWOT members, they are unanimous about the existence of different dimensions of conflict. Such a multi-dimensional analysis differs significantly from classical Marxism, even though capital-labour may be described as one dimension of the liberationist analysis. Moreover, it seems that the main contradiction is described by liberation theologians in reference to the actual distribution of power, as seen in the dichotomy oppressor-oppressed.

A multi-dimensional analysis of oppression has important advantages from a theoretical point of view, since it may be used to analyze conflicts outside the horizons of classical Marxism, such as sex, race, and culture. Yet it cannot be denied that the liberation mode of analysis is still fragmentary. For example, the key concept of "the poor" (or " the oppressed") is still ambiguous, which accounts for the heated discussions on social analysis within EATWOT as well as the equally tense debate on class and race in black theology.[11] On the other side, these extensive discussions where liberation theologians wrestle to clarify their social analysis demonstrate that experience, not Marxist orthodoxy, is the criterion of the social analysis of liberation theology.

Second, the circumstances that condition human thought are defined differently in classical Marxism than in liberation theology, even though both represent a sociology of knowledge perspective. Classical Marxism affirms that the material production conditions human thought while liberation theology also in this respect makes no unequivocal stand. However, it seems that the role within a certain power structure is the conditioning factor in the EATWOT analysis of knowledge.[12]

Third, the cultural dimension of oppression is emphasized in liberation theology far more than in classical Marxism (especially if one compares with

the materialist world view in Marxism-Leninism), as seen in the emphasis on consciousness and spirituality in the new paradigm.[13]

Fourth, liberation theology emphasizes the creativity of the oppressed in a way that differs fundamentally from classical Marxism. The difference is especially striking when compared with the Marxist-Leninist theory of party where the cadres, the "conscious" elite, is seen as necessary tools to inculcate the masses with a revolutionary consciousness. The notion of the poor as interlocutors is clearly incompatible with the Leninist conception of a vanguard party. Not least black theologians, both in the U.S.A. and in South Africa, have been critical of the unidimensional analysis of classical Marxism, which has failed to clarify the dynamics of racial oppression. In the words of Cornel West:

> Though Marxists have sometimes viewed oppressed people as political or economic agents, they have rarely viewed them as *cultural* agents. Yet without such a view there can be no adequate conception of the capacity of oppressed people—the capacity to change the world and sustain the change in an emancipatory manner. And without a conception of such capacity, it is impossible to envision, let alone create, a socialist society of freedom and democracy. It is, in part, the European Enlightenment legacy—the inability to believe in the capacities of oppressed people to create cultural products of value and oppositional groups of value—which stands between contemporary Marxism and oppressed people.[14]

In short, in Ujamaa and black theology we have found a social analysis that is informed but not dictated by Marxism. Differently put, the analysis differs significantly from that of classical Marxism but is yet clearly influenced by the Marxian Wirkungsgeschichte. Some may wonder if this conclusion also applies to liberation theology in Latin America. Undeniably, Marxist categories and methods are used more frequently by the Latin Americans. Yet, this difference should not be exaggerated since the four above-mentioned differences between classical Marxism and liberation theology apply both to the African and to the Latin American context. Moreover, in both cases there is an intrinsic relationship between experience of oppression, conflictual analysis, and a growing interest in Marxist analysis.15

Our analysis of the internal logic of Ujamaa and black theology demonstrates, by means of conclusion, that the experience of oppression is the main argument for conflictual analysis and the use of Marxist categories. This finding demonstrates the importance of a proper definition of the subject of dispute, since much critique of liberation theology obviously is off the mark. The values of consensus, community, and reconciliation are not disputed but emphasized by African liberation theologians, even though

one is led to believe the contrary by quite a few critics. Obviously many critics have failed to perceive the internal logic of the criticized theologies, the systematic relationship between experience, conflictual analysis, and a critical use of Marxist categories. This systematic relationship is neglected, for example, in the theory of Marxism as an epistemologically unique complex.

In other words, the debate on the conflictual analysis and Marxism should not deal with the importance of the values of love and reconciliation—which in fact are agreed on by both liberation theology and its critics—but with the interpretation of the Third World experience, since it is the main argument for conflictual analysis.

Ironically, the critics of conflictual analysis, who are advocating an alleged universalist theory, obviously have failed to listen to the Third World experience. Needless to say, the liberationist position is not beyond dispute. Some may question the central role it assigns to experience. Others may propose different avenues for analyzing the experience of oppression. Again, one may ask how far the academic liberation theology represents the experience of the poorest of the poor. Moreover, we have found several examples of *lacunae* and ambiguities in the new paradigm. A discussion on these issues between liberation theology and its critics could be fruitful but it is not unjustified to say that First World theology has neglected the Third World experience as a source of theology. One may wonder then, if the insistence by the underprivileged for a perspective from below is really the root cause of the problems of communication between the First and the Third Worlds, or if the cause is to be found in the apparent ignorance among many First World theologians of the Third World experience.

Modernity and the Third World Experience

Even though the critique of liberation theology as too secularized and "horizontal"—which we will deal with in the next section—may be the most widely known, it could be argued that the intellectually most articulated critique is of virtually opposite kind, describing liberation theology as too narrowly religious. This critique is based on a perspective of history where the Enlightenment was a watershed that distinguishes between a pre-critical and a critical approach in theology. While theologians of modernity tend to appreciate many aspects of liberation theology and view it as a branch of their own paradigm, they also find it inconsistent, oscillating between a critical and a pre-critical approach.

In the analyzed theologies we have seen that God is defined as the Liberator from economic and political idols. The self-understanding of

black theology as a product of a struggling community, "sharing and experiencing history with God," presupposes a commitment to liberation and to God. In view of this emphasis on participation critics have asked: Is commitment acceptable in an academic theology? The answer of the theologians of modernity is negative. Liberation theology is in their view pre-critical as far as it insists on themes such as "God acting in history" and the option for the poor.[16]

Among the scholars who have criticized theology of liberation most extensively and profoundly on the question of modernity Alfredo Fierro[17] and Shubert Ogden[18] deserve mention. Liberation theology confuses witness and critical theology, according to both critics. The new theologies fail, in Ogden's words, to distinguish between "existential positions, or the rationalization of such positions, on the one hand, and critical reflection on the meaning and truth of such positions, on the other."[19]

Both critics understand their censures as internal criticism, a claim which is logically based on their definitions of liberation theology. Ogden understands liberation theology as a kind of liberal theology similar to the Social Gospel (even though he acknowledges a difference in social basis, liberation theology being based among the disadvantaged groups, liberal theology by contrast within the relatively advantaged group).[20] In other words, the new theologies are defined with social commitment as the distinguishing characteristic (as opposed to a definition referring to the epistemological rupture).

> It is clearly in the tradition of this same insight [of Social Gospel and liberal theology] that the various theologies of liberation today are to be located, their distinctiveness as liberal theologies lying precisely in their intense preoccupation with the issues of action and justice.[21]

Two criteria, in Ogden's view, are central for liberal theology and consequently also for liberation theology: appropriateness and credibility.[22] The first criterion, which is less controversial here, implies congruity in meaning with the apostolic witness as attested by Scripture and tradition.[23] Ogden's critique of liberation theology is based on the second criterion, credibility (or understandability) that implies congruity "with the truth disclosed at least implicitly in human existence as such."[24] This criterion has a specific significance in the relationship between theology and the nonbeliever. Theology has to give reasons for the truth of Christian witness that are understandable without prior commitment to Christian faith.[23] In liberation theology he misses however the concern for credibility, a critical reflection that addresses the issues of the nonbelievers.

Also Fierro argues for the position that liberation theology can adequately be interpreted within a Western framework. Specifically, he maintains

that European political theology, liberation theology, and his own militant theology should be treated as a unit in spite of differences in emphasis and polemic focus. They are linked together, Fierro argues, by contemporaneity, the same argumentative consistency, and the same historical function.[26] What is the common aim of these three theologies? Fierro's answer, it seems, is the following: to respond to the challenge of modernity, which renders "supernaturalism" obsolete.[27] In a secularized society religious faith loses "its sacralising relevance," Fierro argues.[28] Analyzing liberation theology in relation to the distinction between supernaturalism and modernity he finds that the liberationists fail to "lead us across the threshold of critical modernity."[29] Why? In Fierro's view, the conflict between a dichotomic and a holistic theology is not the main *Fragestellung*. He finds "a serious error in perspective [in Gutiérrez's] belief that the principal theological problem today is to get beyond the old model of the distinctions of planes: natural versus supernatural, world versus faith."[30] In his view this perspective makes Gutiérrez too religious, so to say. Since liberation theologians criticize "modernity," they are obviously leaning toward supernaturalism, in Fierro's eyes. His criticism of Gutiérrez on this point is of special significance for our study since, if it is valid, it is equally applicable to the South African "theology of the wholeness of life" or any other variety of African theology.

> Quite aside from its attack on both the theology of secularization and secular theology in general, the work of Gutiérrez is full of religious vestiges and reminiscences. For him the only credible God is the God of the mystics, and one cannot talk about a profane world in any real sense.... His theology of liberation remains bound to the concept of the Christian resacralization of society. The dualism between the profane and the sacred disappears, but only because the sacred is regarded as coextensive with all of reality, as a transcendental of being itself.[31]

In short, Fierro's "major reservation" concerns the methodology, which he calls "pre-critical" and "dogmatic" (in the sense of Kant) since it presupposes faith in the constitutive elements of Christianity. Liberation theology, he argues, does not say anything about "how to proclaim the gospel message in the wasteland of a non-Christian society" and is therefore "useless ... for dialogue with non-Christians." [32]

Without overlooking the fact that the social contexts of Latin America and Europe are different, Fierro maintains that "we are moving towards a generalized situation" of the latter, European type.[33] Even though the process of "desacralization and secularization" has not shaped the Third World as much as the First, a fact that is acknowledged by Fierro, it is "irreversible" and will eventually lead to a "transformation of populist Christianity" with the same result of "desacralization and secularization" in the Third World

as in the First World. The Latin American situation is, in other words, described in terms of a cultural lag.[34]

Liberation theology, by means of conclusion, fails to dialogue with nonbelievers because it does not submit its own prior commitments to critical analysis. The critical analysis of scientific theology in the service of the whole humanity is replaced by "rationalization of positions already taken" in the service of a particular project of liberation, the critics suggest.[35]

As seen from this exposition, the modernist critique of liberation theology pertains to a complex set of theoretical issues which cannot be explored in this study. In view of our purpose we must ask, however, whether the critics give an appropriate interpretation of the internal logic of liberation theology. In particular, is the relationship between the Third World experience, the option for the poor, and the faith commitment properly analyzed in the critique? Differently put, does the option for the poor and the faith commitment imply that the new paradigm necessarily is an ideological legitimation of positions already taken? Or, does this interpretation arise from the imposition of an alien *Fragestellung* which neglects the Third World experience?

Methodologically, there is an obvious difference between the modernity and the liberation paradigm. Ogden presents his own position as an expression of "our common human experience and reason,"[36] while liberationists insist on a new methodology that focuses on the experience of the poor. The divergent positions vis-a-vis the option for the poor may be defined as different answers to the question: Is the experience of poor included in the established rationality or does it only represent the experience of the non-poor? Obviously, this question pertains not only to values but also to facts.

In Ogden's critique of liberation theology, the commitment to "any and all human beings" is the main argument for rejecting a methodological option for the poor.[37] Moreover, modernity is understood as an expression of "our common experience and knowledge."[38] It follows that in his argumentation one is given to believe that the theology of liberation only is committed to a part of humanity, the underprivileged, while the theology of modernity is committed to "any and all human beings." Obviously, two assumptions are underlying this argument: (1) that there is no distinct Third World experience and (2) that modernity represents also the experience of the poor.

Liberation theologians deny, however, that modernity represents "our common experience and knowledge." In reference to the Third World experience it is argued that the established rationality expresses "the point of view of the dominant classes" as distinct from "the point of view of the oppressed."[39] In fact, the distinction between the perspectives of the dominant classes and those of the oppressed is the thrust of Gutiérrez's

argumentation in his important contribution to the founding meeting of EATWOT. The option for the poor is the logical consequence of the proposition of the partiality of modernity, a proposition which consequently is of crucial importance in a discussion between the two paradigms. In other words, when liberation theologians criticize modernity it is not because they are negative to a universal or a critical approach but because they claim that modernity does not fulfil its universal claims, since it neglects the experience of the oppressed.[40]

Some may think, then, that modernity and liberation represent two different, partial concerns. The advocates of the new paradigm would dissent, however. They argue in reference to the dialectics between particularity and universality that in a situation where the experience of the human majority is suppressed the option for the oppressed is the only way to opt for humanity. In their view, the option for the poor is not a partial as opposed to a universal option; rather, the self-affirmation of the poor is a necessary step on the way to an authentic universalism which does not discriminate against any group.[41]

This argument may be clarified in reference to the above discussion on reconciliation. It will be recalled that black theologians argue for a diachronic concept of reconciliation, because they claim that a synchronic concept conceals existing social conflicts. Similarly, the option for the poor, viewed in a diachronic perspective, is an option for all human beings. Consequently, the issue of conflict between Ogden and liberation theology is not, "should theology opt for all humanity or only a part?", but "what is the appropriate method of reconciliation, a synchronic or a diachronic strategy?"

The question of the appropriate strategy for reconciliation brings us back to the basic issue: Is the experience of the underprivileged part of humanity included in modernity or not? If it is included, Ogden's position is consistent and to cite the option for the poor as an epistemological principle must be viewed as an unwarranted partiality. On the other hand, if the universal claims of modernity are unfounded, a necessary step on the way to a universal discourse may be to opt for the silenced part of humanity.

The importance of the experience of the underprivileged in the liberatión/ modernity debate may be clarified with an argument between the Australian astronomer Hanbury Brown and the Brazilian theologian Rubem Alves at an ecumenical conference on faith and science. In the classical conception, represented by Hanbury Brown,[42] science is defined as uncommitted search for truth; it is an institution of organized, disinterested scepticism. When related to practical interest, science becomes industrialized. Criticizing such tendencies, Hanbury Brown distinguished between the essence of science, an unbiased search for truth without any specific relation to practical purposes, and its actual function today when it is abused. However, this distinction between the essence and the actual function of science was sharply censured

by Alves in a parable about the relationship between the essence and the actual life of wolves.

> Let me tell you a parable. Once upon a time a lamb, with a love for objective knowledge, decided to find out the truth about wolves. He had heard so many nasty stories about them. Were they tame? He decided to get a firsthand report on the matter. So he wrote a letter to a philosopher-wolf with a simple and direct question: What are wolves? The philosopher-wolf wrote a letter back explaining what wolves were: shapes, sizes, colours, social habits, thought, etc. He thought, however, that it was irrelevant to speak about the wolves' eating habits since these habits, according to his own philosophy, did not belong to the *essence* of wolves. Well, the lamb was so delighted with the letter that he decided to pay a visit to his new friend, the wolf. And only then he learned that wolves are very fond of barbecued lamb.[43]

The parable on "The Eating Habits of Science" may clarify a Third World experience of First World science. The self-understanding of established science as value-free and disinterested pursuit of truth is characterized not only as untrue to the facts but also as a dangerous idealization which blurs the real function of science today. The answer to the question "What is science?" can, in Alves's view, only be answered by an empirical investigation of the objectively given, testable, concrete results of the scientific work. "Science, as a social entity, is nothing less than the total amount of its social relations and results. If these empirical facts are ignored we cannot claim to be speaking about science."[44] The fundamental sociological distinction between self-understanding and scientific analysis is applied on science itself.[45]

The simile of the lamb and the wolf suggests also that the contribution of the non-experts is necessary in a sociological evaluation of science. "Lambs know more about wolves than wolves do. A wolf is to a lamb what the wolf *does* to the lamb and not what the wolf thinks he is doing."[46] In sum, Alves argues that the experience of the underprivileged has been suppressed in the dominant methodology, in spite of its universalist pretensions.

Even though we cannot resolve the factual och complex question discussed by Hanbury Brown and Alves here, it is important to note its relevance in the interpretation of the methodology of the new paradigm. Liberation theology makes truth claims, we repeat, and their propositions must consequently be interpreted in relationship to these truth claims. On this score one may question Ogden's critique of liberation theology as a rationalization of positions already taken. It seems that this critique overlooks the main argument for the option for the poor as a methodological principle: that the experience of the poor is suppressed in the established methodology. Moreover, it fails to distinguish between the first and the

second act of liberation theology: the experience of the poor and the reflection on this experience. To make the experience of the poor the point of departure of theology is certainly not tantamount to an uncritical acceptance of the theological or political positions of the poor. On the contrary, we have seen how the process of black theology is a continuous reinterpretation of the black experience. The charge of rationalization, in other words, confuses an inductive and a deductive methodology.

To state this is no denial of the existence of rationalization among the advocates of the new paradigm. One must, however, distinguish between two levels, the logic of the new paradigm and its actual implementation. In view of the hermeneutical praxis it is not difficult to find examples of how liberation theologians, as other human beings, tend to rationalize their social, political, and theological position by theoretical constructs. An analysis of the process of African liberation theology suggests, however, that the most powerful antidote against rationalization is the praxis of the core principle of the new paradigm, awareness of the experience of the underprivileged. Rationalization, one could say, is to legitimize an established behaviour by suppressing the voices of its victims. Consequently, as far as liberation theology is true to its main principle and thereby acknowledges the multi-dimensional character of oppression it may be less exposed to the peril of rationalization than other types of theology.

A First World student may then ask, What are the implications for the non-poor of the scientific criteria proposed by the new paradigm? Put in a nutshell, to take cognizance of the experience of the oppressed and to reassess one's own context in the light of this new knowledge.[47]

Those who are convinced that modernity represents "our common human experience and reason" may think that the intention of the option for the poor is to exclude the insights and knowledge of the nonpoor. Such an interpretation may arise from a confusion of the general conditioning of human thought and ideology in a critical sense.[48] It should be clear, however, that Western theologians are not censured for being conditioned by their social context but for not analyzing their own ideas in context. Methodologically, what is advocated is a contextual analysis, where one redefines one's own context in the light of the presence of " the other," in order to discern how one's place in society shapes the perception of reality also in the scientific work.[49] This point is emphasized by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in an argument with Shubert Ogden:

> It should become methodologically *mandatory* that *all* scholars explicitly discuss their own presuppositions, allegiances, and functions within a theological-political context, and especially those scholars, who in critiques of liberation theology, resort to an artificially construed value-neutrality.[50]

In short, liberation theologians argue that a contextual analysis of one's own place in socioeconomic conflicts — a sociology of knowledge self- analysis informed by the experience of the underprivileged, one could say—is intrinsic to scientific theology. Moreover, it is argued that such a self-analysis presupposes an awareness of the other.

The self-analysis implies that persons cannot perceive the contextual character of their thoughts unless they are willing to listen to "the other." Male theologians, for example, will not discover the maleness of their thought in a context where female experience is suppressed. Similarly, Western theologians will not discern the ethnocentrism of Western theology unless they encounter Christians from other parts of the world. Again, the privileged will not discover the narrowness of their context except by listening to the underprivileged.

Therefore, it should be clear that the critique of the alleged value-free methodology does not imply anti-intellectualism or relativism but "a re-definition of the criteria for public theological discourse."[51] The main liability of established theology, it is suggested, is that it fails to reflect critically on its own context, interests, and political functions.

> Theological interpretation must critically reflect on the political presuppositions and implications of theological "classics" and dogmatic or ethical systems. In other words, not only the content and traditioning process within the Bible, but the whole of Christian tradition should be scrutinized and judged as to whether or not it functions to oppress or liberate people.[52]

In other words, the challenge of the new paradigm is not a matter of propositions or ideas but a question of a new methodology where awareness of the suppressed voices of humankind is of crucial importance. Objectivity, then, is not achieved by neutrality but denotes a state where no human experience is suppressed in the public discourse.

A second charge leveled by modernists deals with the challenge of secularization. Can liberation theology dialogue with non-believers? Also here it seems important to note the significance of the Third World experience.

In a theology of modernity the crisis of God-talk is explained in reference to the conflict between Christian tradition and the modern thought. Credibility is, as we have seen, a main argument for modernity. This argument presupposes a simple sociology of knowledge model, that distinguishes between *then* and *now*. The language of *then* is not understandable today. Therefore, it is suggested, theology must use the language of today, modernity, which is taken to represent "our common experience and analysis."

Advocates of the new paradigm deny, however, that the *now* may be characterized in such monolithic and harmonizing terms. In the simile of languages, one could say that liberation theology claims that modernity is not the only language used today; it embodies the language of the privileged. In other word, it is denied that modernity can serve as a neutral *lingua franca* between believers and non-believers, since neutrality is viewed as an illusion.

However, modernists tend to present the project of modernity as a project that unites the privileged and the underprivileged. Liberationists, by contrast, offer both a critique and a partial endorsement of the Enlightenment rationality. It would bring us too far to expound the sociological critique of modernity by the new paradigm. In short, modern consciousness is analyzed in reference to the economic structure and interpreted as "the perspective of the privileged." One notes, for example, the correlation between the individualist epistemology, where the individual is the knowledge-seeking agent, and the capitalist economy, where the individual is the autonomous center and the motivating force.[53] Yet, liberation theology draws, in part, from the Enlightenment rationality. The sociological distinction between self-understanding and scientific analysis, as well as the emphasis on experience and democracy are facets of modernity.

The crisis of God-talk is also analyzed differently by the two paradigms. If the rich and powerful of this world are to receive the gospel, they must learn it from the poor, liberation theologians affirm.[54] It is suggested, in other words, that the crisis of God-talk is due to the complicity between dominant interpretations of Christianity and the structures of oppression. According to this stance, also a theology of modernity lacks credibility as far as it does not take seriously the experience of the oppressed. In short, the challenge of modern consciousness is interpreted in the light of the experience of the poor.

Will the focus on the experience of the underprivileged impede a dialogue between theology and non-believers? Such a conclusion does not seem necessary. By contrast, the hermeneutical circulation between theory and praxis in the new paradigm seems to offer a new opportunity for dialogue between people of different faiths. Human experience, the starting-point of the new approach, may serve as a common ground in an interfaith discourse. Naturally, also those who deny a Christian interpretation of these experiences may acknowledge the importance of the experiences themselves. Moreover, liberation theology analyzes not only experiences of the liberating power of the gospel but also experiences of the alienation of oppressive religious traditions, as exemplified by Boesak's critique of Christian "sadism "and "masochism." If one assumes that the ecclesiastical praxis is one source of modern unbelief, it seems that liberation theology here may address a problem which is neglected in a purely theoretical dialogue.

In spite of the tentative character of a discussion of these complex issues, we propose three conclusions: First, the internal logic of liberation theology is distorted when it is subsumed as a more or less consistent variety of liberal theology or First World political theology. Modernists and liberatonists clearly represent two different paradigms, as affirmed by Gutiérrez. "It must be clearly perceived that we are dealing with two distinct theological perspectives rooted in two very different historical blocs rather than in merely academic discrepancies."[55] In particular, one fails to perceive the crucial role of the Third World experience in liberation theology, when it is considered as a branch of liberal theology. In fact, liberationists differ from liberals in analyzing conflict on four different levels.[56] (1) Whereas liberal theology affirmed the basic tenets of the dominant culture, liberation theology is counter-hegemonic, and has cultural liberation as a major aim. (2) In theological terms the new paradigm is a theology of *metanoia* where the conflict between justice and injustice, and between God and the idols is a basic *Fragestellung,* whereas conversion has not been a focal point in liberal theology. (3) Liberals accept by and large the dominant epistemology whereas liberationists advocate an epistemological rupture, a difference clearly seen in divergent assessments of Kant, the seminal figure of modernity.[57] (4) Even though both theological schools stress the commitment to social justice, the social analysis of liberation theology is far more conflictual than the analysis of liberal theology.[58]

Second, the new paradigm has problemized central assumptions in the established scientific community, specifically the claims to represent universal experience and reason, and to be value-free. If the interpretation of the Third World experience advocated by liberation theology is valid, the whole project of modernity must be reconsidered. Arguably, it must therefore be a major concern also in the First World to clarify whether the common claims to represent the "common human reason and experience" is well-founded or unwarranted, a task which reasonably can only be accomplished by an extensive dialogue with the oppressed.

Third, there is no denial that the challenge of secularization has to be considered also in a theology from the underside of history, as seen in Nyerere's reflection on politics and theology, as well as in the debate on Nyamiti's method. However, on the level of epistemology and scientific methodology many questions are still unanswered in the new paradigm.

In short, theologians of liberation acknowledge the importance of modernity, equally as theologians of modernity may be conscious of the problems of global economic injustice. The point of dissensus is about the framework: Should the demands of the poor be interpreted within the grid of modernity? Or, should modernity be reassessed on the basis of the Third World experience?[59]

Anthropocentrism and a Theology of the Wholeness of Life

While some critics interpret liberation theology as a resacralization, others describe this theology as immanentism and "an evaporation of faith." In other words, some censure liberation theology for neglecting the natural realm, others for neglecting the supernatural realm. Whereas the critique of resacralization typically is based on a theology of modernity, the critique of immanentism is based on a dichotomic theology which separates two different concerns. Even though different distinctions such as temporal-spiritual, profane-sacred or human-divine are used to characterize the two concerns, arguably the heart of these different concepts is the natural-supernatural distinction.[60]

In reference to a dichotomic *Fragestellung* critics argue that liberation theologians are so occupied with one of the two concerns that they neglect the other. Specifically, it is suggested that too little emphasis is placed on spiritual matters and this is explained with reference to the strong commitment to temporal and human questions. As noted above, such critique has been levelled against both the analyzed theologies, e.g., when the political concern in theology done in the context of Ujamaa has been characterized as "attenuation" of religion or when black theology is described as "horizontalism." The critique that liberation theology neglects the spiritual realm due to its socio-political commitment is not only common but could also from a theological point of view be characterized as the most important charge levelled against the new paradigm.[61]

In the *Instruction* the separation of spiritual and temporal concerns is the basis for a critique of the new theologies. Even though sin has "consequences" in "the cultural, economic, social and political spheres," these consequences are merely a "by-product."[62] The spiritual liberation is separated from "liberation from servitude of an earthly and temporal kind" by describing them as cause and effect.[63] In implicit reference to a dichotomic *Fragestellung,* the *Instruction* proposes an order of priority between the two concerns, where "liberation from sin" is the primary concern and liberation in temporal matters is secondary.

When the author of the *Instruction* analyzes "certain aspects" of liberation theology within the framework of a dichotomy between spiritual and temporal concerns, he finds that the "presentation of the problems is confused and ambiguous" in the criticized theologies. Since he finds no *discrete* spiritual concern in these theologies, he infers that they do not represent theology in the proper sense but only thoughts on social and political matters. Concepts such as faith, hope, and charity "have been emptied of their theological reality."[64] The *Instruction* concludes that in the theology under scrutiny many essential aspects of Christianity have either

been misunderstood or eliminated and cites as examples the liberation in
Jesus Christ, grace, salvation, church, sin, conversion, and fraternal love.[65]

From the perspective of the *Instruction* one might ask: Are African
liberation theologians occupied mainly with "liberation from servitude of
an earthly and temporal kind" or is spiritual liberation their first concern?
However, the intercultural methodology advocated in this study implies that
before responding to such a question it must be asked: Is this *Fragestellung*
agreed on by both parties, i.e., not only by the *Instruction* but also by
theologians of liberation?

In the above exposition of theology and anthropology in the analyzed
theologies we have noted an extensive critique of Western "dualism." The
dialectic between theocentrism and anthropocentrism is fundamental in
Ujamaa theology. In black theology there is a similar relation between faith in
God and the concern for human dignity, as expressed in the struggle against
apartheid. This relationship can be seen in the critique of the idolatry of the
white power structure, in Buthelezi's dialectic of church and creation, and
in Boesak's critique of pseudoinnocence. Faith in God is the cornerstone
of humanism, which is often articulated in relation to the concept of *imago
Dei*, both in Ujamaa theology and black theology. In other words: In African
liberation theology theocentrism is interwoven with a humanist commitment
to combat oppression and injustice.

On the basis of this analysis, we have argued that African liberation
theology is characterized by a holistic approach, defined as a theory
according to which the whole of Christian vocation cannot be reduced
without residue to its parts. The black experience in South Africa, for
example, is both political and spiritual, and the same is true for the
analysis of apartheid as idolatry and "the conversion to the wholeness of
life." Moreover, in reference to the Third World experience it is argued
that a dichotomic approach in practice, if not in principle, has legitimized
oppressive and unjust structures.[66] It is also suggested that spiritual and
material issues are intertwined in the process of liberation. Political and
economic oppression is interpreted not only as a "temporal" concern but also
in theological terms, as idolatry. Whereas the emphasis on a certain priority
between "temporal" and "spiritual" concerns presupposes a competition
between the two concerns, anthropocentrism and theocentrism are welded
together in the critique of economic and political idols, presented by
liberation theologians.[67] In sum, the advocates of the dichotomic approach
look in vain for a *discrete* spiritual concern in the new paradigm, since it
represents a different conceptual structure where spirituality cannot be
separated from "temporal" issues. In the words of Frank Chikane:

> There is no longer a dichotomy between *humanity* and *divinity*
> in our lives. Henceforth we do not differentiate between the
> sacred (spiritual) and the *secular* (material). Henceforth there is

no distinction between the *horizontal* and the *vertical.* The only
differentiation possible is between good and evil, righteousness
and unrighteousness, justice and injustice, love and hate, and
between Shalom (peace) and war or conflict.[68]

However, the holism of liberation theology should not be interpreted in
monistic terms but as an emerging dialectical conception, as we have seen.
Then the question may arise: What is the difference between (1) a holistic,
dialectical and (2) a dichotomic theology? While a dialectical approach may
distinguish between different dimensions of salvation it affirms that the
salvific process cannot be reduced without residue to its parts. Therefore, it is
impossible in this approach to describe spirituality or political commitment
as discrete concerns. A dichotomic theology, by contrast, *separates* spiritual
and temporal liberation, either by describing them as cause and effect, or
by putting them in an order of priority.

A comparison between Gutiérrez's *Teología de la liberatión* and the
Instruction may clarify the matter. In a central text Gutiérrez distinguishes
between "three reciprocally interpenetrating levels of meaning of the term
liberation" which have to be considered together. Somewhat simplistically the
three levels of the liberation process may be characterized as sociopolitical,
historical, and spiritual. The point of the distinction is to avoid one-
sidedness by providing a basis for a comprehensive view of the matter.
Gutiérrez insists, however, that the distinction should not be understood
as a separation between parallel or chronologically successive processes.
The three levels of liberation form "a single, complex process, which finds
its deepest sense and its full realization in the saving work of Christ."[69]

Even though the *Instruction* occasionally proposes a holistic approach,[70]
two dichotomic ideas serve as the basis for the critique of "certain aspects of
liberation theology": (1) a causal relationship between spiritual and temporal
liberation and (2) an order of priority between them. Logically, both notions
presuppose a separation, even though this consequence is not spelled out
in the *Instruction.* The proposition "A is the cause of B" presupposes that A
and B are separate entities. If, by contrast, B is intrinsic to A, the proposition
does not make sense. Similarly, the proposition "A is more important than
B" presupposes that one can separate between the two entities.[71] In sum,
it seems that the critique of liberation theology as "immanentism" "and
"reductionism" is based on an implicit dichotomic scheme.

While our concern here is not to argue for or against a holistic conception,
we must stress the importance of a proper analysis of the question at
issue. In reference to generally accepted rules of textual analysis it must be
demanded that a critic knows the subject of criticism. It seems, however,
that quite a few critics of the new paradigm presuppose a dichotomic
scheme without acknowledging the fact that liberation theology represents a
holistic approach. This is all the more remarkable since some kind of holistic

approach has been characteristic for academic liberation theology ever since its inception. Moreover, when it comes to the content of theology, the distinctive characteristics of liberation theology may be found in its critique of dichotomic schemes and the corollary insistence on a holistic conception which unites faith in God and socio-political commitment.[72]

In the debate about liberation theology, many critics offer a wealth of arguments for the necessity of the "spiritual" dimension in Christianity against a "reduction" to the "temporal" dimension, arguments which all presuppose a dichotomic conception.[73] Logically, such arguments are of no relevance in a debate between a dichotomic and a holistic conception. Naturally, this debate must start from a more fundamental level, comparing the two conceptions. In other words, instead of the futile quest for a *discrete* spiritual element in liberation theology, we must discuss: "Which conception is most appropriate for a Christian theology, a holistic or a dichotomic one?"

A proper definition of the debate at issue between First and Third World theologies is all the more important for the following reasons: (1) Both in the South African and the global context we have noted that critics who presuppose a dichotomic scheme in their critique of the holistic paradigm, in other texts acknowledge that the "spiritual" and the "temporal" dimensions of Christian faith cannot be separated;[74] (2) The inequal distribution of political, economic, and ecclesial power in this world may tempt those with more power to try to impose their unilaterally chosen *Fragestellung* on those with less power.

Findings

The aim of this study has not been to argue for or against the position of liberation theology in South Africa and Tanzania. Instead, we have opted for a logically more fundamental task, namely to interpret these theologies for First World readers. In other words, we opted for questions such as "What do the theologians of liberation actually say?" "Are they correctly interpreted by their critics?" The main reason for this limitation was that liberation theologians claimed that their positions were often misrepresented. Our study reveals that there are, in fact, many examples of critique of liberation theology that fail to do justice to the internal logic of the new paradigm and this is largely due to a disregard of the Third World experience, the holistic approach, and the rules of textual analysis. The lessons to be learned from these misrepresentations could be summarized in three points.

First, the *Third World experience* is a cornerstone in the analyzed theologies—and also in other branches of Third World theologies—concerning social analysis, epistemology, and theology. In other words, it is impossible to conceive the internal logic of the new theologies unless

one interprets them in relation to the underlying contrast experience. The position of liberation theology concerning controversial issues such as class struggle, Marxism, violence, and theological methods can only be properly understood in relation to its interpretation of the Third World experience. Naturally, this conclusion is of special significance for Western studies of Third World theologies, since First World students for obvious reasons have not undergone this experience themselves. On the basis of generally accepted rules for textual analysis, it might be required that (1) the role of the Third World experience in the studied theologies and (2) the relationship between this experience and the critically discussed ideas be properly analyzed by the critics.

Second, the analyzed theologies integrate theology, anthropology, the economy, and epistemology into a *holistic approach* that differs markedly from the established pattern in Western theology. Hence, if a dichotomic grid were forced on these theologies, their internal logical would be destroyed.

Third, the general rules of *textual analysis* are of primary importance in Western studies of Third World theologies due to the dangers of ethnocentrism. We have seen examples above of ethnocentrism both in scholarly works and in ecclesial documents, where the new theologies have been misrepresented as result of the absolutization of the interpreter's own *Fragestellung.* The dangers of ethnocentrism underline the importance of textual analysis as a means to discern the internal logic of the texts of Third World theologies.

Notes

Introduction

1. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her,* p. xxi. Concerning the claim to represent a radically new type of methodology see e.g., Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation,* p. 86: spokesmen of the new Latin American theology "will refuse to be subject to the academic theology of the West as a sort of *norma normans* to which all theology is accountable"; similarly, Tutu, "African Theology and Black Theology," p. 59, argues that "African and Black theology are a sharp critique of how theology has tended to be done mostly in the North Atlantic world." See also his "The Theology of Liberation in Africa," p. 168: "We who do liberation theology believe we are engaged in something too urgent to have to wait for the approbation of the West or of those who would blindly follow western standards of acceptability and play western games using western rules."

   Since there are conflicting interpretations of the "paradigm shift" in Kuhn's writings, it must be clear that in liberation theology the phrase is used to underline the magnitude of the methodological shift and the difficulties of communication between proponents of the old and the new methodologies without excluding the possibility of "a common ground" of argumentation, as seen, for example, in Fiorenza's study (pp. xxi-xxiii). As we will further argue below, the paradigm shift of liberation theology does not imply an epistemological relativism.

   Cf. McFague, "An Epilogue: The Christian Paradigm," pp. 325-326: "A 'paradigm' is an exemplary formulation; in theology, it can refer to such formulations as those of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and the liberation theologies. Such theologies are 'exemplars,' standard models which include basic assumptions and accepted forms of articulation. In science a paradigm shift such as the change from Newtonian to quantum physics involves a revolution in basic assumptions; the old is left behind and everything is seen from a new perspective. Such is not the case in theology. Old interpretations are cast aside, but the basic assumptions of the religion remain." On theological "paradigms," see also King, "The Task of Systematic Theology," pp. 2, 10-12, 25-27.

   Liberation theology is not seldom presented as a "challenge" in implicit reference to the new paradigm. See, for example, Mahan and Richesin (eds.), *The Challenge of Liberation Theology;* Moore (ed.), *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa;* Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* pp. 1-75; Mshana, "The Challenge of Black Theology and African Theology."

2. Concerning the "counter-hegemonic" character of liberation theology, see West, "Black Theology and Marxist Thought," pp. 562-563.

3. Buthelezi, "The Christian Challenge of Black Theology," p. 21; a similar view is proposed in Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 15-16.

4. In 1973, the World Council of Churches arranged a dialogue between First and Third World theologians that, as several observers have remarked, went down in history as an instance of "incommunication." Cf. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. ix: "I have rarely been at a meeting where the emotional tension was so evident."

5. Torres, "Die Ökumenische Vereinigung von Dritte-Welt-Theologen," p. 12.

6. In the list are included those who have participated in the EATWOT conferences, whether they are formal members of the organization or not.

7. Due to political reasons, Buthelezi was not able to participate in person in the Dar es Salaam conference but his paper was included in the report of the conference. Cf. Torres, "Introduction," p. xv.

8. See e.g., Torres, "A Latin American View of the Asian Theological Conference," p. 194: Torres shows "how the reflections of Asian theology on culture and religion are very important for Latin Americans." See also his "Preface," p. xii; Cone, "Black Theology," p. 98; Balasuriya, "A Third World Perspective," p. 198; Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," pp. 228-231. Admittedly, many theologians from different parts of the world have been exposed to international influence in different conferences of the ecumenical movement, but it is probably difficult to find a structure where the members report on so deep and enduring a mutual influence.

9. The influence of the EATWOT reports "on theological circles throughout the world" is noted by J. Russell Chandran in "A Methodological Approach to Third World Theology," p. 80.

10. The Bandung Conference and its role for the self-consciousness of the Third World is emphasized by Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 156.

11. The term *the epistemological break* was reportedly introduced by Gaston Bachelard but obviously with a different meaning. Similarly, Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 29, uses the phrase with reference to Bachelard to characterize the shift in methodology proposed by Marx in *Theses on Feuerbach.* Cf. also Miguez Bonino, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics,* pp. 46, 120. Concerning the differences between the Marxian and the liberationist methodology, see chapter 6.

12. EATWOT I, p. 269. The text is quoted, for example, by Torres, "Introduction", p. x; Torres, "Preface," p. x; Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 223.

13. Cf. the definition of epistemology in Hamlyn, "History of Epistemology," pp. 8-9: "that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and basis, and the general reliability of claims to knowledge."

14. In EATWOT I, p. 260, "the Third World" is defined as "referring to the countries outside the industrialized capitalist countries of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and the socialist countries

of Europe, including the U.S.S.R." For Aloysius Pieris, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures," p. 113, "the Third World" has virtually the same denotation as "oppressed": "The phrase 'Third World' is a theological neologism for God's own people. [The Third World] is something that happens wherever and whenever socio-economic dependence in terms of race, class, or sex generates political and cultural slavery, fermenting thereby a new peoplehood." By contrast, the phrase "the two-thirds world" does not emphasize the status of oppression but the fact that the peoples of these regions form a majority of the humankind. Concerning the concept "Third World," see also Anderson & Stransky, "Foreword," pp. 1-2.

It should be noted that the categorization of EATWOT differs from the "three world view" of Mao Zedong, who groups participants in international politics as follows: a first world comprised of the superpowers (U.S.A. and the Soviet Union); a second world of the developed, non-superpower countries (West and East Europe, Japan, Canada, and Australia); and a third world of the world's poor countries, the largest in number and population.

15. Berger et al., *The Homeless Mind,* pp. 10-11. Quoted from Anderson & Stransky, "Foreword," p. 2. Cf. "the quasi-mythological phrase 'third world'," in Berger, "Underdevelopment Revisited," p. 73.

16. EATWOT I, p. 271. Cf. Nyerere's analysis in *South-South Option,* p. 3, of the Third World Prize that, in his view, implies "a number of controversial statements. First, it asserts that there is such a thing as a Third World. Secondly, it asserts that the Third World is conscious of its existence as a diverse unity, and of its condition as a victim of exploitation. And, thirdly, this Prize is an assertion that the Third World is involved in the affairs of mankind, and has rights within the larger community. The Third World Prize is thus a declaration of pride in ourselves, and gives notice of our intention to become controllers of our own destiny."

17. Chandran, "A Methodological Approach," p. 83. Cf. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," p. 256: "Our diversity exists in the context of one common and over-riding experience. What we have in common is that we are all, in relation to the developed world, dependent—not interdependent—nations."

18. Chandran, "A Methodological Approach," p. 83. However, according to Anderson & Stransky, "Foreword," p. 1, at least some Third World theologians sense "remnants of unconscious colonialistic attitudes" in the Third World concept.

19. Niles, "Tecken för folken," p. 22.

20. Fabella, "Preface," p. xii.

21. Mbiti, "Theological Impotence and the Universality of the Church," p. 16.

22. Ibid., pp. 16-17. Similarly, Mveng, "A Cultural Perspective," pp. 73-74, censures the Christians in the First World because of "the walls of arrogance of their cultural bastions," suggesting that "the commissioned representatives of Western theology have evaded dialogue.... There has been

only, on the part of the First World, a monologue of arrogance, derision, and domination addressed to the Third World."

23. EATWOT V, p. 200.

24. The role of experience as the starting-point for theological reflection was emphasized from the outset of the academic liberation theology, as seen in the opening phrases of Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. ix: "This book is an attempt at reflection, based on the Gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited land of Latin America. It is a theological reflection born of the experience of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation to build a different society, freer and more human."

   See also EATWOT I, pp. 259,271: "We have reflected from our life experience as belonging to the oppressed men and women of the human race.... We have spoken from the depths of our lived experience"; EATWOT II, p. 192: "the colonial experience of depersonalization and cultural invasion"; Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her,* p. 32: "The personally and politically reflected experience of oppression and liberation must become the criterion of appropriateness for biblical interpretation and evaluation of biblical authority claims." Cf. the analysis of the "black experience" in ch. 3.

25. The exposition of these points draws from McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key,* pp. 60-74.

26. Cf. Appiah-Kubi, "Preface," p. viii: "In our theological task our orienting principle should be the poorest of the poor in our communities"; Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 9, quotes Miguez Bonino to the effect that the social relation to "the poor peasant" is a decisive theological criterion.

27. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Addresses in Response to Its Cultured Critics.*

28. According to Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 227, First World progressive theology "tends to regard the *modern mind* and spirit as its chief interlocutor. It addresses itself to the modern person, who is an unbeliever in many instances, and to the liberal ideology espoused by the middle class. By contrast, theology deriving from the poor majorities of the human race seeks to answer the question raised by those 'without history,' by the 'non-person' who are oppressed and marginalized specifically by the interlocutor of the dominant theologies. So the issue is not simply one of theological niceties. We are talking about two theological perspectives that respond to different needs and questioners." (Italics in the original)

29. Gutiérrez, "Liberation Theology and Progressivist Theology," p. 241. The distinction between liberation theology and progressivist theology, which is crucial to a First World interpretation of the new paradigm, may have got one of its most pregnant formulations in the following text:

   "A goodly part of contemporary theology seems to take its start from the challenge posed by the *nonbeliever.* The nonbeliever calls into question our *religious world,* demanding its thoroughgoing purification and revitalization. Bonhoeffer accepted that challenge and incisively formulated the question that underlies much contemporary theological effort: How are we to proclaim

God in a world come of age (*mündig)?* In a continent like Latin America, however, the main challenge does not come from the nonbeliever but from the nonhuman—i.e., the human being who is not recognized as such by the prevailing social order. These are the poor and exploited people, the ones who are systematically and legally despoiled of being human, those who scarcely know what a human being might be.

These nonhumans do not call into question our religious world so much as they call into question our *economic, social, political, and cultural world.* Their challenge impels us toward a revolutionary transformation of the very bases of what is now a dehumanizing society. The question, then, is no longer how we are to speak about God in a world come of age; it is rather how to proclaim him Father in a world that is not human and what the implications might be of telling nonhumans that they are children of God." "Praxis de liberación, teología y anuncio," quoted from Gibellini (ed.), *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America,* p. x. (Italics in the original)

30. Gutiérrez, "Liberation Theology and Progressivist Theology," p. 241.

31. McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key,* p. 61.

32. Torres, "Introduction," p. ix. Cf. Miguez Bonino, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics,* p. 43, where he discusses the phrase "the epistemological privilege of the poor" and insists that it does not imply that the poor are morally or spiritually superior but that they do see reality from a different angle, which accounts for the emphasis on the *epistemological* contribution of the poor.

33. Cf. Gutiérrez, "Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith", pp. 10-11: "A scientific line of reasoning is absolutely necessary, no matter how demanding it may prove to be; and it is a very real possibility, though it may still be far from worked out." Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 225: "We want a truly serious and scientific theology."

34. Gutiérrez, "Liberation Theology and Progressivist Theology, " p. 241.

35. Richard, "Introduction," p. 1: "The central question in Latin America today is not atheism—the ontological question of whether or not God exists [but] idolatry—a worship of the false gods of the system of oppression" (italics removed); EATWOT V, p. 203: "In the Third World the opposite of faith is not atheism but idolatry."

36. EATWOT VI, p. 190. Biblical references deleted. Cf. EATWOT IV, p. 235: "The church encounters the God of the poor by confronting the idols of oppression."

37. Aloysius Pieris described Mammon in his lauded contribution to the Wennappuwa conference, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation," pp. 81-82, as "that undefinable force which organizes itself within every person and among people to make material wealth antihuman, antireligious, and oppressive."

38. Ibid., p. 82.

39. Richard (ed.), *The Idols of Death and the God of Life,* p. 1. Cf. EATWOT VI, p. 190: "In contrast to the gods of the global system, the true God is not revealed

among those on the throne of power and affluence, but among the least valued according to the reigning canons of respectability — the victims, the voiceless, the powerless, those on the underside of history (Matt. 25)."

40. Cf. Maimela, "Current Themes and Emphases in Black Theology," p. 103: "By looking at the world from the point of view of the oppressed and the downtrodden, where the world is experienced as a conflict because the major constituents are polarized and are unable to work together toward the liberation and realization of dignity for all human beings, and by insisting that the reality of our conflictual world should become a subject for theological reflection, Liberation Theology raises embarrassing and uncomfortable questions for traditional theology." Cf. the expression "conflictual history" in EATWOT II, p. 194.

41. EATWOT I, pp. 259-264. See also Torres, "Introduction," p. vii, and "Opening Address," p. 5: "We want to pay special attention to the most significant fact or our times: the gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries.'' EATWOT I, pp. 270-271, hints, however, at an emerging multidimensional analysis.

42. EATWOT VI, p. 182.

43. See, for example, Fabella and Torres (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World* and *Doing Theology in a Divided World.* It should be noted that besides the conflicting, regional identities there have in the EATWOT discussions been substantial disagreement about the importance of race and sex in social analysis.

44. EATWOT I, p. 270.

45. Rücker, *Afrikanische Théologie Darstellung und Dialog,* pp. 84-86, argues that there is a fundamental difference between the Dar es Salaam and Accra conferences of EATWOT in the use of the concept contextual theology. At the former, it is suggested, it goes about the autonomous person struggling with the world and the Word of God but failing to enter into "dialogue with God.'' It seems, however, that such an interpretation neglects a characteristic feature of the new paradigm, the intrinsic relationship between community with God and "worldly" experiences.

46. EATWOT V, p. 198: "Social analysis is an indispensable mediation and basic equipment for a liberating theology"; Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God'' p. 224: "Unlike European and North American theology, whose interlocutor is philosophy, liberation theologians dialogue with sociology.''

47. "Latin American report," p. 16.

48. In the Dar es Salaam report see e.g., Masanja, "Neocolonialism and Revolution in Africa," and the first section of EATWOT I on "The Third World Political, Social, Economic, Cultural, Racial, and Religious Background."

49. Concerning the epistemological significance of the sociology of knowledge approach, see Stark in "Sociology of Knowledge," p. 476: "The main philosophical importance of the sociology of knowledge consists in its claim

to supplement, if not to replace, traditional epistemology." This stance is elaborated in his *The Sociology of Knowledge,* e.g., pp. 13-19.

50. In Boesak's *Farewell to Innocence* Mannheim is one of the most-quoted white scholars. According to Cone, *God of the Oppressed,* pp. 39-44, sociology of knowledge, "demonstrates convincingly the function of a social a priori in all thinking" and establish the relativity of all thought processes, thereby refuting the assumption "that theological thinking is objective or universal." Cone's position seems to be similar to the conception of Stark, *Sociology of Knowledge,* p. 16, which is quoted by assent: "We see the broad and deep acres of history through a mental grid ... through a system of values which is established in our minds before we look out on to it—and it is this grid ... which decides what will fall into our field of perception." (Italics in the original)

    To the importance of the sociology of knowledge, see also Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology;* West, "Black Theology and Marxist Thought,'' p. 554; Bernadette Mosala, "Black Theology and the Struggle of the Black Woman in Southern Africa," p. 130; Chikane, "The Incarnation in the Life of the People of South Africa," p. 44, who relates a theological reflection on sociology of knowledge with the incarnation. For a feminist sociology of knowledge model, see Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her,* pp. 21-26; Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk,* pp. 12-20.

51. Chandran, "A Methodological Approach," p. 85, argues for a Christian commitment "influenced, but not dominated, by Marxism."

52. Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 226: "contemplation and practice together constitute the *first act,* theologizing is the *second act*" (italics in the original). Cf. EATWOT V, p. 199: "The committed involvement of the Christians in [the struggle of the poor and the oppressed against all forms of injustice and oppression] provides a new locus for theological reflection"; Fabella, "Preface," p. xv: "commitment to the liberation of the oppressed constitutes the first act of theology."

53. Torres, "Opening Address," p. 5.

54. Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation,* p. 91: "Every interpretation of the texts which is offered to us must be investigated in relation to the praxis out of which it comes." Concerning "hermeneutical circulation," see also p. 102.

55. West, "Black Theology and Marxist Thought," p. 564: "Organic intellectuals combine theory and action, and relate popular culture and religion to structural social change"; cf. Pieris, "A Theology of Liberation in Asian Churches?", p. 1: "Any liberation theology begins to be formulated only when a given Christian community begins to be drawn into the local peoples' struggle for *full humanity* and through that struggle begins to sink its roots in the lives and cultures of these people." (Italics in the original)

56. Boff and Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology.* Similarly, Oduyoye, "Who Does Theology?", p. 147, suggests that one of the marks of the new paradigm is a "cross-fertilization of the academic and the popular."

The unfinished character of liberation theology, being "a theology in movement," is emphasized by many of its proponents. Torres, "Introduction," p. xii, acknowledges that "the lived experience of specific people" and the "scientific tools" have not yet been integrated in liberation theology. Similarly, Segundo, *Liberation of Theology,* p. 241: "The pathways traced out in this book will take us on a long journey. If theology in Latin America or anywhere else chooses to follow them, my book and liberation theology itself will probably be forgotten long before the new tasks outlined here have been carried out as thoroughly as those undertaken by other methodologies in the past history of theology. It will take centuries to match the latter in seriousness, range, and results"; Gutiérrez, "Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith," p. 24: "Much work remains to be done if this line of theological thought is to be clarified and if its questioning is to be brought to a fine edge." Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 225: "We are still in the process of perceiving all the implications of our epistemological break" and p. 220: "We are well aware that [theologies elaborated in terms of the poor and their struggles for liberation] still harbour First World categories and perspectives that must be rejected." Similarly, the EATWOT approach is presented as "an emerging methodology," EATWOT V, p. 198.

57. For a different view, see Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah, p. x et passim,* who defines liberation theology as "a specific 'programme' which relates to the three interconnected elements of content (liberation), structure (contextuality) and function (theology as ideology or ideological criticism)." Even though Witvliet repeatedly discusses the poor as interlocutors and the role of the black experience in black theology, he fails to give these themes a place of prominence and thereby obscures the radical character of the *epistemologica ruptura,* which in his account appears as an elaboration of Barth's theology.

58. Cf. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 13: "a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word."

59. Cf. the discussion on modernity and liberation theology in ch. 6. An analysis of Peter L. Berger's discussion of liberation theology may elucidate the importance of the defining characteristic of "liberation theology." According to Berger, "the preferential option for the poor" is tantamount to Samuel Johnson's dictum "a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization," "Underdevelopment Revisited," p. 76. In other words, the epistemological dimension of the new paradigm is neglected. This omission has profound implications for Berger's criticism of liberation theology. He argues that the economic strategies proposed by liberation theologians "are politically disastrous and morally irresponsible precisely because they will in all likelihood lead to more poverty, more oppression, more exploitation," *Moral Judgment and Political Action,* p. 8 (see also "Underdevelopment Revisited," "A Summary of Peter Berger's Oral Presentation"). The main arguments for this controversial proposition are calculi of pain and meaning,

which, Berger suggests, reveal that socialism creates suffering, while there are "fabulously successful capitalist cases," for example, in East Asia.

The major liability of these calculi, it seems to us, is that they neglect the main argument of the "epistemological rupture," by creating an illusion of neutrality in the assessment of the different factors of the calculi. An example may clarify this criticism. In reference to a "calculus of means, costs and consequences" in Vietnam, Berger argues that the American anti-war movement in the late 1960s was a mistake since it contributed to the victory of "a relentless totalitarian tyranny," which has created more suffering than the "atrocious acts committed by the Unites States and its allies," *Moral Judgment and Political Action,* pp. 14-15. One may wonder if, in the presentation of this calculus, Berger—paradoxically—does not forget "the social construction of reality." Be this as it may, it cannot be denied that—according to the *epistemologica ruptura*—the privileged in the United States and the underprivileged in Vietnam may assess the factors of this calculus differently. Accordingly, one of the privileged cannot provide an assessment on behalf of the underprivileged. Therefore, the new paradigm focuses on the experience of the oppressed. It is suggested that the privileged must listen to the underprivileged. By contrast, Berger seems to suggest that the liberationist emphasis on listening to the poor is exaggerated, Novak (ed.), *Liberation Theology and the Liberal Society,* p. 99.

In short, Berger and liberation theology differ significantly regarding "the preferential option for the poor," as defined in the new paradigm, but this dissensus is distorted by his misrepresentation of the new school of thought. In fact, he suggests repeatedly that "the preferential option for the poor" by liberation theologians is "perfectly plausible to me both ethically and theologically"; the disagreement, it is suggested, arises from the "neo-Marxist" presuppositions of the liberationists.

60. Cf. Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology,* pp. 39-40: "It is the fact that the one and only thing that can maintain the liberative character of any theology is not its content but its methodology. It is the latter that guarantees the continuing bite of theology, whatever terminology may be used and however much the existing system tries to reabsorb it into itself."

61. Concerning the concept of modernity, see the analysis of "modern consciousness" in King, "The Task of Systematic Theology," pp. 10-25.

62. African theology was aptly portrayed by *All Africa Lutheran Consultation,* p. 3, "as being a young calf which has hardly grown horns." The simile obviously refers to the African saying: "Cattle are born with ears, their horns grow later," quoted by Mbiti in his analysis of the relationship between oral and written theology in "Cattle Are Born With Ears, Their Horns Grow Later—Towards an Appreciation of African Oral Theology." In Mbiti's interpretation, the simile of "ear" symbolizes attentiveness and thereby refers to a community-oriented anthropology. Cf. Nyamiti, "An African Theology Dependent on Western Counterparts?", p. 146: "I am fully aware

of the fact that African theology is still in its infancy, and much remains still to be done in order to bring it to maturity and perfection."

63. Tutu, "African Theology and Black Theology," p. 56. Cf. the plea for "a radical spiritual decolonisation," p. 64: "Too many of us have been brainwashed effectively to think that the Westerner's value system and categories are of universal validity. We are too concerned to maintain standards which Cambridge or Harvard or Montpelier have set even when these are utterly inappropriate for our situations. We are still too docile and look to the metropolis for approval to do our theology, for instance, in a way which will meet with the approval of the West."

64. Ibid.

65. Nyamiti, "Some Methodological Considerations on African Theology," p. 52. A similar view is proposed by Upkong, *African Theologies Now, pp.* 23-25. For a discussion of the African initiative see Sundkler, "African Church History in a New Key."

66. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* pp. 164-165.

67. Ibid., p. 231.

68. Vincent Mulago, contributor to *Des pretres noires s'interrogent,* was a pioneer of this approach, and so was Tharcisse Tshibangu, whose book *Théologie positive et theologie speculative* is praised by Adrian Hastings in *A History of African Christianity,* p. 170, as "in comparably the most serious piece of theological scholarship yet produced by an African."

69. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 43. For a sociological elaboration of this argument, see Houtart, "Südafrikas Schwarze Théologie in soziologischer Sicht." A similar critique is articulated in EATWOT I, p. 267. It should be noted, however, that in the theological reflection on liberation in the All African Council of Churches, the sociopolitical dimension obviously was present from the outset, as noted by Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology,* pp. 57-74.

70. Bujo, "Dangers de bourgeoisie dans la Théologie Africaine," p. 10, and "Welche Théologie braucht Afrika?"

71. Muzorewa, 77ie *Origins and Development of African Theology,* p. 89.

72. EATWOT V, p. 194. Cf. Torres, "Die Ökumenische Vereinigung von Dritte-Welt-Theologen," p. 17; Mushete, "Einfuhrung," p. 113; Mveng, "Evaluation by an African Delegate": "'Anthropological poverty' consists in despoiling human beings not only of what they have, but of everything that constitutes their being and essence—their identity, history, ethnic roots, language, culture, faith creativity, dignity, pride, ambitions, right to speak."

73. In the literature there are different designations such as African theology, Theologia Africana and African Christian theology that are practically identical. To the history of the concept, see Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 7; Bimwenyi-Kweshi, *Alle Dinge erzdhlen von Gott,* p. 12; Kramm, "Ein Afrikaner zwischen Staat und Kirche," pp. 90-91.

74. Quoted from Shorter, *African Christian Theology,* p. 23.

75. EATWOT II, p. 194. Cf. p. 193: "We believe that African theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture and the creative attempt of African peoples to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and the neo-colonial present." Similarly, Pobee defines African theology as "the theological reflection that emanates from and speaks to the African situations." "Contextuality and Universality," p. 5. See also Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology,* p. 96; Nthamburi, "African Theology as a Theology of Liberation," p. 233: "African Theology is born out of the African experience, African vision of the world and metaphysics, and takes seriously the cultures of the peoples of Africa"; Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 40: "Reflection of African Christians in the light of the Word of God, on the African situation, on African culture and traditions, on the African past and the African present."

76. Mbiti, "The Biblical Basis for Present Trends in African Theology," p. 83.

77. Cf. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology,* pp. 52, 97.

78. Similarly, Pieris, "A Theology of Liberation", p. 1, clarifies the creation of liberation theology as a process within the struggle for full humanity, and adds "That is why we insist that inculturation and liberation, rightly understood, are two names of the same process."

79. "African theology must also be *liberation* theology," according to the Accra conference,
    African theology being understood as a branch of Third World theologies. EATWOT II, p. 194 (italics in the original). Cf. Balulette, "Liberation in Africa," pp. 90-91: "There is an emerging group of African theologians who forcefully say that African theology must be a theology of liberation." Concerning African liberation theology, see also Okolo, "Diminished Man and Theology: A Third World Perspective"; Nthamburi, "African Theology as a Theology of Liberation"; *All Africa Lutheran Consultation,* p. 4; Okullu, "Political Ethics in Africa," p. 37: "Christian political ethics in Africa must be built around liberation theology."

80. Nyamiti, "Approaches to African Theology," pp. 32-33; "Some Methodological Considerations on African Theology," p. 66.

81. Upkong, *African Theologies Now.*

82. Mushete, "The History of Theology in Africa," p. 28. To the critique of concordism, see Chikane, "The Incarnation in the Life of the People of South Africa,", p. 49, who advocates what is called a dynamic and critical-minded African theology.

83. EATWOT II, p. 192. If comparing the categorizations proposed by Nyamiti, Upkong, and the Accra conference some similarities can be noted. Besides the formal characteristic of using three categories, all place black theology in an independent category. The other two classes are formed, however, in different ways. The Accra meeting uses a diachronic approach, distinguishing between an earlier, adaptionist and a more recent, critical, and contextual method, while Nyamiti categorizes with reference to language and auxiliary

disciplines. Upkong's classification, finally, has a clear affinity to that of Accra. A liability of Upkong's grouping, however, is the differentiation between liberation theology and black theology, since the latter obviously is a branch of the former, as testified by many black theologians. See Tutu, "The Theology of Liberation in Africa," p. 163, who affirms that "Black theology is a theology of liberation in Africa"; Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa", p. 171, and *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 7, analyzes black theology within "the framework of the theology of liberation"; Maimela, "Current Themes and Emphases in Black Theology," p. 102, explicitly deals with "Black theology within the broader context of Liberation Theology, of which Black Theology is just but a part."

84. The Bible and the Christian heritage are mentioned always among the sources of African theology, when they are not presupposed implicitly. Similarly, African anthropology, culture, traditional religions, and independent churches are included, even though the headings may vary. More controversial is the importance of the present socioeconomic reality, as suggested by the above distinction between a theology of indigenization and a critical theology. At the *All Africa Lutheran Consultation,* p. 3, the following sources were mentioned: "The Bible, African Traditional Religions and Cultures, and various forms of oral theology which are experienced in the songs, conversations, prayers, homiletics, proverbs, aetiological myths, and evangelical strategies in African churches and communities."

85. EATWOT II, pp. 192, 197.

86. Mveng, "Christianity and the Religious Culture", p. 10: "the crisis, on the part of the African, is a crisis of *depersonalization."* (Italics in the original)

87. Sawyerr, "What Is African Theology," p. 20: "The worship of the ancestors, the attitude to birth and death, sin, sickness, forgiveness, and health all converge on the central role of the community."

88. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,* pp. 108-109: "Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are and since we are, therefore I am'." This is, says Mbiti, "a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man." Upkong, *African theologies Now,* p. 60, differentiates between Western and African anthropologies by referring to the cartesian *cogito ergo sum* which, translated into the African context, in his view would be *cognatus ergo sum* (I exist because I belong to a family). To the *homo oeconomicus* paradigm, see, for example, Lepage, *Tomorrow, Capitalism.*

89. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology,* p. 63.

90. Oduyoye, "The Value of African Religious Beliefs," pp. 110-111.

91. The holistic character of African theology is emphasized by many scholars. Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 60, says that the African "contribution to Christian theology" puts the emphasis on creation: "even the profane is seen as capable of being included into the supernatural."

92. EATWOT II, p. 192.

93. As aspects of the fifth source, the Accra conference also mentions the extended family, hospitality, and communal life, even though it may be more logical to deal with these phenomena as aspects of African anthropology.

94. Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology,* p. 4.

95. Ibid.

96. EATWOT II, pp. 192-193: "Despite the colonial experience of depersonalization and cultural invasion, the cultures have kept their vitality. This vitality is expressed in the revival of African language, dances, music, and literature and in Africa's contribution to human sciences and to the human experience. This cultural vitality is the support of the African people in their struggle for complete liberation for the construction of a human society. We believe that African theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture and the creative attempt of African peoples to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and the neo-colonial present."

97. Actually, the idea which led to the formation of EATWOT was first aired by an African, Oscar Bimwenyi-Kweshi. See Kamphausen, "Afrikanische Théologie im Spannungsfeld von Abhangigkeit und Befreiung," p. 563, and Bimwenyi-Kweshi, "Déplacements. A Torigine de l'Association Oecumenique de Théologiens du Tiers Monde.' This fact is no corroboration, however, of Mveng's assertion in "Evaluation by an African Delegate," p. 217, that EATWOT is "an African project."

98. Mveng, "Evaluation by an African Delegate," p. 217: "Long before [EATWOT] came into being, various currents of liberation theology existed—in Latin America, in the United States, in Africa (especially in South Africa), and in Asia. These currents, very different from one another in their context, their methodology, and their analyses, did not depend on, did not flow from, the Latin American current." Similarly, Mushete; "Einfiihrung," p. 113, affirms that liberation theology in Africa has a history of its own which cannot be reduced to Latin American influence. Cone, "Black Theology: Its Origins, Methodology, and Relationship to Third World Theologies," p. 104, dates the origin of African liberation theology to the 1950s and sees it as "inseparable from the movement toward nationhood on that continent."

99. Cf. EATWOT V, p. 199: "We are convinced that a relevant theology for the Third World should include both the cultural and socio-economic aspects of the people's lives. In most theological efforts today, stress is on one to the near exclusion of the other. Most of the Latin Americans realize that their liberation has failed to include the cultural dimension of their people and the aspirations of marginalized groups of their continent. Some Africans, on the other hand, in stressing anthropology, traditional cultures, and religions, tend to give little consideration to the contemporary economic and political plight of their peoples."

100. In agreement with the international community and the liberation movement, we will here use *South Africa* to denote the geopolitical entity of the Act of Union, 1910, and modified to become a republic in 1961,

disregarding the amputations and excisions made by creating out of the former bantustans political artifacts that by the South African government are regarded as "independent" states.

101. According to Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 57, Tanzania provides "an excellent take-off point" for a theological reflection on the process of African liberation. It may also be noted that EATWOT I refers three times to Tanzania and Nyerere, an attention not given the hosts of other EATWOT meetings. Cf. the appreciation of Nyerere in Walle, "Women Seeking Equality," p. 23.

102. Torres, "Introduction," p. viii.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid., p. 223.

105. Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 222.

106. See Lyimo, "An Ujamaa Theology"; Soka, "An Ujamaa Theology in the Making." Some theologians are speaking about "A Theology in the age of Ujamaa." Concerning Lyimo's essay, cf. Mbiti, "The Biblical Basis for Present Trends in African Theology," p. 90; Rücker (who misspells the name as Lymo), "Afrikanische Théologie": Darstellung und Dialog, pp. 85, 179, 215; Shorter, *African Christian Spirituality,* pp. 27-31, 126-129.

107. Soka defines Ujamaa theology as "a critical reflection over [the commitment of Ujamaa] in the light of faith," understanding it as an expression of the same "trend in theology which has given rise to the Theology of Liberation in Latin America and elsewhere," "An Ujamaa Theology in the Making." pp. 39, 30.

108. Even though "perspective" is sometimes used as equivalent to *Fragestellung,* we prefer the latter term since it clearly relates to the conceptual structure in a body of texts.

109. A concise argumentation for the relevance of "many and rather extensive quotations" is given by Jarl Hemberg in *Religion och metafysik,* p. 18.

110. This assessment of the methodological problems of a research on oral theology derives from the author's experience as tutor for Tanzanian research students and as consultant at the Makumira Research Institute in Tanzania. Working together with students doing field-work in their native country, the author was impressed by the methodological problems that had to be mastered and were mastered because of the students' knowledge of the local culture. The lesson from this work was, however, that it would be far more difficult for a Westerner to account for African theology on the parish level, even though a study including this type of material would undeniably be richer and far more representative of Christian thought in different contexts (as demonstrated e.g., by Mbiti, "Cattle Are Born With Ears, Their Horns Grow Later—Towards an Appreciation of African Oral Theology").

   In fact, several warnings have been sounded by Third World theologians on this score, as seen e.g., in Buthelezi's criticism of the Western idealization

of "the true African" (ch.5). A similar view is advocated by Pieris, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology," p. 137, who suggests that Western anthropologists in their studies of "primitive" cultures may succumb to the temptation of "apocalyptic megalomania in that they claim to possess a secret power of knowing these cultures 'emphatically'." In this context some critical questions may be asked of recent theological literature, e.g., Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered,* or Healey, *A Fifth Gospel.*

111. Tutu, *Die Versöhnung ist unteilbar,* pp. 18-19. Translated from the German by the author.

112. Yebio, "Intercultural Education: What? Why? How?", pp. 7-8. Cf. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 4: "In dealing with black theology, sooner or later we come up against ourselves. The paradoxical thing is that the more we succeed in doing justice to black theology, the more we are thrown back on ourselves."

113. In discussion with W. Dantine, Witvliet rightly observes that "the problem in [Dantine's] critical questions is that the critic's own tradition continues to function as the norm by which the independent development of doctrine in black theology is measured." Ibid., p. 293.

114. Newbigin, "Theological Education in a World Perspective," p. 9.

115. The growing importance of Africa in world Christianity may be illustrated by some statistical facts. In 1900 there were less than 10 million Christians on the continent (1,8 % of all Christians in the world). In 1980 the continent had 203 million Christians (14,3 % of all Christians in the world) and by 2 000 it is anticipated that there will be 393 million (19,5 % of all Christians in the world). Barrett (ed.), *World Christian Encyclopaedia,* p. 4. On African theology there is a selected bibliography in *Revue Africaine du Clergé,* 1976-1980, comprising 320 titles and 4,077 additional items listed for the period 1927-1975.

116. Cone, "Introduction," p. 136, is critical of the benevolent silence of white theologians in the U.S.A. toward black theology, a silence typically legitimized by referring black theology to "the practical department." In a similar vein, Buthelezi, "Black Theology — A Quest for the Liberation of Christian Truth," p. 52, claims that "there is an unexpressed reluctance to receive Black Theology in the intellectual community of the plurality of theologies. That is why in the West, Black Theology, like all African attempts to articulate the Christian faith, has remained a curiosity of interest to specialists with a bent for the discipline of ethnology."

This pattern of "benign neglect" is ascertained also by white scholars. In the German context, Dejung, "Reaktionen auf Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika," p. 24, notes that systematic theology has hardly noticed black theology. Similarly, Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* pp. 4, 286, remarks that in the Netherlands almost only missiologists and ecumenists, not systematicians, have shown interest in black theology. Moreover, he notes: "Black theology does not criticize the personal disposition of individual

theologians, but the fact that they are part of a discipline which in principle does not put up any opposition to an all-embracing ideological practice which excludes blacks from culture and history."

117. Rücker, "*Afrikanische Théologie": Darstellung und Dialog,* offers a wealth of material, presented without ethnocentric arrogance but also without a clear categorization, a fact that is seen e.g., in the treatment of African socialism and Ujamaa theology under the heading of African Independent Churches, pp. 178-179. More importantly, however, is that the emphasis is placed on a dialogue with what is called an African world view, p. 21 *et passim,* and that consequently the socioeconomic context and liberation theology are treated as marginal phenomena. As we will see below, an approach where the African world view is analyzed in isolation from the context of its authors is debatable. Moreover, a liability of Rücker's ahistorical perspective is that African theology is presented without any differentiation between regions, periods, etc.

From an African point of view there are two brief monographs of a systematic-theological character dealing with African theology in general: Upkong, *African Theologies Now* and Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology.*

Dantine, *Schwarze Théologie,* and Blaser, *Wenn Gott schwarz ware,* analyze mainly American black theology.

118. For a micro-perspective, see Westerlund's analysis of religion and Tanzanian socialism in *Ujamaa na dini.*

119. Since the author is trained in the discipline of systematic theology, the limitations of the study may be most apparent in the fields of epistemology and social science.

120. It should be noted that the criterion of democracy here is somewhat different from my argument in "The Hermeneutics of the Poor."

121. Bergström, *Objektivitet,* p. 122.

122. Ibid., p. 117.

123. Ibid.

Chapter 1. Ujamaa as Theological Context

1. Ujamaa is labeled a philosophy in the sense of "a system of motivating beliefs, concepts and principles," even though some students suggest that philosophy should only be used to denote a science.

2. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* pp. 162-171. Cf. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 137: "I was the first to use the word ujamaa in order to explain the kind of life we wish to live in our country." It appears to have been introduced in the essay from 1962, since the index of Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* does not give any reference to the concept in any of the earlier speeches.

3. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 166.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 162. Barrett, *World Christian Handbook,* p. 662, suggests the translation "brotherhood."

6. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 137.

7. See Nyerere's essay on Ujamaa, in *Freedom and Unity,* p. 162-171, and The Arusha Declaration, in *Freedom and Socialism,* pp. 231-250.

8. A *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary,* p. 528.

9. In *Kamusi ya kiswahili sanifu* (published by the Institute of Kiswahili Research at the University of Dar es Salaam), p. 291, the word "ubepari" is somewhat depreciatively defined as "mfumo wa kiuchumi unaowezesha watu wachache kumiliki rasilimali na njia kuu za uchumi wanchi," which may be translated as "an economic system which makes it possible for few people to govern wealth and the main economic structures of a nation."

10. See e.g., Soka, "An Ujamaa Theology in the Making," p. 29.

11. See, for example, Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 6; Shorter, *African Christian Theology,* p. 5: "African Traditional Religion has always been, to some extent, a submerged religion, indistinguishable from a cultural tradition." From the perspective of black theology in South Africa, this aspect is also emphasized in Mosala, "The Relevance of African Traditional Religions and Their Challenge to Black Theology," pp. 91,98: "The relevance of African religions for the contemporary black struggle can be appreciated when it is realized that the notion of culture as an act of liberation is at the heart of a progressive understanding of these religions.... In fact, to understand the relevance of African traditional religion one must comprehend the significance of culture."

12. "Culture," *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,* 3rd ed., p. 210. As other definitions the following are proposed: "state of intellectual development among a people," "particular form of intellectual development" or "all the arts, beliefs, social institutions, etc. characteristic of a community, race, etc."

13. EATWOT V, p. 201.

14. Mveng, "A Cultural Perspective," p. 73.

15. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 137.

16. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 44.

17. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," pp. 246-253.

18. The charter was revoked in 1891, when the territory became a proper colony.

19. Yeager, *Tanzania,* p. 10, accounts for how the German warfare included "a scorched earth campaign that left many thousands dead from military action, disease, and famine." According to a conservative estimate about 75,000 people died in two years of violence, hunger, and disease. The importance of the Maji Maji rebellion as a symbol for the struggle against foreign domination is testified by Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 2, who also refers to the armed conflict between the Hehe and the Germans, 1891-1898:

"Memories of the Hehe and Maji Maji wars against the German colonialists, and of their bloody suppression, were deeply ingrained in the minds of our people."

The most prominent leader of the revolt was a *mganga,* traditional doctor, by the name of Kinjikitile Ngwale, who taught that "all Africans were one," and that all who partook of the *maji* (water), the war medicine, would be immune to European bullets. He also taught that the war was commanded by God, and that the dead ancestors would assist the fighters.

See, for example, Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* pp. 34-35; Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika,* pp. 168-202.

20. Cf. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 41.

21. During this time white settlers dreamed of an "East and Central African Federation" under European leadership. Dr. Malan in South Africa even went so far as to announce that he was prepared to receive a deputation of Kenyan and Tanganyikan settlers. See Hastings, *A History of African Christianity*, p. 16.

22. Yeager, *Tanzania,* p. 18.

23. Ibid., p. 19.

24. Ibid.

25. Barrett, *World Christian Handbook,* p. 661. Cf. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* p. 185: "The Arusha Declaration … has provided a moral flag for Africa ... and ... has heralded a growing movement in the 1970s towards a far more strenuously social approach to the problems of society than was apparent in the decade of independence."

26. Cf. Kijanga, *Ujamaa,* pp. 1-10.

27. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 235. (Italics added)

28. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," pp. 246-247.

29. Ibid., p. 247. Cf. p. 260: "There are no miraculous answers to our problems. Changing the world order is a process. It can be speeded; it can be directed; and it can be made less turbulent: But it will remain a process."

30. Motshologane, "African Socialism," p. 223.

31. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* p. 11.

32. Quoted from Motshologane, "African Socialism" p. 226.

33. Silveira, *Africa South of the Sahara,* pp. 118-119.

34. Ibid.

35. Skurnik, "Léopold Sédar Senghor and African Socialism," p. 349, quoted from Mbuende, *Namibia: The Broken Shield,* p. 163.

36. *The Church in Mozambique,* p. 38.

37. Even though Shivji, *Class Struggles in Tanzania,* p. 14, deals with African socialism within the Tanzanian context, his analysis of this political philosophy may possibly apply to Senghor's edition, but not to that of Nyerere, since he claims that "Marxist analysis of capitalism is ipso facto irrelevant [in] African Socialism."

38. This aspect is forcefully, possibly in an exaggerated way, emphasized by Silveira, *Africa South of the Sahara,* p. 124. 39. See for example, Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 170, who cites "tribal socialism" as an argument against the notion of class struggle.

40. Ibid.

41. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 381.

42. According to Silveira, *Africa South of the Sahara,* p. 126, Ujamaa "is not a political option between two major conflicting systems: it is the renaissance of traditional African socialism, whose foundation, and the objective is the extended family." Silveira's analysis may be accurate as an interpretation of the self-understanding of Ujamaa in the 1962 essay but it is clearly contradicted by the above quotations from 1972, which shows the development of Nyerere's political thought. Moreover, the claim that Ujamaa is "the renaissance of traditional African socialism" must be submitted to historical criticism.

43. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 381.

44. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika,* p. 549.

45. See Shivji's essay with this title and *Class Struggles in Tanzania.* According to Blömstrom and Hettne, *Beroende och underutveckling,* p. 157, the essay is "the most interesting event in the Tanzanian debate on dependence and a real milestone." 46. Shivji, *Class Struggles in Tanzania,* p. 3. Noteworthy is the definition of Marxism as "a whole world outlook with its own philosophical base in dialectical materialism," identifying Marxism with Marxist-Leninism.

47. Cf. Mbuende, *Namibia: The Broken Shield,* p. 166: "The notion of the non-existence of classes in Africa was shattered by a number of scholars who demonstrated that the communal modes of production in Africa were transformed under the orbit of capitalist imperialism."

48. Freyhold, *Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania,* pp. xiv, 55. Perceptively, Freyhold notes, p. 72, that "the memory of traditional co-operation" may have different functions for wealthy and for poor peasants since it could serve both as a critique of prevailing injustice and as a "cover for exploitative relations."

49. Ibid., p. 117.

50. For example, Boesen, et al., *Ujamaa: Socialism from Above.*

51. *The Times,* letter, 4 August 1950. Quoted from Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* p. 14.

52. Ibid.

53. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite,* p. 179: "Now that African freedom is accepted by all except the diehard racialists as an inescapable fact, there are efforts in certain quarters to make arrangements whereby the local populations are given a token freedom while cords attaching them to the 'mother country' remain as firm as ever. This arrangement gives the appearance of nationhood to the African territory but leaves the substance of sovereignty with the metropolitan power. A certain token aid is pumped in by the colonialist power in order to mislead the people and give the impression that something

is done for them. It is meant to divert the nascent demand for a change of government involving more positive independence and a programme envisaging popular welfare."

Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 10-11, compares Senghor's *negritude* and Nkrumah's "African personality": "While Negritude seems to emphasize the cultural distinctness of the African values, 'African personality' seeks to uphold the integrity of the African presence in international politics."

54. Cf. Ankrah, "Church and Politics in Africa," p. 155.
55. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," p. 257.
56. Nyerere, *South-South Option,* p. 6.
57. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," p. 258.
58. Ibid., p. 248.
59. Ibid., p. 258.
60. Ibid., p. 257.
61. Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism,* p. ix.
62. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 214. (Italics added)
63. Ibid., p. 213. The structural analysis is also emphasized in EATWOT texts. See, for example, EATWOT VI, pp. 182-188.
64. Ibid., p. 217.
65. Ibid., p. 213.
66. Ibid., p. 214.
67. Ibid.
68. Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," p. 269.
69. Ibid., p. 253.
70. Mbuende, *Namibia: The Broken Shield,* p. 4.
71. Ibid., p. 4.
72. Gutiérrez, "Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith," p. 17: "Only a class-based analysis will enable us to see what is really involved in the opposition between oppressed countries on the one hand and dominant peoples on the other. If we focus solely on the confrontation between different nations, we will falsify the real situation and mitigate its harshness. The theory of dependence will lead us astray if its analysis is not framed in the context of the class struggles that are developing on a world-wide scale." See also his "Théologie und Sozialwissenschaften," pp. 52-53.
73. Pieris, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation," p. 76, argues that the dependency theories of Cardoso, Frank, and Furtado, "which offer valid explanations of and useful strategies against the increasing poverty in the Third World," ought to be complemented and corrected by the "cultural approach" of social scientists.
74. See, for example "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation',", p. 871.

75. See, for example, the critique of anti-communism in Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 20, and nn. 76, 80-83 below.

76. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 15.

77. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

78. Ibid., p. 14. Similarly, in "Interview Given by the President, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere," p. 25, he censures a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism. "None of this is socialism. It is theology."

79. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 201: "Once you deal in dogma you cannot allow freedom of opinion…. This, I believe is not unlike what has befallen our friends the Communists. They have made their policies a creed, and are finding that dogmatism and freedom of discussion do not easily go together."

80. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 15.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., p. 16.

83. Ibid., p. 17.

84. See, for example, Civille, "*Ujamaa* Socialism," pp. 175-178,257. Concerning early apprehensions of Ujamaa as a new kind of Communism, see Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* pp. 111-113.

85. For a critique of monolithic interpretations of Marxism, see my "Modern Marxist Critique of Religion."

86. *Materialismus Ideologic Religion.*

87. If one compares the exposition of the economic laws by Marx and by classical bourgeois economics, it is obvious that the main difference is found in Marx's insistence that these laws are of historical character. For a discussion of the concept of "law" in bourgeois economics and in *Das Kapital,* see my *Materialismus Ideologic Religion,* pp. 90-91.

88. In the author's preface to *Das Kapital,* Marx states in no uncertain terms: "It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of Modern society." Quoted from Feuer (ed.), *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,* p. 177.

89. See my *Materialismus Ideologic Religion,* especially pp. 90-91, 107-122, 150-154 and 155-159 where it is argued that *Das Kapital,* as other treatises in social science and economics, presupposes a methodological, but not a theoretical, atheism. The difference between the Marxian methodology in *Das Kapital* and Lenin's materialist world view may be illustrated by Marx's critique of the ahistorical approach of the Russian economist H. F. von Storch: "Flow much it *was inevitable* that Storch could not get beyond trivial phrases, how little he had even *formulated* for himself the task, let alone its solution, is apparent from one single circumstance. In order to examine the connection between spiritual production and material production it is above all necessary to grasp the latter itself not as a general category but in definite historical form. Thus, for example, different kinds of spiritual production correspond to the capitalist mode of production and to the mode of production of the Middle Ages. If material production itself is not conceived in its *specific*

historical form, it is impossible to understand what is specific in the spiritual production corresponding to it and the reciprocal influence of one on the other. Otherwise, one cannot get beyond inanities." Quoted from Z.A. Jordan (ed.), *Karl Marx,* p. 191. Italics from the original.

In the materialist world view it is assumed that there is a causal relationship between basis and superstructure — material and spiritual production, in Marx's terminology; pointedly, the basis is the cause and the superstructure an effect. Contrary to popular opinion, Marx assumed a different position, arguing that the relationship between material and spiritual production is a *historical* relationship. As the above quotation bears out, those who think that the ahistorical approach of the materialist world view does not "get beyond inanities" may quote Marx in support of such a critique.

Consequently, there is an affinity between Nyerere's insistence on the secularity of socialism and Marx's methodology, which may be overlooked, if one accepts the conventional confusion of Marx's and Lenin's theories. A comparison between the argumentation of *Das Kapital* and Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* corroborates that the theory advanced by Marx is "secular," to use Nyerere's terminology, while there are "metaphysical" assertions which are intrinsic to Lenin's theory.

Another similarity between Nyerere and Marx is found in their jest with militant atheists. It is an often neglected fact that Marx frequently uses religious metaphors to poke fun at rigid atheist attitudes. For instance, he "baptized" the German author Max Stirner, who had dedicated his life to a war on religion, as *Saint* Max. Again, "Section des athees socialistes" was refused membership in the International, since it was regarded as a "theological" organization. For references, see my *Materialismus Ideologic Religion,* pp. 138, 159-160.

90. Nyerere, "Interview Given by the President, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, to Members of the Association of Religious Superiors of Tanzania. 14th November, 1976," p. 25, stresses the affinity between Ujamaa and Marxist analysis. "We and the communists speak the same economic language, and this frightens people. I do not mind frightening a capitalist; we both frighten the Capitalists. But I do not want to frighten off a religious man. It is my business to frighten capitalists!" According to the interview, the main difference between Ujamaa and Communism is the metaphysical, "religious" commitment to atheism in the latter ideology. "We accuse the Communists of making a religion out of politics. Atheism is a form of religion because atheists ask a metaphysical question. Atheists believe there is no God; I believe there is a God. So, on that basis, atheists and we are both believers," pp. 24-25. The focus of interest of Tanzanian socialism, however, is economics and not metaphysics, according to Nyerere. "What really interests me as a Tanzanian socialist, is economics." In fact, an analysis of the works of African Marxist-Leninists who declare their adherence to the materialist world view of Marxism-Leninism, suggests that for them the materialist ontology is a

venerated dogma without any relevance in the African context, it seems. See e.g., Shivji, *Class Struggles in Tanzania,* p. 13. For a discussion on African Marxism-Leninism, see my *Umarxisti na ukristo,* pp. 8-9, 117-120.

91. "Wirkungsgeschichte" originates from Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode,* pp. 283-290, who uses the term somewhat differently, however.

92. The subtitle of Yeager, *Tanzania,* is "An African Experiment."

93. Ibid., p. 1.

94. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 127.

95. In spite of the extensive debate on the crisis of the Tanzanian economy and society in the 1980s there are few thorough analyses. Boesen et al., *Tanzania,* may be among the most comprehensive studies. Green et al., *Economic Shocks and National Policy Making,* deals extensively with the economic policy of the 1970s from a pro-Ujamaa perspective, arguing, p. 102, that "there is no evidence that classic demand-deflation strategy would have worked better" than the actual Tanzanian policy. Even though we cannot evaluate these studies here, it is important to note the complexity of the different perceptions of Tanzania in order to avoid a simplistic pragmatism. Cf. Berger—"Underdevelopment Revisited," p. 79, and *Moral Judgment and Political Action,* p. 8—who suggests that the "economic fiasco" of Tanzania is an argument against liberation theology; see also Introduction n. 60.

96. See, for example, Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* pp. 379-390.

97. One example may clarify the selective use of facts to corroborate a certain assumption about human nature: Some analysts quote statistics of the Tanzanian economic crisis in support of the theory of the intrinsic selfishness of human nature. However, the argument of selfishness was also used in 1967 against the nationalization of the financial system but was then falsified by the actual development; this measure "did not have the dire consequences predicted at the time," as noted by Green, et al., *Economic Shocks and National Policy Making,* p. 11. Such counter-arguments are, however, often neglected by those who want to prove the necessity of economic incentives.

98. See nn. 49-50 above.

99. Boesen et al, *Tanzania,* p. 23. See also Skarstein, "Growth and Crisis in the Manufacturing Sector," p. 93, who argues that "the Tsh 10,000 m. (at current prices) invested in manufacturing industry during 1977-80 to a large extent represented a waste of resources because the additional productive capacities were obviously not taken into use." Raikes, "Eating the Carrot and Wielding the Stick," has a similar assessment, suggesting that "the Arusha Declaration proposed that Tanzania should reduce the emphasis on industry and concentrate on peasant agriculture. What happened was almost precisely the reverse," p. 126.

100. Blömstrom and Hettne, *Beroende och underutveckling,* pp. 154-162, 205-206.

Chapter 2. Community Versus Selfishness

1. Among themes discussed in Tanzanian theology but not dealt with in this study one may note Christology from an African perspective. See, for example, Pengo, "The Risen Christ in the Concrete Life of the African"; Nyamiti, *Christ Our Ancestor* and "Christ as Our Ancestor. Christology from an African Perspective."

2. Even though Nyamiti clearly belongs to the process of liberation theology, as defined in the introduction of this study, his social-ethical writings may rather be characterized as a socio-political application of the Gospel than "a theology from the underside of history." For Nyamiti, *African Theology,* p. 33, ethnology, rather than social science, is "ancilla theologiae Africanae." However, this position is modified in Nyamiti's subsequent writings, for example in *The Way to Christian Theology for Africa.* However, also in this book, Nyamiti advocates a deductive (as opposed to inductive) method.

3. While Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 128, describes Magesa as virtually an echo of Gutiérrez, a different interpretation is proposed by Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 57. Distinguishing between three types of African liberation theology—the indigenous, the Latin American, and the combined approach—Upkong places Magesa in the third category: "the basic pattern followed by Laurenti Magesa may provide the contours of a viable African liberation theology." Magesa's insistence on African socialism and African culture could be quoted as examples of differences between his approach and that of Gutiérrez.

4. Significantly, the founding meeting of TANU, 7 July 1954 was closed with prayer. Similarly, in the struggle against colonialism Nyerere could call the people to "pray and fast" a certain day as a means of protest and as a token of solidarity and dedication; Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 62. Cf. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* p. 185: "Tanzania's policies have been Nyerere's in a personal way that is true of the policies of very few governments, while Nyerere's vision has owed much to his own religion—a form of radical Catholicism."

5. Lutahoire, "The Place of the Church in Tanzania's Socialism," p. 12.

6. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,* p. 2. For a similar view, elaborated in the Tanzanian context, see Healey, *A Fifth Gospel,* pp. 140-149.

7. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 12.

8. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 26.

9. Ibid., p. 24.

10. Ibid.

11. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* pp. 231-232.

12. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 58.

13. Ibid., p. 60.

14. Ibid., p. 58. Nyamiti quotes M. Lavelle from Fabro, "Participation," pp. 1042-1046.

15. Ibid., p. 60. (Italics in the original)
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid. (Italics removed)
18. Ibid. (Italics in the original)
19. Ibid., p. 61.
20. Ibid., p. 60.
21. Ibid., p. 61.
22. Ibid., p. 73. (Italics in the original)
23. Ibid., p. 66.
24. Ibid., pp. 64-65. Cf. the comparison between African and Western anthropocentrism, ibid., p. 70: In the latter, man is considered "as a subject of dignity, liberty and creativity, while in Africa he appears more as an object of security and protection." The comparison is elaborated in view of the concept of God. In the West, it is suggested, God will be seen especially as the foundation and fulfilment of human dignity and liberty, whereas in Africa he will be approached more as Father, Life-giver, and Protector.
25. Ibid., p. 59.
26. Ibid., p. 60.
27. Ibid., p. 69; cf. p. 62: "What does the African seek through participation if not oneness with the sources of life and power?" The anthropocentric character of African traditional religions is emphasized by Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,* pp. 15-16, 48: "Africans [have] an extremely anthropocentric ontology in the sense that everything is seen in terms of its relations to man."
    To the discussion on anthropocentrism and theology, see also Nyamiti's reference to Thomas' dictum in *Summa Theologica:* "Fidei objectum per se est id per quod homo beatus efficitur," *The Scope of African Theology,* p. 27.
28. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 69.
29. Ibid., p. 70.
30. Ibid., p. 69. Concerning the "the-andric" character of theological language, see also, for example, Bimwenyi-Kweshi, *Alle Dinge erzdhlen von Gott,* pp. 30-73, and "Theandricite du langage theologique africain."
31. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 227.
32. Ibid., p. 216.
33. See, for example, Magesa, "Authentic African Spirituality," p. 74.
34. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 65.
35. Cf. God as "the first Christian community" in Healey, *A Fifth Gospel,* p. 116.
36. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 15. For a similar view, see Lyimo, "An Ujamaa Theology," p. 129: "the most perfect community of *Ujamaa* is the Trinity."
37. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 10.
38. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 73. (Italics removed)
39. Ibid., p. 62. (Italics in the original)
40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Cf. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 10.

43. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

44. Ibid., p. 15.

45. Ibid., p. 11.

46. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 25.

47. Communalism, by contrast, denotes pre-colonial modes of production.

48. Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* p. 216; originally a quotation from a Russian thinker, Fedorov.

49. Ibid., p. 216. See also Ware's interpretation of "living the Trinity" in terms of struggle against oppression, injustice, and exploitation in *The Orthodox Way,* p. 49.

50. According to Persson, "Synergismens problem, belyst utifran de ortodoxa kyrkornas teologi," p. 246, also Orthodox theologians reject a dichotomy between God and humankind: "For the Orthodox theologians the decisive line of division goes not between divine and human activity, between God's work and human work.... But the decisive line of division goes between the unified divine-human 'theandric' activity and the unnature which deforms the truly human by sin and death."

51. Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* pp. 24-43. Cf. Nyamiti's contribution to the Dar es Salaam meeting of EATWOT, "Approaches to African Theology," where he acknowledges the importance of contextuality and contextualization.

52. Ibid., p. 25.

53. Interestingly, Nyamiti is one of the few African theologians who as early as in the 1970s discusses the place of women's liberation in the new paradigm, ibid., pp. 13-15. Referring to the anthropological concept of *imago Dei* it is argued that "both man and woman reflect, in their own way, something of the perfection of God, and positive qualities of both can therefore be applied to God," p. 14. Consequently — Nyamiti suggests — motherhood, equally as fatherhood, is a quality which, analogically, is found in God.

54. Ibid., p. 24.

55. See ch. 1 nn. 48-50. If one compares Nyamiti and Nyerere, it is obvious that the former represents a somewhat more harmonizing variety of African socialism and virtually identifies African socialism and the "African traditional society," ibid. p. 24. Nyerere, by contrast, suggests as early as in "Ujamaa — the Basis of African Socialism," *Freedom and Unity,* pp. 170-171, that "Modern African socialism" cannot imitate the life-style of "the tribal days" even though he also insists that socialism and democracy "are rooted in our own past" and that therefore one "can draw from" the pre-colonial heritage. As noted in ch. 1 nn. 41-43, 55-59, the conflictual and historical aspects are given more emphasis in Nyerere's later writings.

56. It may be noted that Nyamiti also discusses J. Deotis Robert's meek variety of black theology but this discussion is of less relevance here.

57. The tension between a holistic and a dichotomic perspective in Nyamiti's discussion on liberation theology may be seen in the following quotations. Affirming a holistic perspective, it is argued that liberation is synonymous with salvation, freedom, and redemption. In agreement with Cone, it is affirmed that "God always encounters man in a situation of historical liberation," ibid., p. 32. Moreover, God's acts in creation and God's self-communication in Christ are subsumed under the heading "God as Liberator." In an exegetical and theological analysis of this theme, it is asserted that "after the fall all God's activity is a work of liberation," p. 39. See also pp. 40,42: an "all-embracing liberation," "a final and total liberation," "the whole content of the Christian faith can be summed up in the word 'liberation'." In sum, in these quotations Nyamiti advocates a holistic theology in accordance with the new paradigm.

    However, in the critique of radical liberation theology, pp. 33-37, 40-43, Nyamiti appears to assume a different position. He presupposes that there is a dichotomy between "eschatological and 'secular' types of freedom," p. 42, and argues that Cone's black theology limits "the redeeming activity of Christ to social liberation in this world," p. 33. Moreover, it is affirmed, p. 42, that "theology cannot be reduced to the theme of liberation without being impoverished" and that there is a "qualitative and essential difference between the two kinds of liberation," i.e., from sociopolitical oppression and from sin. The dichotomic character of this distinction is obvious from the fact that Nyamiti arranges the two types of freedom in an order of priority. Cf. below ch. 6.

    Underlying the critique of radical liberation theology seems to be the assertion that a conflictual analysis neglects liberation from sin, even though this daring hypothesis never is argued. See also his "Approaches to African Theology," pp. 42-44, where the assessment of South African black theology is more positive.

58. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* pp. 315-326; the quotations are from pp. 315 and 320.

59. Ibid., p. 4.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., p. 316.

63. Metz in *Christliche Anthropozentrik* uses "Christian anthropocentrism" to characterize how Thomas Aquinas initiated an anthropological viewpoint in opposition to the cosmological vision of the ancient world. Cf. Karl Rahner's phrase "transcendental anthropology."

64. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development*, p. 215. Cf. p. 226: "The purpose of the Church is man—his human dignity, and his right to develop himself in freedom."

65. Ibid., p. 215. Cf. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 316, possibly alluding to Mark 2:27: "The creation of wealth is a good thing and something which

we shall have to increase, but it will cease to be good the moment wealth ceases to serve man and begins to be served by man."

66. Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 34.

67. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 4.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p. 303.

70. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 90 (italics in the original). Westerlund, p. 101, also notes that Tanzanian Muslims repeatedly have stated that "the principles of the Arusha Declaration were fundamentally and inherently the same as those enunciated in the Koran."

71. According to *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu,* p. 294, *udugu* besides the literal meaning, siblingship, also means "to relate to each other in equality" *(hali ya kuhusiana kutokana na uzawa mmoja).*

72. For an analysis of the relationship between Ujamaa and Catholic church teaching, see Civille, "*Ujamaa* Socialism."

73. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 228.

74. One exception is a speech in October 1966 when students went on strike in protest against the plans of National Service, *Socialism i Tanzania,* pp. 38-67. Nyerere reacted strongly against the striking students, asserting that Tanzania could only be built by selfless and dedicated citizens. As an example for the students, Nyerere referred to Jesus, the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. Interestingly, this speech is not included in the Tanzanian collections of Nyerere's texts and speeches, possibly due to the fact that he in the emotionally loaded situation referred more explicitly to Christian faith than in any other of his speeches in Tanzania.

75. See, for example, Lutahoire, "The Place of the Church in Tanzania's Socialism," p. 8, where he affirms that Ujamaa encourages "a sense of identity, based upon a common belief in the parenthood of God and the unity of the human family." According to Mussa, "The Importance of the Opportunity Which Christianity Has in Ujamaa," p. 29, "Ujamaa stresses that all men are equal. All have been created by God, and all have the same needs in common."

76. Cf. the discussion of Ujamaa and socialism above, chapter 1.

77. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 43.

78. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 25. (Italics in the original)

79. Ibid., p. 28.

80. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 81.

81. Ibid.

82. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 186.

83. Ibid., p. 273. Cf., p. 269: "The education provided by the colonial government... was not designed to prepare young people for the service of their own country; instead, it was motivated by a desire to inculcate the values of the colonial society and to train individuals for the service of the colonial state."

84. Ibid., p. 272.

85. Ibid., p. 273.

86. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 199, censures the "aristocracy" of Marxism-Leninism: "We now find that it is by the 'redness' of his thought that a man is judged worthy of entry into the ranks of the élite."

87. Cf. Dzobo, "The Indigenous African Theory of Knowledge and Truth," pp. 93-94, who quotes a West African proverb: "Knowledge is like a baobab tree (monkey bread tree), no one person can embrace it with both arms." Similarly, Pobee, "A Time to Speak and Act in God's Light," p. 38: "We do believe with the Akan people of Ghana that *adwen wotua tua,* i.e., wisdom is pieced together from the insights of several persons and that [nobody has] a monopoly on wisdom and truth."

88. Cf. Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 26: "The 'common good' is a basic principle of African Socialism."

89. Nyerere, "From Uhuru to Ujamaa," p. 8.

90. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 216.

91. Ibid., p. 219.

92. Ibid., p. 220.

93. Ibid., p. 215.

94. Ibid., pp. 215, 223.

95. Ibid., p. 228. (Italics added)

96. Ibid., p. 219.

97. Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 17.

98. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 219.

99. Ibid., p. 224; Nyerere, "Selected Speeches and Writings," p. 269.

100. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 214.

101. Ibid., p. 224.

102. Ibid., p. 219.

103. Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 17.

104. Ibid., p. 20. (Italics in the original)

105. Magesa, 'Towards a Theology of Liberation for Tanzania," p. 507.

106. Kijanga, *Ujamaa and the Role of the Church in Tanzania,* p. 51.

107. O'Rourke, "Commentary: An Attempt at Interpretation," p. 207. In 1978, Iversen conducted an attitudinal survey of Lutheran seminarians, "ELCT and Its Ministry as Seen Through Twenty-two Makumira Students." Even though the majority agreed with the statement that "socialism, in its essence, should be attractive to believers and in particular to Christians because its fundamental principles are similar to the gospel," a substantial minority disagreed, arguing that the center of Christianity is Christ, whereas the center of Ujamaa is "man." See also Thomas, "Black Africa," p. 142.

108. Mshana, "The Challenge of Black Theology and African Theology," p. 26. See also Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* pp. 25-26, where dichotomic notions are described as "traditional expressions and attitudes."

109. Andersson, *The Church in East Africa 1840-1974,* p. 104.

110. Ibid. Significantly, Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 8-9, quotes the story from a book written in 1928 by Davidsson Don Tengo Jabavu, who testifies that also in the South African context the story was "quite common." Cf. the discussion on Christianity and colonialism in Omari, "Religion and Society in Perspective," pp. 13-14.

111. Kijanga, *Ujamaa and the Role of the Church in Tanzania,* p. 104. For a similar view, see van Bergen, *Development and Religion in Tanzania.*

112. Ibid., p. 127. (Italics removed)

113. Ibid., pp. 92, 32. Cf. p. 103, "There is a need for a theology which may not separate this world from the spiritual realm."

114. Ibid., p. 118.

115. Ibid., p. 32.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid., pp. 118-119.

118. Ibid., p. 32: "The traditional African society sees life as being under the control of God. The tasks of daily life and crises of human experience both individual and public are seen as [a] realm over which God reigns supremely."

119. Ibid., p. 119.

120. Ibid., p. 112-114: "The Christian Church has welcomed *Ujamaa* with the understanding that there is natural affinity between *Ujamaa* ethic and the Christian ethics. In Christianity, as well as in *Ujamaa,* the fulfillment of the individual is bound up with the fulfillment of all."

121. Magesa, *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 26. Cf. Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 56.

122. Ibid., p. 27.

123. Magesa, "Reflections on the Church and Ujamaa," p. 5; *The Church and Liberation in Africa,* p. 27. Cf. "Towards a Theology of Liberation for Tanzania," p. 510-511: "Are we perhaps being guilty of glorifying the theory of *Ujamaa* and ignoring the area that counts most—the area of practice? In Tanzania as well there are abuses of the practice of *Ujamaa:* dishonesty, opportunism, coercion and so many others. Theology must inform and lead the church to be sharply critical of any alienating tendency in the praxis of *Ujamaa."*

124. Magesa, "Reflections on the Church and Ujamaa," pp. 2-7: "An honest examination of conscience will, perhaps, make the Church aware that in spite of repeated invitations by the Government to act as a constructive critic, that is, to use her prophetic function in the political system of Ujamaa, she has remained astonishingly quiet or unduly prudent." Similarly, Thomas, "Black Africa," p. 145, notes "the total absence" of a radical economic critique of Ujamaa socialism in church statements.

It could be argued that Nyerere, during his time as President, repeatedly invited the churches to prophetic ministry. Cf. his *Freedom and Development,*

p. 222: "I am not asking that the Church should surrender its functions or allow itself to be identified with particular political parties or political doctrines. On the contrary, what I am saying amounts to a demand that it should stop allowing itself to be identified with unjust political and economic power groups." For a different interpretation, see Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* pp. 60-61.

125. There is occasional evidence of a radical Christianity among the poorest strata in Tanzania. For example, Freyhold, *Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania,* pp. 72-75, accounts for utopian socialism among plantation workers, drawing from primitive Christianity, and with "a touch of peasant millenarianism." Even though this popular theology may have been of importance in the formation of the first Ujamaa villages, it is virtually neglected in academic Tanzanian theology.

126. *African Ecclesial Review* 18, no. 5 (1976): 250, 266-267. Concerning SCCs in the Rulenge Diocese, Tanzania, see Healey, A *Fifth Gospel.*

127. Soka, "An Ujamaa Theology in the Making," p. 31. For a similar view, see Lyimo, "An Ujamaa Theology," p. 128.

128. *Pastoral Orientation Service* No 2, 1979: The editorial, p. 3.

129. In "Jumuiya ndogo ndugu za Kikristo," 1979, from Leadership Training Centre of the Arusha Diocese (mimeographed) the mutual help of SCCs is interpreted with reference to the struggle against *ubinafsi* (selfishness), p. 6: "The main aim is to remove this selfishness and to build true Christianity." The sentence could also be translated as: "A main aim ..."

130. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 20.

131. Ibid.

132. Healey, A *Fifth Gospel,* p. 127. See also p. 124: "The starting point for discussion must be the life of the people, a concrete event or situation, a slice of life, not Scripture or doctrine. Then we could ask, 'What light does the Gospel bring to this situation we are discussing?'"

133. Ibid., p. 116.

134. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 9.

135. For a discussion of the relationship between political and religious institutions, see, for example, Healey, A *Fifth Gospel,* p. 23, and Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* pp. 9, 13.

136. Healey, A *Fifth Gospel,* p. 23.

137. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 25.

138. Ibid., p. 12.

139. Ibid., p. 22: "Just as baptism transforms a natural baby into the child of God, a small Christian community is nothing else but a baptized clan. The clan with all its culture, ethos, relationships and institutions, is not destroyed but purified and transformed." In the ideal SCCs there are different types of lay ministries as marriage counsellors, promoters of community spirit, promoters of sacraments and spirituality, and coordinators. The typical

SCC, however, has a more modest set-up, e.g., chairperson, secretary, and educator. Cf. Healey, A *Fifth Gospel,* pp. 111-112.

140. Mwoleka, *Ujamaa and Christian Communities,* p. 6.

141. For a comprehensive comparison, see Healey, "Basic Christian Communities," pp. 23-29.

142. Ibid., pp. 26-27, quoting Alphonse Timira.

143. Ibid., p. 26.

144. Cf. Carvajal, "The Context of Theology," pp. 101-111. However, Carvajal seems to suggest that the relationship between material conditions and world view may be described in terms of cause and effect. Obviously, such a mechanistic notion is liable to criticism, both in a theological and a philosophical perspective.

145. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 57. Similar modes of analysis, juxtaposing politics and religion, may be seen in other, less thorough studies. Neve, "Nyerere in Religious Perspective," p. 29, describes Nyerere's political ideology as an independent "religion" based on human equality as its "ultimate concern." Interpreting Ujamaa as one with Christianity competing "civil religion," he states emphatically: "I can uncover no reason for thinking that [Nyerere's] political views are motivated by his personal religious faith."

146. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 57. (Italics added)

147. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 216.

148. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 60.

149. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 226.

150. Ibid., p. 222. To Nyerere's conception of the ministry of the church, see also p. 215 and "Christianisme et Socialisme," where it is argued on p. 35 that the challenge to the church in socialist countries is "a challenge to the traditional thought of the church but not a challenge to Christianity as such."

151. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* pp. 226-227.

152. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 68. Cf. ibid., "religion *was used* to foster national unity." (Italics added)

153. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

154. Ibid., p. 61. The short quotation between the single quotation marks is from Apter, *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization,* p. 210.

155. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 68.

156. The piece was composed in 1897 by a Methodist teacher in Klipspruit, Enoch Sontonga. The composition was first publicly sung in 1899 at the ordination of a Shangaan Methodist Minister. According to D. D. T. Jabavu, "the occasion was one of wide joy over the fact that a member of the more backward African tribes had attained to the honour of being a clergyman." Seven additional stanzas composed by S.E.K. Mqhayi were added later. Later, the piece was adopted as a dosing anthem at the meetings of the African National Congress in South Africa. Moreover, it was adopted

as the recognized national anthem in different African countries after independence. From the outset the piece had a general religious character without any specific Christian expressions. It is consequently farfetched to explain the absence of such expressions in the Tanzanian anthem as a compromise between Christians and Muslims and as a consequence of a "civil religion." For references, see Jabavu, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika." Cf. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* pp. 67-71.

157. Shorter, *Prayer in the Religious Traditions of Africa,* pp. 16-19.

158. Obviously, many Western studies have difficulties with the interrelation between the divine and the world in African traditional religion, as Rücker *"Afrikanische Théologie": Darstellung und Dialog,* p. 132, notes in his review of this research tradition. "Particularly offensive for the Christians was the worldly face of African religiosity."

159. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 224. The quotation is from a speech at the opening of extensions of the Morogoro Teachers' College and was uttered in view of the Holy Ghost Fathers teaching there.

160. Nyerere, "Interview Given by the President, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, to Members of the Association of Religious Superiors of Tanzania. 14th November, 1976," p. 24. (Italics in the original)

161. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 12.

162. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 13.

163. Westerlund, *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 64. (Italics in the original)

164. Ibid., p. 65.

165. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 13. Cf. the following note.

166. Ibid., p. 2: "The country is divided in religion and it would have been very easy for TANU to have fallen into the trap of religious hostility. That it did not do so is a tribute to religious leaders in this country, but in particular to the adherents of the Moslem faith in the coastal belt—where TANU started. Only after that is it due to the deliberate and inflexible rule of the Party that a man's religious beliefs were never to be commented upon or used in political argument."

167. *Nyerere, Freedom and Development,* p. 225. For a discussion of the ministry of Christianity in a religiously plural world, see, for example, Pieris, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures."

168. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development,* p. 227.

169. Ibid. Cf. ibid.: "The Church has to lead men towards godliness by joining with them in the attack against injustices and deprivation from which they suffer."

170. In this respect there is a logical relationship between Westerlund's definition of religion with reference to "a supernatural world" and his critique of the alleged contradiction in the Ujamaa policy, *Ujamaa na dini,* pp. 7 and 14 n. 2. At the same time, one may note that such a definition of religion clearly is incompatible with the holistic conception of faith in liberation theology, which rejects a dichotomy between nature and a supernatural world.

See also the juxtaposition of religion and politics in Westerlund, "Freedom of Religion Under Socialist Rule in Tanzania, 1961-1977," p. 102: "Politics prevailed over religion"; *Ujamaa na dini,* p. 75: "A civil religion of the Tanzanian type ... requires a willingness to accept the primacy of politics and the attenuation of religion. It can exist in a nation where *kujenga taifa* (to build the nation) is a much more important feature than *kujenga dini* (to build religion)."

171. Nyamiti, "An African Theology Dependent on Western Counterparts?", p. 142. The debate was opened by two reviews of *The Scope of African Theology,* written by J. Dupuis, *African Ecclesial Review* 19, no. 4 (1974): 437 and by A. Hastings in *The Tablet,* 23 March 1974. While the debate has covered several topics related to the content of theology and its methodology in general, we will here only deal with the relationship between universality and particularity.

172. Nyamiti, "Approaches to African Theology," p. 35. It seems unclear, however, how Nyamiti's acknowledgement of critical reason goes together with the emphasis on metaphysics in his concept of scientific theology.

173. Nyamiti, "Reply to Aylward Shorter's Review," p. 174.

174. Nyamiti, "An African Theology Dependent on Western Counterparts?", p. 141.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid., p. 142.

177. Ibid.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid. An "influence which impoverishes instead of enriching—an influence that colonizes and suffocates the African soul instead of liberating it" is undesirable.

180. Ibid., p. 145. Cf. Buthelezi's critique of the so-called ethnographic approach in ch. 5. As an example of "an African Theology according to Western models" one may quote Rücker," 'Afrikanische Théologie': Charles Nyamiti, Tansania," p. 66, where an African's concept of God is dismissed with the categorical declaration: "An African God is different."

181. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 316.

182. Ibid., p. 315. Cf. ibid.: "We shall remain Tanzanians."

183. Ibid., pp. 315-316.

184. Ibid., p. 317.

185. Cf. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 24-27, who accounts for "severe criticism" leveled against the concept of development. "Liberation in fact expresses the inescapable moment of radical change which is foreign to the ordinary use of the term *development."* As we have seen, the preference for "development" in the philosophy of Ujamaa goes together with an emphasis on consensualism. The difference between the Tanzanian and the Latin American views should not be over-emphasized, however. Gutiérrez

mentions also a second concept of "development," which comes near to that of Nyerere: "a total social process," involving an ethical dimension that presupposes a concern for human values.

In fact, one may get the impression that *maendeleo* (development) and *mapinduzi* (revolution) are virtually synonymous in Tanzanian political language. Significantly, when TANU in 1977 merged with its Zanzibar counterpart ASP, the new party was called *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (the Party of the Revolution). Cf. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* pp. 231-232, where the discussion on development includes the demand for "a complete social and economic revolution"; *Freedom and Development,* p. 215: "development of peoples means rebellion."

186. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 116. (Italics added)

187. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* pp. 80-81: "past and present are merely two aspects of a single thing. The continuity of life is maintained throughout— and despite—change, both in societies and in individuals; although reformers sometimes wish it were not so, and revolutionaries pretend otherwise! Different as are the lives of Modern Africans from those of our grandparents, still we and our ancestors are linked together indissolubly."

On reading this passage it is tempting to refer to Mbiti's notion of a specific concept of time originating in African Traditional Religions. "The linear concept of time in western thought, with an indefinite past, present and indefinite future, is practically foreign to African thinking," *African Religions and Philosophy,* p. 17. In pre-colonial culture, time was regarded as "a two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long *past,* a *present* and virtually *no future,*" ibid, (italics in the original). Instead of the English concepts of past and present, Mbiti prefers the kiswahili words *zamani* (past) and *sasa* (present). The former, characterized as "Macro-Time," is "the final storehouse for all phenomena and events, the ocean of time in which everything becomes absorbed into a reality that is neither after nor before," while *sasa,* by means of contrast, is called "Micro-Time." If the simile of the ocean is used to characterize *zamani,* one might describe *sasa* as an island within this ocean. *Zamani,* not the future, was the major point of orientation in the decision-making of the traditional society.

Mbiti's theory has not without reason been censured for vague and uncritical generalizations by Sankey, "Readers' Comments, 'African Concept of Time," and others. Nevertheless, it could be argued that his theory is helpful as a heuristic tool, for example, in a discussion on the role of tradition in Ujamaa, if it is translated into historical categories.

188. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* p. 116.

189. For a similar view, see Omari, "Afrikansk socialisme og kirkens mission," p. 9.

190. Extracts of *Democracy and the Party System* are included in Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity,* pp. 195-203; the quotation is from p. 195; see also ibid.: "In African society, the traditional method of conducting affairs is by free discussion."

Cf. Yeager, *Tanzania,* p. 45, and the advice to the judges in Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism,* p. 110, to follow "an African concept—that you will talk until you agree."

"The elders under the tree" may also account for Nyerere's concept of democracy, *Freedom and Development,* pp. 62-63: "Everyone must be allowed to speak freely, and everyone must be listened to.… The minority in any debate must have the right to speak without fear of persecution; it must be defeated in argument not by threat of force."

191. See, for example, Nyamiti, *African Tradition and the Christian God,* p. 25: "Christian theism will also be the fulfilment of African Socialism by transforming it to a higher level and thus deepening it, stabilising it, and giving it an effectiveness which immeasurably surpasses its natural possibilities. Indeed, by believing in the God of Christianity, African Socialism will be induced to accept God as its ultimate source, foundation, goal, animating principle, and exemplar…. Belief in the God of Christianity can give stability and security to African Socialism."

192. Cf. Bucher, "Black Theology in South Africa," p. 336: "It would be an exercise well worthwhile to show once how much of what is presented by the negritude ideology as typically African is in fact part and parcel of any pre-literate small-scale society and thus was to be found in Europe as well centuries ago."

193. Hountondji, *African Philosophy,* p. 177. See also p. 66, where he censures "the dominant mythological conception of Africanness" and wants to restore "the simple, obvious truth that Africa is above all a continent and the concept of Africa an empirical, geographical concept and not a metaphysical one."

194. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 10.

195. Mosala, "The Relevance of African Traditional Religions and Their Challenge to Black Theology," p. 99, is an articulate advocate of a historical interpretation of African identity; similarly, Houtart, "Südafrikas Schwarze Théologie," p. 188, claims that the wholeness of life, integrating spiritual and material spheres, is characteristic for all societies with the same socioeconomic structure, be it Africa, Asia, or Europe. See also Hountondji, *African Philosophy,* p. 177, who wants to "relativize our ideas of Africanness, Westernness, etc., by making them purely formal concepts whose content cannot be fixed once and for all but is essentially open, plurivocal and contradictory." It seems, however, that Mosala and Hountondji differ in that the former, as most African theologians, still insists on the quest of the African identity, albeit in a historical context, while the latter appears to dismiss the issue.

Chapter 3. The Black Experience

1. "Plan for the 1983 Dialogue Between First and Third World Theologians," p. 3. (Mimeographed)

2. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 80.

3. Concerning the black experience and the black situation see, for example: Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 4: "Our theological reflection must take into consideration—more strongly still, must emerge out of—that which white theology has never taken seriously: the Black experience"; Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. xi, 10; Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," p. 20: "Black Theology has taken up the role of uncovering, in a systematic way, the structures and forms of the black experience"; Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 57: "Black experience as a hermeneutical point of departure"; ibid. p. 58: "What must be emphasized is that Black Theology expresses itself within the context of our experience of oppression. It portrays the Christian story within the experience of pain and suffering"; Maimela, "Current Themes and Emphases in Black Theology," p. 102: "Black Theology as a conscious and systematic reflection on the black situation of racial oppression in South Africa is born out of a historical experience of suffering, of domination and humiliation"; Moore (ed.), *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa,* p. 6; Buthelezi, "An African or a Black Theology?", p. 29: "Black theology" denotes "the reflection upon the reality of God and his Word which grows out of that experience of life in which the category of blackness has some existential decisiveness"; see also ibid., p. 34.

   For a bibliography of black theology, see Kretzschmar, *The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa.* Kretzschmar's study is only taken into account in part here, since I received it in the final stage of the work.

4. For a thorough discussion of the concept of blackness, see Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 26-45.

5. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," p. 20.

6. Before 1977, South African blacks were officially called "Bantus" (a misnomer since "Bantu" is a plural word without the plural s), which itself superseded the term "natives" in 1955.

7. The racial classification is arbitrarily mixing genetic and social criteria of "races." A person is classified as "black" or "white," if his or her ancestors a certain number of generations back all were *regarded as* belonging to this category. It has been suggested that this intellectually confused legislation is due to the fact that quite a few of the first white settlers were interbreeding with African women. A consistent application of genetic criteria would then imply that the descendants of such relations (who today may belong to the Afrikaner élite) must be classified as "coloureds," i. e., second-class citizens.

8. For an analysis of the inconsistencies of the South African ideology of "nations," see Comevin, *Apartheid,* pp. 69-75.

9. The motifs of the remarkable construction of the many Bantu nations are clearly exposed in a speech by M. C. Botha in which he—as an observer aptly puts it—"climactically" maintained that "As regards all the various nations we have here, the *White Nation,* the *Coloured Nation,* the *Indian Nation,* the various *Bantu Nations,* something to which we have given too little regard is the fact that *numerically the White Nation is superior* to all other nations in South Africa.... This has a very wide implication for us all firstly, it demonstrates the utter folly of saying that a minority government is ruling others in South Africa…. It demonstrates our duty as guardians…. Our policy is based on facts of separatedness and diversity of the various *Bantu Nations* and other nations in South Africa as separate national groups set on separate courses to separate destinies." *Hansard* 1966, cols. 4131-4137, quoted from Sizwe, *One Azania, One Nation,* pp. 83-84.

   Even though the homeland policy is intellectually confused, politically it has been of importance by creating an African élite with vested interest in the apartheid system. Cf. Adam and Giliomee, *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power,* quoted from Nash, *Black Uprooting,* p. 43: "Critics who constantly ridicule the Bantustans as economically unviable and internationally unrecognised functions of Afrikaner minds ignore the success of the policy in the form of retribalised nationalisms with vested interest of a growing administrative class of civil servants, professionals, petty traders, market-producing peasants."

10. Remarkably, some analysts of black theology accuse its proponents of intellectual dishonesty, if they refuse to accept the apartheid categories. One example is Irving Hexham, "Christianity and Apartheid," p. 55, who finds it "highly misleading" when Boesak is described as "a black South African" since "Boesak is in fact not an African but a Coloured."

11. Boesak, "Courage to Be Black," p. 168.

12. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 26; Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 67, who quotes Vilakazi. Cf. the statement from the South African Council of Churches in 1968: "Until a man's racial identity is established, virtually no decision can be taken: but once established, it can be stated where he can live, whom he can marry, what work he can do, what education he can get, whose hospitality he can accept, where he can get medical treatment, where he can be buried ... our racial identity is the final and all-important determining factor in the lives of men."

13. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 123, in a quotation from John de Gruchy. In a similar vein, Small, "Blackness versus Nihilism," pp. 15-16, argues that blackness should be interpreted in terms of cultural awareness, not as an ethnic term: "It must be clear for anyone who knows the meaning of culture that blackness is for us a supremely cultural fact."

14. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 24 (italics in the original). Cf. *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 139: "Blackness does not in the first place designate color of

skin. It is a discovery, a state of mind, a conversion, an affirmation of being, which is power."

15. Cf. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 291-292.

16. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 42. The same interpretation of blackness is expressed in his *Black and Reformed,* p. 13: Jesus "lived on earth in a way familiar to us blacks. He identified himself completely with us. He is the Black Messiah."

17. Cf. Witvliet, *The Black Messiah,* pp. 6-7. The interpretation of "black" as "oppressed" accounts also for the startling characterization in American black theology of Barth and Bonhoeffer as "black."

18. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 42-43. Boesak quotes from the 1976 Statement on Black Theology by the American National Committee of Black Churchmen.

19. Moore, "Editor's Preface," p. ix. (Italics removed)

20. Interview with Buti Tlhagale.

21. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 1-2.

22. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 79.

23. *Black Review* (1972): 41-42, quoted from Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 201. Cf. Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 59, who defines black consciousness "as a kind of political philosophy whose goal is to forge and promote the struggle for black liberation in a world of white domination."

24. Another definition often quoted also in South Africa was proposed by the American National Committee of Black Churchmen in June 1969, here quoted from Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 60: "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. Black Theology is a theology of 'blackness.' It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people." To the concept of "black theology," see also Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", pp. 33-35.

25. Needless to say, not all theology found among blacks in South Africa meets the requirements of this definition. It should be noted that especially in the "homelands" there is a system-immanent theology, which accepts the ethnic lines of division in the apartheid notion of *volk.* If one asserts, as we do, that one intrinsic aspect of "liberation" in the South African context is the acceptance of the principle "One person, one vote," the so-called "homeland theologies" (which accept that political rights are granted according to ethnic criteria) cannot be subsumed under the heading of liberation theology, regardless of whether they use its terminology or not.

This comment may be specially justified in view of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi (not to be confused with bishop Manas Buthelezi), who invokes liberation theology in support of his policy as first-place a "homeland" leader with a

government-created platform. According to Buthelezi, the "cherished ideal of a one-man, one-vote system of government" is not intrinsic to his conception of a free South Africa. Similarly, *Inkatha ye Nkululeko Ye Sizwe,* the mainly Zulu-based National Cultural Liberation Movement, must be understood as a part of the collaborative opposition, not a liberation movement in the meaning of a movement aiming at structural change. For an analysis of the Inkatha movement, see Davies et al., *The Struggle for South Africa,* pp. 387-395. A different view on Buthelezi and the Inkatha movement is presented by Scherzberg, *Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika,* p. 24.

26. "Black Theology and Black Consciousness are almost always mentioned simultaneously in South Africa." Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 139.

27. Pityana, "Black Consciousness," p. 63. See also Mofokeng, *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers,* p. 3, suggests an intrinsic relationship between black consciousness and black theology: "Black Consciousness is a philosophy and praxis of Black Liberation inseparably united with Black Theology." Similarly, Motlhabi, "Black Theology: A Personal View," p. 76, describes black theology as the theological aspect of black consciousness. In common for all these three positions, it seems, is that they interpret black theology as a theological expression of black consciousness, as different from a critical relationship.

28. Goba, "'The Black Consciousness Movement,' p. 61, describes black consciousness and black theology" as parallel movements both arising from black experience." On the basis of what is called a hodogenic methodology, he proposes, ibid., p. 69, a critical perspective, questioning existing categories of thought, with the experience arising from the concrete struggle as criterion.

29. Buthelezi, "Black theology and the Le Grange-Schlebusch Commission," p. 263. See also Boesak's discussion of the Commission in *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 36. Cf. *Le Grange-Schlebusch Commission,* p. 153: "The Commission is satisfied that the father of Black theology in South Africa was Dr Basil Moore, who brought it with him from a University Christian Movement (USA) Congress in America." See also *Steyn Commission,* p. 88: "There is a marked difference between African Theology and traditional African religion on the one hand, and imported Black theology, which has in South Africa in fact become a dangerous 'vagrant culture element', on the other."

30. Irving Hexham opens his "A Short History of Black Theology in South Africa, " p. 189, with an astounding statement: "South African Black Theology was born in anger. Not the racial anger of an oppressed people but the personal anger of one man, Basil Moore, a young white Methodist minister." In fact, Hexham has to contradict his own thesis some pages later reducing Moore's role to that of being a "catalyst." Needless to say, it is a sign of intellectual confusion when an author credits one person first "with the creation of South African Black Theology " (p. 189) and then, a few pages later, reduces that same person to a "catalyst for the creation of a Black Theology Movement among African intellectuals" (p. 196).

Significantly, in Hexham's exposition the theory of import serves as the basis for the proposition that South African black theology cannot be interpreted as an expression of African theology, p. 189.

31. Chikane, "Foreword," p. xiv.

32. Ibid.

33. Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 62.

34. Motlhabi, "Introduction," pp. viii-ix, lauds the role of Dr. Basil Moore, "a white theologian whose organization was originally responsible for engaging black theologians in this kind of theological reflection."

35. Luthuli, *Let My People Go,* with its Exodus motif, its anti-idolatrous discernment, and its holistic interpretation of Christianity anticipated academic liberation theology. Cf. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 36: "There has always been a distinct black understanding of Christianity and the message of the Bible. [There has] been Black Theology (or at the very least the *Sacheot* Black Theology) for as long as white Christians have been preaching the gospel to blacks."

36. The notion of import is incompatible with the position advocated by James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore, "Black Theology and African Theology," p. 197: "Black consciousness did not come into being with Stokely Carmichael or Leopold Senghor. It began with the plunder of Africa by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. It began with the experience of and resistance to white domination and it was shaped and honed and given its most profound statement by the preaching of the gospel by black men to black men in the cotton fields of the South, on the plantation of the Caribbean, among the freedmen of Philadelphia and New York, in Cape Colony and Nyasaland."

37. Buthelezi's Ph.D. thesis, "Creation and the Church," was submitted in 1968. In the thesis there is no reference to American black theology. In fact, in an interview, Hope and Young, *The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation,* p. 144, Buthelezi claims not to have been influenced by American black theology: "When I was in the States, between 1963 and 1968, my studies included Black theology, but for me it wasn't much more than a matter of intellectual curiosity." Parts of the thesis were edited and published in Moore (ed.), *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa.*

38. Mosala and Tlhagale, "Editorial note," p. v. For a similar view, see Kretzschmar, *The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa,* pp. 58-60. Concerning the development of black theology, see also Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid.*

39. Since the First World War, *Afrikaners* denotes the Afrikaans-speaking descendants of Dutch, German, and French settlers.

40. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," p. 12: "Black Consciousness... represents an almost total break with white liberal tutelage." A similar critique of white liberalism is found in Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 125: "We are sick and tired of being 'done fori and spoken down to." Cf. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 33.

41. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa,* p. 155.

42. Mofokeng, *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers,* p. 9: "The U.C.M., a Christian organization, became the organizational ground on which the idea of black consciousness solidified…. It is important to note that the S.A.S.O. and thereby the Black Consciousness philosophical approach was born inside Christian circles."

43. Scherzberg, *Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika,* p. 22.

44. Nengwekhulu, "Black Consciousness," pp. 8-9. (Mimeographed)

45. Moore, "What Is Black Theology?" p. 2.

46. Nengwekhulu, "Black Consciousness," p. 8.

47. Ibid.

48. Mofokeng, "The Evolution of the Black Struggle and the Role of Black Theology," p. 120: "This connexion between religion and resistance was there right from the dawn of black religiosity…. The African kings and queens who led the struggle against dispossession were both religious leaders as well as military commanders."

49. See, for example, Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for True Humanity."

50. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa,* p. 155.

51. Cf. Motlhabi, "Introduction," p. viii: "Dr. Manas Buthelezi… was to become the leading exponent of Black Theology" and p. x, where it is noted that *Farewell to Innocence* has been considered "the major text on Black Theology in seminaries."

52. Bosch, "Currents and Crosscurrents in South African Black Theology" may be the most sophisticated attempt to categorize black theology. Bosch proposes five types or "currents": (1) The American model as represented by James Cone. (2) A theology of indigenization, similar to the first generation of African theology. (3) A theology drawing from African traditional religions. (4) A theology drawing from African Independent Churches. (5) A combination of the first and the second types. As the list bears out, the first four types in fact represent four different sources: American black theology, African culture, African traditional religion, and African Independent Churches. All these four sources may be of importance, more or less, in virtually all varieties of black theology. Another liability of Bosch's scheme is the fact that Buthelezi mistakenly is defined as an exponent of type 1 (cf. note 37 above). In fact, the categorization obscures more than it clarifies, since no major theologian fits into any of the four first categories. For a critique of Bosch, see Motlhabi, "The Historical Origins of Black Theology," pp. 48-50, and Dejung, "Reaktionen auf Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika," p. 19 n. 23.

53. Chikane, "Foreword," p. xv.

54. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," presented at the 1984 conference, may be one of the most ambitious, attempts to interpret the different tendencies of black theology,

but also this interpretation was seriously questioned during the conference, according to "Black Theology and the Black Struggle," p. 60.

55. Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 65; I. J. Mosala and Tlhagale, "Editorial Note," p. vi.

56. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," p. 34.

57. Significantly, also Nyerere was accused for being "a racist upstart" in the pr*e-Uhuru* period due to his Pan-Africanist stance, as noted by Neve, "The Political Life of Julius K. Nyerere in Religious Perspective," p. 38.

58. Nolan, "The Political and Social Context," p. 13.

59. Among black theologians related to non-racial structures one may mention Frank Chikane and Allan Boesak.

60. Chikane, "Foreword," p. xv.

61. For a somewhat different exposition of the two stages in the process of black theology, see Motlhabi, "Introduction," p. viii.

62. See, for example, Mofokeng, *The Crucified Among the Cross-Bearers;* Mazamiza, *Beatific Comradeship;* I. J. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology."

63. Cf. Tlhagale, "On Violence," p. 143: "There is a rapidly growing belief that violence is virtually the only answer left in the face of the intransigence of the government."

64. Due to the specific role of the African Independent Churches in the struggle for liberation, a role which defies to be subordinated to European categories, it may be worthwhile to quote some assessments of this complex phenomenon. Many analysts emphasize the radical potential of the independent churches: Mofokeng, "The Evolution of the Black Struggle and the Role of Black Theology", p. 115: "black pastors of the African Independent Churches were the ones who came forward to provide the leadership [of the black struggle]. They became the first black people in South Africa to advocate a broad African nationalism and used their church organizations as the first functional bases"; Oosthuizen, "Black Theology in the History of Africa" [no pagination]: "for nearly a century South Africa has experienced Black theology — unwritten but alive — in the songs and dances, the sermons and liturgies of those outside the established churches."

However, the independent churches have also been a conservative force, according to many analysts. "The Black independent churches in South Africa are alas, not in the forefront of the liberation struggle as their counterparts in North American and Latin American countries." *Sowetan,* April 9, 1985. The role of the independent churches in the "total strategy" is discussed below, ch. 5 n. 149.

In a way which has some similarities to Metz's notion of *memoria* as a spiritual force in the struggle for justice, Sizwe, *One Azania, One Nation,* p. 46, notes that the independent churches "kept alive the belief that Africa belongs to the Africans and that the land should be returned. But this was seldom given a directly political expression except by individuals in their

capacity as members of political organisations of the oppressed. It was rather a general climate, a political memory that was sustained in these churches and their prayer meetings in the open veld or in the hovels inhabited by the majority of their members."

Also Thetele, "Women in South Africa," p. 151, proposes a dialectical assessment: "The Independent Churches in South Africa in many ways are both pre-revolutionary and actively revolutionary at the same time. They are pre-revolutionary in the sense that they do not operate according to a set plan or strategy in trying to move society toward a definite goal. But they are revolutionary in their impact on the fabric of the society, creating a change that provides the dispossessed people with a sense of hope and a vision for the future. They offer a place in society where people can begin to sense their role as creators of their own histories, rejecting a passive acceptance of the status quo and beginning to work out alternatives to dehumanization."

65. Goba, "Corporate Personality," p. 73.

66. *ICT News,* No. 3, 1983.

67. Among the few exceptions Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 144-153 and "Anzätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," pp. 88-92, and Tlhagale, "Towards a Black Theology of Labour" deserve mention. In *Black Theology and the Black Struggle,* p. 5, Chikane and Tsele argue that "Black theology should be constantly informed by those who are closer to community experiences—factory workers, community workers, etc."

68. See, for example, B. Mosala, "Black Theology and the Struggle of the Black Women in Southern Africa." Cf. the self-critique in the Final Statement of the 1983 Black Theology Seminar, *Black Theology Revisited,* pp. 60, 63; *Black Theology and the Black Struggle,* pp. 4, 141-142: "Male Black theologians cannot sincerely and genuinely talk of liberation from oppression, while they continue to oppress their female partners... There are evidently structures oppressive of women inherent in both the Black community and the church. We also express our concern about the need for more critical analysis of cultural and economic forces that serve to reinforce the ideology of male dominance and humbly call upon feminist theologians to inform Black theology and forge an alliance with it."

69. Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader,* p. 54.

70. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 182: "The reason why blacks are backward is subtly laid at their own door and the white history-makers are given a philanthropic task to perform towards their black fellow human beings."

71. Quoted from Buthelezi, "Self-Determination and Race Relations in South Africa," p. 7.

72. *Eastern Province Herald,* 3 November 1973. Quoted from Moulder, "A Ministry to White South Africans," p. 187.

73. For references, see ch. 4 on the "good intentions" of Afrikaner nationalism.

74. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 17.

75. Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 7. The statement is modified on p. 8, when it is suggested that both the requirements of justice and the different South African perceptions must be recognized. Nevertheless, the truth claims of the black experience is neglected in his book.

76. Bernstein, *No. 46 — Steve Biko,* p. 7.

77. For information about Biko's arrest and death, see Bernstein, *No. 46 — Steve Biko.*

78. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 18-24, 56-62. The quotation is from p. 22.

79. Tutu, "Theology of Liberation in Africa," p. 162.

80. Ibid. p. 163. (Italics in the original)

81. *Argus,* 14 September 1977, quoted from *South African Outlook* (September 1977): 141.

82. *South African Outlook* (September 1977): 142.

83. Ibid.

84. Quoted from Bernstein, *No. 46 — Steve Biko,* p. 115.

85. Ibid.

86. *The London Times,* 22 January 1977. Quoted from Bernstein, *No. 46 — Steve Biko,* p. 116.

87. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 60-62; Tutu, "The Theology of Liberation in Africa," especially pp. 162-163; the quotation is from p. 163.

88. See above n. 79.

89. The quotation is from the report by Sir David Napley, British Law Society, who was invited by The Association of Law Societies in South Africa to attend as an independent observer at the inquest into the death of Steve Biko. Quoted from Bernstein, *No. 46 — Steve Biko,* p. 145.

90. Tutu, "The Theology of Liberation in Africa," p. 163. Significantly the paper opens with an account of Biko's death and the verdict of the Chief Magistrate of Pretoria and then lists a sequence of other events of injustices and oppressions. Similarly, Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 56-62, suggests a paradigmatic relevance of the Biko case.

91. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 50. (Italics in the original)

92. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 13.

93. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 23.

94. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. xi.

95. Gilkey, "God," pp. 70-71.

96. Kelsey, "Fluman Being," p. 152.

97. Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," pp. 228-231.

98. Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader,* p. 40.

99. Cf. ch. 6 on Ogden's phrase "our common experience and reason."

100. Metz, *Faith in History and Society,* pp. 111-112.

101. Small, "Blackness Versus Nihilism," p. 15. For a similar view, see Biko, "Black Theology and the Quest for a True Humanity," p. 41.
102. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 62.
103. Sundermeier, "Der Mensch in der Schwarzen Théologie," p. 149.
104. Buthelezi, "The Christian Challenge of Black Theology," p. 23.
105. Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 35.
106. Mpunzi, "Black Theology as Liberation Theology," p. 137.
107. Even though Buthelezi has a somewhat different terminology his so-called anthropological method has basically the same structure as the contextual method of liberation theology.
108. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 4.
109. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 27: "All of life is defined within the limits of black situational possibilities. To this situation, with its pain and frustrations, its joys and secret hopes of redemption, traditional Christian theology has not even begun to address itself. Black theology, by taking this situation seriously, seeks to realize the true humanity of black people."

Chapter 4. Apartheid as Idolatry

1. Scherzberg, *Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika,* pp. 96-137. Paradoxically, in Scherzberg's chapter on "Theology and the Perception of Social Conflicts—Social Analysis as the Basis of Black Theology" virtually no material is from black theology texts and also the theological aspects are virtually absent.
2. See, for example, Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 2, who describes his social analysis not in terms of independent research, nor as a comprehensive social theory but as an *ad hoc* analysis in the service of theological reflection. "Our primary interest is not to set forth an exhaustive historical and systematical analysis of the situation, but to select those illustrative critical features in the situation which relate to the existential quest by way of tracing its environmental factors."
3. Cf. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 257 n. 1: "Since 1948, the term 'apartheid' has been officially superseded by an array of euphemisms—'separate development', 'separate freedoms', 'multinational development', 'pluralist democracy', etc. However, despite claims that 'apartheid as you know it is dying', NP's [National Party] commitment to the basic props of apartheid—white monopolisation of land, political power and citizenship, and the barricading of Africans, stripped of their citizenship, into overpopulated Bantustans until their labour is required by some white capitalist—remains unshaken."
4. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 57. (Italics in the original)
5. See, for example, Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 83: "racism, nationalism, militarism, and materialism have become such idols." In an ecumenical context he, ibid., pp. 158,163, mentions the national security ideology,

militarism, greed, materialism, and racism as aspects of the anti-idolatrous discernment, while *The Kairos Document* mentions three subideologies: racism, capitalism, and totalitarianism.

6. Nolan, "The Political and Social Context," p. 2. As arguments for the selection of these four sub-ideologies we note: "Racism" and "capitalism" are fundamental categories in virtually all analyses of apartheid by black theologians; the security ideology has emerged as a main issue recently; the analysis of Afrikaner nationalism, finally, may not be so important in an immanent study of black theology but is of relevance here in view of the First World perception of apartheid.

7. Boesak, "Foreword," p. xi.

8. See, for example, Boesak, *Walking on Thorns,* pp. 15, 24.

9. At the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting in Ottawa 1982, it was stated that "apartheid ('separate development') is a sin and 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." In consequence herewith it declared that this matter "constitutes a status confessionis for the Reformed churches, which means that we regard it as an issue on which it is not possible to differ without seriously jeopardizing the integrity of our common confession as Reformed churches," quoted from de Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (eds.), *Apartheid Is a Heresy,* p. 170. For a documentation of the South African debate on apartheid as a heresy, see ibid. The Lutheran World Federation stated at its Sixth Assembly (Dar es Salaam 1977) "that the situation in Southern Africa constitutes a *status confessionis.* This means that, on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity of the church, churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system." Lorenz (ed.), *The Debate on Status Confessionis,* p. 11; this collection of papers reflects the Lutheran debate.

10. Boesak, *"To Break Every Yoke...."* p. 9. To the theme of idolatry, see Richard (ed.), *The Idols of Death and the God of Life.* "All systems of oppression are characterized by the creation of gods and of idols that sanction oppression and anti-life forces.... The search for the true God in this battle of the gods brings us to an anti-idolatrous discernment of false gods," p. 1; "The practice of justice and correct thinking about the Lord go together. When practicing injustice, one necessarily thinks idolatrously about the Lord," p. 17; "We live in a profoundly idolatrous world—economically, socially, politically, culturo-ideologically, and religiously. We live crushed under the idols of an oppressive and unjust system. To live the demands of faith in this context is not simply a 'pious' or personal act; it necessarily entails a radical confrontation with that system. Idolatry is a question of politics and a question of faith," p. 24.

11. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 59. In agreement with George D. Kelsey, Buthelezi claims that "racism is a form of idolatry," quoting Kelsey's reference to Luther.

12. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 89. See also *Black and Reformed,* p. 159: "We have not yet understood that every act of inhumanity, every unjust law, every untimely death, every utterance of faith in weapons of mass destruction, every justification of violence and oppression is a sacrifice on the altar of the false gods of death; it is a denial of the Lord of life."

13. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 72.

14. Ibid., pp. 83, 105, 25.

15. Ibid., p. 83.

16. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 60.

17. Buthelezi, "Church Unity and Human Divisions of Racism," p. 2.

18. Buthelezi, 'Toward a Biblical Faith in South African Society," p. 57: "When Christianity is used, wittingly or unwittingly, to divide communities into warring factions, it becomes idolatrous and polytheistic."

19. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 22.

20. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 84. (Italics in the original)

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 5: "This *farewell to innocence* means also that the traditional role of the white liberal is thoroughly re-evaluated. The question is no longer whether whites are willing to do something *for* blacks, but whether whites are willing to identify with what the oppressed are doing to secure their liberation and whether whites are aiding that liberation in their own communities." (Italics in the original)

25. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 2. See also p. 4: a "new reality of race relations and class relations."

26. Cf. Houtart, "Südafrikas Schwarze Théologie in soziologischer Sicht," pp. 180-184.

27. Wright, *The Burden of the Present,* p. 4. The impressive *Oxford History of South Africa,* published 1969-71, is characterized as "the Modern apotheosis" of the liberal paradigm, ibid., p. 6. Wright attempts to clarify the controversy between two major schools in South African historiography, the liberal paradigm, which has dominated South African historiography for many decades, and a more recent "radical" paradigm. The structural approach of black theology demonstrates a close affinity with the radical school; a major difference is, however, that the black experience is no focal point in the radical analysis.

28. Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun,* p. 47, proposes the following definition: "Racism is the specific ideology which organizes and regulates the exploitation and dependence of a particular 'race' (group, people) on the basis of the supposed cultural and/or biological inferiority of this 'race' and in this way perpetuates and deepens already existing differences of power." For a theological discussion of different definitions of racism, see his *The Way of the Black Messiah,* pp. 91-92 and references.

29. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 110-111. (Italics in the original)

30. Mosala and Tlhagale (eds.), *The Unquestionable Right to Be Free,* may be characterized as a third step in this process, analyzing the relationship between "race" and "class."

31. Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," p. 47.

32. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

33. Ibid., p. 40.

34. Wright, *The Burden of the Present,* p. 8.

35. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 1.

36. Wright, *The Burden of the Present,* p. 40. One may compare Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 121, describing the conflict between English- and Afrikaans-speaking populations as a "clash between the nineteenth and seventeenth centuries in the colony" and O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 5: "In questioning these myths [of Afrikanerdom], many histories in English likewise take for granted the discrete identity and organic unity of 'Afrikanerdom', and simply revise the moral assessment of Afrikaner nationalism from positive to negative. The central assumption here holds that Afrikanerdom (or the 'Boer race') and its associated social attitudes evolved 'in the long quietude of the eighteenth century'."

37. Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," pp. 44-46.

38. Ibid., p. 38.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. See e.g., Sizwe's critique of Biko's economic idea of "buy black" in which he hears an "echo of the Afrikaner sectionalist movement." *One Azania, One Nation,* pp. 130-131 n. 79. Cf. Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," p. 46.

42. See, for example, Boesak, "Courage to Be Black," p. 168: "We prefer to speak of 'White gospel' however, because firstly, most English-speaking South Africans have thoroughly enjoyed the fruits of Apartheid without any qualm while hypocritically attacking the Afrikaners; and secondly, because racism and the gross misuse of the Bible to justify it has never been the monopoly of Afrikaners nor of white South Africans, for that matter." Many analysts claim that one can find apartheid also in the Lutheran church. One important similarity between Lutheran and Reformed churches in South Africa is that in both confessions elements of romantic philosophy have been used to legitimize social attitudes among the whites. See Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 252, and Kistner, "The Context of the Umpumulo Memorandum of 1967," p. 185: "In spite of the recourse to different doctrinal traditions in the Lutheran and in the Calvinist denominations, one has the impression that the basic theology underlying the concept of the church and its relation to the world, is identical among the Lutheran and the Reformed churchmen who emphasize the spiritual unity of the church. The underlying concept of the Spirit also seems to be identical."

The joint responsibility of Afrikaners and English-speaking whites is also stressed by Villa-Vicencio, "A Source of Hope and Despair," pp. 84-85: "Too long have the English-speaking churches been allowed to escape the critique and judgement of the world church, whose wrath has been reserved for the white Dutch Reformed Churches…. Indeed, hegemonic Afrikaners and English fellow-travellers are apparently in the can together in the eyes of radical blacks." The same stance is forcefully argued in his "An All- Pervading-Heresy." Cf. Adam and Giliomee, *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power,* p. 92: "The history of European colonisation shows that it does not matter materially whether colonisers are calvinists or catholics. What is crucial is whether they enjoy power to acquire the land, cattle and labour of indigenous peoples."

43. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 47. (Italics in the original)

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 69. (Italics added)

46. Ibid.

47. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 27. See also ibid., p. 81: "Let me repeat here what I have said elsewhere: joining the struggle for human liberation in Africa does not mean christianizing the struggle, 'taking over" as it were, what others have been doing long before."

48. Boesak, "To Break Every Yoke…," p. 8. See also *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 58, where it is argued that structures are not a fate but the product of human decisions; apartheid, it is suggested, "was designed, carefully planned, and is being ruthlessly executed by people—white people. Therefore, it can only be changed by human beings." Cf. Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 95, who criticizes a "Red Cross ethics" that neglects the context.

49. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 13.

50. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 147.

51. Ibid.

52. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 145. The relationship between the First World and apartheid is stressed by many analysts, as Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 54: "We know how the South African regime would not survive without the active support of Western nations"; Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 110, asks for pressure which Western "brothers and sisters" could exert to "drive us to the conference table." But "I sense a great deal of reluctance to exert this pressure, and too much enthusiasm to refer to changes that are supposedly happening under the Botha administration"; Goba, "A Black South African Perspective," p. 53: "The fundamental crisis facing South Africa is that of the ongoing political conspiracy of Western countries in supporting the system of apartheid"; Wolfram Kistner and Tom Manthata insist in an interview: "We have to conscientize on an international level as well. Overseas churches are usually willing to contribute funds to support change here, but they often fail to realize that fundamental change here is

impossible without their contribution to fundamental change in their own situation, where forces support oppressive South African policies," Hope and Young, *The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation,* p. 95.

In a First World context, *South Africa in the 1980s,* p. 4, argues that "Western economic support for South Africa speeds the cancer of distrust into Europe and North America" in two fields: (1) The dialogue between races and minorities is affected since "black minorities here [in the West] can only view western support for South Africa as an indication of racial bias." (2) Regarding the North-South dialogue, "the West's position on South Africa is widely taken as a symbol of an underlying hypocrisy on the world issue of development aid and global economic stability." Occasionally, the complicity of the First World in apartheid is acknowledged by First World churches, as in a statement by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches: "How do we come to understand our complicity in the racist structures of South Africa through the economic involvement of especially Western European and North American countries and Churches?" Quoted from de Gruchy and Villa Vicencio (eds.), *Apartheid Is a Heresy,* p. 172. See also Lehmann, "Foreword," p. x: "These sermons [of Allan Boesak] make transparent and inescapable the fact that the black context of South Africa is the human context of the world"; *Racism in Theology,* p. 10: "The struggle against racism implies a radical analysis of the international economic order."

53. See e.g., Boesak, "Foreword," p. xii: "Apartheid is but a microcosm of a worldwide situation." See also n. 64 below. Concerning the theory of dependency, see *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 147: "poverty is one side of a coin of which the other side is affluence and exploitation"; *Black and Reformed,* p. 76: "Colonialism has been exchanged for newer, subtler forms of economic exploitation in which underdevelopment and dependency are both real and inescapable."

54. Connor, "Evangelisation in South Africa: Future Needs," p. 210.

55. These points are drawing from Hastings, "Why the Church in South Africa Matters."

56. Makgetla and Seidman, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism,* p. 8.

57. Hastings, "Why the Church in South Africa Matters," p. 156.

58. Ibid.

59. Sölle, "Dialectics of Enlightenment," pp. 84, 82.

60. See, for example, Marais, *The 'New' South Africa,* p. 9; Breytenbach, *The New Racism,* p. 19, criticizes the Immorality Act but is else far less sophisticated than Marais. Both publications were sent to the author from the South African Embassy in London on request for material about the official policy in South Africa.

61. Cf. Buthelezi's comment in "Highlights of the Current Church Problems in South Africa," p. 5: "As long as I am no longer a citizen of South Africa but of the Transkei, eating in white hotels will not help me."

62. Botha, *South Africa,* p. 192. Quoted from Nash, *Black Uprooting,* p. 18 (italics

added by Nash). Cf. Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 33, quoting the Minister of Bantu administration and development: "Africans are secondary to Whites in White areas, just as Whites are secondary to Blacks in the homelands."

63. Makgetla and Seidman, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism,* p. 89.

64. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 148-149.

65. Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity."

66. Motlhabi, "Black Theology and Authority," pp. 119-120.

67. Ibid., p. 120.

68. Buthelezi, "Church Unity and the Human Divisions of Racism," p. 1.

69. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 100. See also his critique of the global economic system and "the gap between the rich developed world and the vastly poorer developing world." In the eyes of the poor the freedom of "the free enterprise system" is dubious, he thinks, since in this system "some are certainly a great deal freer than others. From my perspective Capitalism seems to give unbridled license to human cupidity, and has a morality that belongs properly to the jungle—'the survival of the fittest, the weakest to the wall, and the devil take the hindmost'. I find what I have seen of Capitalism and the free enterprise system quite morally repulsive." Ibid., pp.112-113.

70. Goba, "Corporate Personality," p. 69.

71. Ibid.

72. Goba, "Corporate Personality," p. 70.

73. Ibid., p. 69.

74. Ntwasa, "The Concept of the Church in Black Theology," p. 117.

75. Mpunzi, "Black Theology as Liberation Theology," p. 132.

76. Pityana, "What Is Black Consciousness?", p. 63, quoting James Ngugi.

77. See, for example, the emphasis on black historiography in Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," pp. 44-45.

78. On accounting for such a historiography, Davenport, *South Africa,* p. 97, argues that "it should be clear from the events recorded in this chapter [White and Black: the Struggle for the Land] that such a view has little historical basis."

79. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," pp. 4, 6 (the second reference is to a quotation by Sebidi from Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa,* p. 74). See also p. 7, where Sebidi discusses "the white settlers' hunger for land and labour."

   To understand the context of the black theology analysis it is important to remember how black historiography analyzes the South African history as a "process of conquest, dispossession, enslavement, segregation and disfranchisement." From the black perspective, it is argued that the history "is one of the continuous plunder of land and cattle by the European invaders, of the devastation and decimation of people, followed by their economic enslavement." For references, see Comevin, *Apartheid,* p. 130.

80. For a critique of "the land-hungry white invaders," see Motlhabi, "Black Theology and Authority," pp. 119-120.
81. Pityana, "What Is Black consciousness?", p. 59.
82. Report of the Transvaal Local Government Commission of 1921, paragraph 267; quoted from Sizwe, *One Azania, One Nation,* p. 45.
83. *Forbes,* 15 June, 1974, p. 40, quoted from Seidman and Makgetla, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism,* p. 101. It should be noted that, with a minor exception, "dividends paid out by the gold mines to shareholders between 1911 and 1969 have alone consistently totalled more than the gross earnings of black mine workers." Cochrane, "The Role of the English- Speaking Churches in South Africa," p. 177.
84. Marais, *The 'New' South Africa,* p. 14.
85. David Pallister, "Cash That Keeps Pretoria in Profit," The *Guardian,* 1 June 1984. Similarly, Sjollema, *Isolating Apartheid,* pp. 4, 100-101: "The rate of return on foreign investments in South Africa is considered to be among the highest in the world.... Studies and research carried out in recent years have demonstrated dearly the links between colonial and economic domination and institutional racism. The racist regime of South Africa is the most extreme example of this.... Overseas investment in South Africa is made precisely because of apartheid and not despite it." See also the analysis of the reasons why South Africa has been regarded as "a safe investment haven" in Seidman and Makgetla, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism,* p. viii.
86. Cf. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 247: "Far from representing the triumph of the precapitalist frontier which undermined capitalism, as the conventional wisdom has it, the apartheid policies of the [National Party] were a product of the particular character of capitalist development in South Africa and acted as a spur to rapid capital accumulation in a given historical phase of South African capitalism."
87. In criticism of such a policy, Buthelezi, "The Problem of the Dignity of Labour in South Africa," pp. 1-2, describes the humiliation he experienced when he had his "dompas" (pass) stamped at the Influx Control office, stating that he was "permitted to remain in the proclaimed area of Durban" as long as he was employed as a "labourer." In practice, he was reduced to being "merely a unit of labour." In this way, he contends, labour has lost its dignity in South Africa. "For black people, especially Africans, movement within South Africa is regulated by whether or not one is labourer of someone else."
88. See, for example, the criticism in *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture,* p. 75: "Migrant labour disrupts family life."
89. Ibid., p. 74.
90. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 108.
91. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 50.
92. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 107 (italics in the original). Cf. the critique of the label "superfluous appendages," which is attached to those Africans whose labour is not needed in the white economy, ibid., p. 100: "My

vision includes a society that is more compassionate and caring, in which 'superfluous appendages' are unthinkable."

93. Even though de Klerk's book cannot claim to be a scientific treatise it is of significance here, since it eloquently expresses an analysis which is not uncommon in the First World. For the debate about this book, see different articles in the November 1976 edition of *South African Outlook.*

94. de Klerk, "We Who Should Be as Gods," p. 148.

95. Kinghorn, "DRC Theology," p. 12. Kinghorn seems to adapt a different position in a more recent writing, Lategan et al., *The Option for Inclusive Democracy.* The political ethics proposed in this document may be described as a reappraisal of the Afrikaner tradition in the light of the black experience, pp. i-ii.

96. Albertyn, *Kerk en Stad,* p. 110, quoted from Kinghorn, "DRC Theology," p. 8. For a somewhat different translation, see *Africa Events* (December 1986): 52. In view of the discussion on the root cause of the conflictual analysis of black theology, it may be noted that this DRC report, equally as black theologians of today, argues that "the capitalist profit-seeking" is a main cause of the predicament of labour. Since leaders of the DRC and the South African government have argued that the critique of capitalism and the demand for structural change by black theology is a work of communist agents, one may wonder if the same conclusion should apply to the critique of capitalism and the demand for structural change by early DRC theologians.

97. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 65.

98. Simson, *The Social Origins of Afrikaner Fascism,* p. 165.

99. Ibid., pp. 164-192; the reference to Malan is found on p. 178. In view of the Afrikaner anti-capitalism, it may be noted that as early as at the turn of the century, Jan Christian Smuts in his classic *A Century of Wrong* argued that the Afrikaners had a special vocation in "the struggle against the new world tyranny of Capitalism," O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. xvi.

100. de Klerk, *The Puritans in Africa,* pp. xiii, 321-322.

101. For example, Hexham, "A Short History of Black Theology in South Africa," p. 193, defines the theology of Afrikaner Nationalism as a liberation theology: "The connection between the development of Afrikaner liberation theology and the liberation theologies developed by Africans should not be overlooked." In a similar vein it is suggested by Bosch, "Racism and Revolution," pp. 18-19, that both Afrikaner and black nationalism are "employing" a theology of liberation.

102. See, for example, Bosch, "Die Religiose Wurzeln der gegenwartigen Polarisation zwischen Weiss und Schwarz in Südafrika," pp. 104-105, for an argument that black theology and Afrikaner theology are two varieties of contextual theology. Bosch suggests that if one accepts black theology, it follows that one must also accept the theology of Afrikaner Nationalism as a legitimate model of contextual theology. A similar stance is proposed by *Steyn Commission,* p. 90, arguing that black theology accords with Afrikaner

    political thinking "in the sense that they, like the Afrikaner, place great emphasis on differential development both theologically, and by parity of reasoning, also politically and culturally."

103. de Klerk, *The Puritans in Africa*, p. xiv.

104. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 5. Cf. West, "Puritans in Africa and America," p. 168, who — in explicit criticism of de Klerk's study — suggests that in the emerging Afrikanerdom the theological arguments were "qualifiers rather than basic determinants."

105. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 105.

106. Ibid., p. 111.

107. The idolatrous character of Afrikanerdom has been stressed in particular by black Reformed Christians. Their analysis may be of special relevance, since they somehow know DRC — one of the most important structures of Afrikanerdom — from within. The Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa (hereafter ABRECSA) argues that the Word of God is not the supreme authority in the theology which accepts apartheid; by contrast, the Word of God is then subjected to a cultural or racist ideology. Bill, "Foreword," p. x. Cf. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 74, where he implicitly asks the members of the Broederbond: Which is your fundamental loyalty, the brotherhood in Christ or the Broederbond? See also his sermon at the death of Steve Biko, "Do Not Be Afraid of Them," ibid., pp. 56-62.

    Significantly, also Afrikaner dissidents have repeatedly warned against the idolization of the *volk.* Among these dissidents, Beyers Naudé may be the most well-known. Forced to choose between a promising DRC career and a position within the Christian Institute, Naudé explained his choice in a sermon on Acts 5:29: "We must obey God rather than man," formulating the key questions as follows: "Is his Word the highest authority, the final word for you? If so, do you obey his Word? Do you live according to his Word? God will not let you go until you have made your choice," Randall, *Not Without Honour,* p. 103. Interestingly, the different relationships to the policy of apartheid are here not explained with reference to different interpretations of the "covenant," predestination, or other theological *loci,* but squarely with the choice between God and the idols, insisting that in this choice there is no fundamental difference between Afrikaners and other ethnic groups. "In closing, this text also has meaning for other Churches in South Africa and for the Christians in those Churches, white as well as non-white. You who together with us confess loyalty to Christ and his Word, is your primary obedience and loyalty to Christ? Are you willing to call your people and your racial group to seek and to put this obedience over all other things?" Ibid., p. 105. Cf. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 100-101: "Obedience to earthly authority is only obedience *in God....* So, when Beyers Naudé sides with the poor and the oppressed in South Africa *he* is the true representative of the Reformed tradition, not those who banned him and sought to bring dishonour to his name." (Italics in the original)

108. An analysis of the relationship between the DRC and the National Party

after 1948 reveals the opportunistic character of the DRC theology, which is changed according to the desires of the leading politicians. See, for example, Strassberg, *Ecumenism in South Africa 1936-1960*, p. 203; Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* p. 23.

109. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 111, quoting an analysis of idolatry in Israel by C. J. Labuschagne. (Italics in the original)

110. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 7.

111. Ibid., p. 85. It should be remembered that the Marxist influence among Afrikaner workers in the 1920s caused a deep rift in this language group, as seen in the Benoni uprisings when hundreds of striking Afrikaner miners were killed by a government that was, in fact, headed by an Afrikaner.

112. The psychological impact of the *Eufees* was remarkable: "Men grew beards and women donned Voortrekker dress; street after street in hamlet after hamlet was renamed after one or other Trek hero; babies were baptized in the shade of the wagons—one was christened '*Eufeesia'* (best translated 'Centennalia')—and young couples were married in full trekker regalia on the village green before the wagons. With tearful eyes old men and women climbed onto the wagons—'Lord now lettest thy servant depart in peace', said one old man—and the young ones jostled with one another in their efforts to rub grease from the wagon axles onto their handkerchief. Monuments were raised up and the wagons were pulled through freshly laid concrete so that the imprint of their tracks could be preserved forever." Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom,* p. 180; quoted from O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 76.

113. Bezuitenhout, Dr. *Tinie Louw,* pp. 54, 56; quoted from O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 108.

114. *Inspan* (October 1944), E. G. Jansen, future Minister of Native Affairs; quoted from O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 173.

115. The pervasiveness of white paternalism is seen from the fact that even as staunch an opponent of apartheid as B. B. Keet fails to understand the significance of an epistemology from below, as seen in his *The Ethics of Apartheid,* p. 5: "In its ideal form apartheid does claim to justify its policy ethically by pointing to the duty of the white man to act as guardian of the undeveloped, coloured races of the country. Indeed it cannot be denied that it is the plain duty of the superior white races to educate and lead the inferior black races on the road to advancement. In their primitive state they cannot be left to themselves; they need to be nursed and prepared for the future by their natural guardians."

116. Buthelezi, "The Christian Challenge of Black Theology," p. 21.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid., p. 22: "We are not, for instance, claiming that we are the chosen race of God in relation to others in South Africa. We are calling none 'Canaanites' or our 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'."

119. Ibid.

120. It should be noted that the reconstruction presented here will necessarily give a somewhat over-simplified picture of black theology, not accounting for terminological and other kinds of inconsistencies. One example may clarify this limitation. Buthelezi's analysis in "Reconciliation and Liberation in Southern Africa," pp. 46-49, differs from ours in two respects; (1) he defines liberation theology not with reference to method but to content, understanding it as a theology of reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressors on the basis of new structures where "the oppressor must cease to be the oppressor and the oppressed cease to be oppressed"; (2) acknowledging that Afrikaner theology, as represented by Paul Kruger, is not such a theology of reconciliation and consequently cannot be characterized as liberation theology, yet Buthelezi quotes it as an example of what happens "when a theology of liberation becomes an end in itself."

121. The cover of the Penguin edition of the book shows a caricature of Sir Paul Kruger and John Bull, suggesting that the "Story of Afrikanerdom" has only two agents, Afrikaners and English-speaking whites, while the blacks remain invisible, by and large, both on the cover and in de Klerk's exposition.

122. A main argument in Boesak's critique of the DRC theology as expressed in the *Landman report,* is that the black experience is suppressed. *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 108. Cf. nn. 88-90 above.

123. EATWOT I, p. 270.

124. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 143. Similarly, Coe, "Contextualizing Theology," pp. 21-22, argues that contextuality is a conscientization of the contexts in the particular, historical moment. See also the critique of theologians who do not "question the social conditioning of their own theology" in Balasuriya, "Towards the Liberation of Theology," pp. 16-17. For a similar interpretation of contextuality, see Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 17: "Liberation theology differs from current theological practice not through a new insight into the concept of liberation but by making itself aware of the contextuality of its own reflection."

125. McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key,* p. 87 (italics in the original). The text has been edited for our purposes; for example, McAfee Brown's "historical situation" has here been substituted by "context" in reference to the discussion on contextual theology.

126. There is no generally accepted title of the national security doctrine. *South Africa in the 1980s* proposes "National Security Ideology"; Nolan, "The Political and Social Context" suggests "The national security state (NSS)"; Connor, "The Future," also proposes "The National Security State." Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* finally, has "National Security Doctrine." The protagonists of this doctrine, e.g., Louw, "The Nature of National Security in the Modern Age," seem to prefer the expression "national security," even though one also finds expressions of "state security." The expression "National Security State" is preferred here since it exposes the obviously central commitment to the preservation of what is called "state" in this

doctrine. Moreover, this title is gaining acceptance, as seen in Comblin, *The Church and the National Security State,* possibly the most thorough analysis of this doctrine, expounded with special reference to a Latin American context.

127. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 158.

128. *Pretoria News,* 2 September 1986.

129. See, for example, the critique of ANC in *Oosterlig,* June 8,1987: The strategy of ANC "is prescribed from Moscow and the welfare of Blacks is not a priority there." Cf. the exposition of the military propaganda against ANC in Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* p. 43: "In one of the longest analysis, in March 1982, the movement [ANC] was throughout referred to as 'the USSR-ANC-SA Communist Party' and the thrust of the argument was that the organisation was totally under the control of 'the Kremlin'."

130. *Legrange-Schlebusch Commission,* p. 150, asserts that "Bultmann's thinking is not founded on Christianity, showing rather the influence of the existentialist philosophy of the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, who is pro-Communist…. It is clear, therefore, that Bultmann's thinking stems from Sartre's existentialist philosophy." Of course, Bultmann was never a disciple of Sartre. Even though he was influenced by Heidegger's existential analysis, there is no trace of Sartre's philosophy in Bultmann's concept. Moreover, in political terms Bultmann was a staunch anti-communist who denounced social welfare as "slavery" and as a "communist utopia." For references, see my *Politik och hermeneutik,* pp. 150-155.

131. *The Kairos Document,* p. 7. Cf. *Legrange-Schlebusch Commission,* p. 103, where the journal of the Christian Institute, *Pro Veritate,* is charged for "propagating, in a disguised form, the basic principles, ideas and objectives of Marxism and neo-Marxism, not only by attacking apartheid, but also by constantly stressing the necessity for Marxist-oriented structural change (= revolution, but without violence) so that a socialist structure and social order can be established in this country in which the place and future of the Whites would change radically." Similarly, it is argued that the World Council of Churches has launched an "onslaught on South Africa."

132. Ibid., p. 148.

133. Ibid., p. 151. See also pp. 155-163 on "horizontalism."

134. In the SACC trial, the comprehensive testimony of General Johan Coetzee — the then chief of the South African security police and the chief witness of the persecutor — is of special relevance. The testimony is printed in its entirety (but without appendices) in *Evangelischer Pressedienst,* no. 9-10 (1983). In his conclusion, pp. 99-106, Coetzee argues that SACC pursues a "secular" aim, to change South Africa; this aim is outside the boundaries of a religious ministry but is part and parcel of conspiracy instigated from abroad.

135. de Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio (eds.), *Apartheid Is a Heresy,* p. 172.

136. Ibid., pp. 174.

137. The charge of communism has been leveled against many black theologians. Manas Buthelezi was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1973, while in the South African media Boesak and Tutu repeatedly have been described as communists or dupes of communism. Official government reports, for example, *Legrange-Schlebusch Commission* and *Steyn Commission* propose repressive actions against black theology and church institutions for alleged affiliation to communism.

138. For an exposition of the NSS doctrine as articulated by one of its advocates, see Louw, "The Nature of National Security in the Modern Age." Cf. the official statement by P. W. Botha, a leading proponent of the NSS ideology, in 3975 *Defence White Paper,* p. 4: "Defence strategy... involves economy, ideology, technology, and even social matters and can therefore only be meaningful and valid if proper account is taken of these other spheres... all countries must, more than ever, muster all their activities—political, eco nomic, diplomatic and military—for their defence. This, in fact is the meaning of 'Total Strategy'." Quoted from Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* p. 27.

139. Nolan, "The Political and Social Context," pp. 8-10.

140. In *Steyn Commission,* for example, theological issues are dealt with extensively. See e.g., pp. 77-91, 483-686. See also Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* p. 30.

141. Nolan, "The Political and Social Context," p. 9.

142. Buthelezi, "The Relevance of Black Theology," p. 199.

143. Ibid.

144. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 22.

145. Ibid., p. 23.

146. Ibid., p. 88.

147. In implicit critique of the NSS doctrine ABRECSA censures a position that "demands uncritical loyalty to the State," arguing that "obedience to earthly authorities is only obedience in God," Bill, "Foreword," p. x. See also Tutu's presentation to the Eloff Commission of Inquiry, *Hope and Suffering,* pp. 153-189.

148. Bax, *A Different Gospel,* p. 31, notes that Nico Diedrichs in his outline of the apartheid ideology insists that the *volk,* and not humanity, should be regarded as "the absolute."

149. Cf. Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* pp. 124,183, who exemplifies the political ambiguity of the independent churches. Also, Bosch, "Racism and Revolution," p. 14, argues that these churches "inculcate obedience and respect for authority in their members which make these members very popular with white employers."

150. The importance given to Botha's speech in the Supplement to *South African Digest,* 24 May 1984, issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, is significant for the sensibilities of the NSS doctrine.

151. Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* p. 42.

152. See, for example, Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 64.

153. O'Meara, *Volskapitalisme,* p. 255.

154. Ibid., p. 255. See also Cawthra, *Brutal Force,* pp. 35-38, where the Council, in reference to P. Frankel, is described as "the focal point of all national decision-making and governmental power."

155. Ibid., p. 34.

156. Cf. Connor, "The Future," pp. 149-150.

157. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa,* p. 174.

158. Coetzee's testimony, *Evangelischer Pressedienst* no. 9-10 (1983), especially pp. 99-106, may be one of the most articulate expressions for this argument in a debate with black theology. See also *Legrange-Schlebusch Commission,* and *Steyn Commission,* passim.

159. It could be argued that the alternative race or class, presented by influential Marxists in South Africa, confused different levels of social analysis. In *Materialismus Ideologic Religion,* pp. 44-53, I have established that Marx carefully distinguishes between the levels of explanation and of description, insisting that his materialist analysis is not a description but a theoretical explanation. Therefore, he may admit that religion or politics were more important in the human consciousness than economics in certain societies but argues that his methodology may explain the different structures of human consciousness in different social formations. Similarly, "class" is for Marx an explanatory, not a descriptive, concept. "Race," by contrast, seems to be used as a descriptive device in the black consciousness analysis. In other words, "race" seems to be a category on the level of consciousness. It follows that the distinctive characteristic of a Marxian class analysis is not a denial of the importance of "race" as a descriptive concept but in the insistence on the usefulness of "class" in the answer to the question: *Why* has "race" become a dominant structure of consciousness in South Africa? Cf. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme,* p. 10.

160. Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," p. 38: Whites "tell us that the situation is a class struggle rather than a racial one. Let them go to van Tonder [derogatory reference to the average Afrikaans-speaking farmer] in the Free State and tell him this. We believe we know what the problem is, and we will stick by our findings."

161. Cf. Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," p. 29, who quotes with assent a political scientist, who states that "there was no systematic economic analysis of class, nor even a political account of what the interests and roles of the various classes might be in the process of liberation." In the aftermath of the October 1977 bannings, Sebidi suggests, objections against this "idealistic approach" were raised persistently within black political circles.

162. "A Critical Appraisal of the Conference Themes" in *Black Theology and the Black Struggle.*

163. If one compares Moore (ed.), *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa,* Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* and Mosala and Tlhagale (eds.), The *Unquestionable Right to Be Free,* one can follow the growing interest in

Marxist analysis in response to the need for a clarification of the black experience.

164. Cf. Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement," p. 69, who criticizes what he calls "ideological reductionism current in some of the vulgar materialistically orientated approaches in our situation."

165. Even though Sebidi, "The Dynamics of the Black Struggle and Its Implications for Black Theology," advocates a combination of race and class analysis, his vocabulary recalls the earlier polarization between Marxist-Leninist and black consciousness analyses, defining them as "materialism" and "idealism." It should be noted, however, that these crude categories are not uncontroversial, as seen in *Black Theology and the Black Struggle,* p. 60.

166. For example, Hope and Young, *South Africa in a Revolutionary Situation,* and Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid,* presuppose the liberal paradigm. Neither the critique of this paradigm by black theology, nor the methodological profile of this theology are expounded in these books. Similarly, First World mass media may present the specific political demands by Boesak, Tutu, and other black leaders but not the underlying analysis, which arguably is necessary to perceive the urgency of the demands, as I have argued in view of Sweden in "Befrielseteologi i Sydafrika."

Chapter 5. Conversion to the Wholeness of Life

1. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 1, 28-29, 137, *et passim;* "Change in the Church," p. 201. Per Erik Persson has called my attention to the fact that medieval catechisms started with the question: Why do I live here on earth? This universal question was prior to a more specific one: Why am I a Christian? Buthelezi's reflection on creation and church follows a somewhat similar pattern, even though there are two significant differences: (1) The starting point of Mthethwa's question is an experience that is corporate but limited to a certain social group, the blacks; (2) The address to God has a special significance in a context of oppression that is legitimized as a defence of "Western, Christian civilization."

2. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 31.

4. Our account of Buthelezi's theological profile will be based on (1) his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, with the programmatic title: "Creation and the Church. A Study in Ecclesiology with Special Reference to a Younger Church Milieu"; (2) the Heidelberg lectures, 1972—an abridged version of the dissertation, published in Tödt (ed.), *Théologie im Konfliktfeld Südafrika. Dialog mit Manas Buthelezi;* (3) Buthelezi's three essays in Moore (ed.), *The Challenge of Black Theology;* (4) other articles, lectures, and sermons. In the latter group is included also unpublished material that may be used by

courtesy of Bishop Buthelezi. If one reads these different texts, it is obvious that Buthelezi's dissertation, by and large, covers the different themes throughout his subsequent writings. The dissertation, then, offers the most comprehensive account of Buthelezi's theology and we shall use it as a framework for the interpretation of the other texts.

5. At the very beginning of the intellectual articulation of black theology, Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," p. 43, emphasized the holistic perspective, focusing on the relationship between, on the one hand, "God and Christ" and on the other, "the black man and his daily problems." See also Tutu, "The Theology of Liberation in Africa," p. 168, who defines the challenge of liberation theology to other theologies in terms of wholeness, a consequence of being "biblical": "Liberation theology challenges other theologies to become more truly incarnational by being concerned for the whole person, body and soul." For the concept of wholeness in other Third World theologies, see e.g., Fabella and Torres, *Irruption of the Third World,* pp. xvi, 214.

6. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 30.

7. Ibid., p. 124.

8. Ibid., p. 123. Possibly, one could say that Buthelezi has a sacramental ecclesiology since the sacramental formula "in, with, and under" is the frame of reference of his exposition of the relationship between the created reality and the church.

9. Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 93.

10. In Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. I l l, Luther's concept of grace is criticized. Moreover, in "Black Theology — A Question for the Liberation of Christian Truth," p. 58, there is cautious critique of Luther, suggesting that the reformer's utterances on social ethics are unsystematic and cover a wide area of divergence; in order to be appreciated they must be taken together "in their dialectic relationship and inner tension." The critique of contemporary Lutheran confessionalism is sharper as seen, for example, in "Towards Indigenous Theology in South Africa," pp. 71-72: "We do want to raise the question whether ... Lutheranism ... has not sacrificed the 'human' for the 'ideological'."

11. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 134.

12. Buthelezi, "The Theological Meaning of True Humanity," p. 99. In view of the controversy about African and black theology it may be of interest to note that this quotation plays a key role in "Creation and the Church," pp. 122-123, and in "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," pp. 44-45.

13. Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 44 n. 13. The same is true for the equivalent of *impilo* in some other Bantu languages, for example, kiswahili (*uzima*).

14. Buthelezi, "The Theological Meaning of True Humanity," p. 100.

15. Ibid. The quotation is from Adeolu Adegbola, Nigeria. Cf. "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 45.

16. Buthelezi, "Towards Indigenous Theology in South Africa," pp. 69-70.

17. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 88.

18. Buthelezi, "Theological Grounds for an Ethic of Hope," p. 151: "The theological consciousness of the givenness of the social, economic and political structures of life is not one of a fatalistic resignation, but of awareness of an inevitable responsibility in those structures."

19. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 58.

20. Ibid., p. 62.

21. Ibid., p. 202.

22. To the wholeness of life as criterion, see, for example, Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 81.

23. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 43.

24. Buthelezi, "Theological Grounds for an Ethic of Hope," pp. 152-153.

25. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 136-164; "Theological Grounds for an Ethic of Hope," pp. 151-152: "Just as the fact of sin explains man's alienation from God, so does it also account for the alienation of man from man."

26. Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 54. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 78-80, notes that Buthelezi's analysis of participation of power as intrinsic to humanity is equivalent to his own exposition of "black power," even though Buthelezi in "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 30, rejects this phrase as politically loaded.

27. Buthelezi, "Theological Grounds for an Ethic of Hope," p. 156.

28. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 60.

29. See, for example, Dammann, *Das Problem einer Afrikanischen Théologie,* pp. 15-16.

30. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 306.

31. Ibid., p. 29.

32. Ibid., p. 207.

33. See n. 2 above.

34. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 75-87. In this argument Buthelezi draws from Wingren's study of Irenaeus, *Man and Incarnation.* However, Buthelezi is critical of Irenaeus's notion of a progressive human nature which means that in reality the continuity between creation and salvation is emphasized more in a theology of the wholeness of life than in the recapitulatio.

35. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 79.

36. Ibid., p. 77. See also p. 92: "Redemption does not mean to whisk man away from daily life, but it means to remove him from the path of God's judgment

back to the stream of life as it issues from God and is directed to his service and purpose."

37. Ibid., p. 78.

38. Buthelezi, "Daring to Live for Christ," p. 178: "If Christian life is other than human life, the incarnation of Christ is then of no significance."

39. Ibid., p. 177.

40. Ibid., p. 178. See also ibid.: "The identity of the Christian life is ... a concrete reality which is embedded in our social, economic and political relations."

41. For a discussion of the eschatological dimension, see "Theological Grounds for an Ethic of Hope" and "Creation and the Church," pp. 173-205.

42. Buthelezi, "Daring to Live for Christ," p. 178.

43. Ibid., p. 180.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 179.

46. Ibid. Cf. Luthuli's dictum in *Let My People Go,* pp. 208-211: "The Road to Freedom is via the Cross"; Mofokeng, *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers,* p. 36: "Incarnation in a conflictual situation means being prepared to suffer for righteousness and regarding suffering as integral to the way of liberation. As J. P. Sartre says in 'Black Orpheus': 'Suffering carries within itself its own refusal; it is in essence refusal to suffer... it opens itself toward revolt and toward liberty'."

   Hastings, *A History of African Christianity,* p. 232, rightly suggests that black theology is a *theologia crucis* in a way that other types of African Theology hitherto have failed to be. Similarly, Dejung, "Reaktionen auf Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika," p. 28, notes that black theology (unlike the independent churches) represents a *theologia crucis.* By contrast *The Kairos Document,* pp. 18-19, remarkably claims that not only black theology but also African theology in its entirety and the theology of the African Independent Churches "have already laid great emphasis upon the biblical teaching about suffering, especially the suffering of Jesus Christ."

47. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 68.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 181. Cf. the critique of the "'death of God' theologians," pp. 173-175 n. 189.

51. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 180.

52. The term "drama" is obviously inspired by Gustaf Aulen. Cf. the reference to Aulen in "In Christ—One New Community." p. 330.

53. Buthelezi, "In Christ—One New Community," p. 331.

54. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 74.

55. Cf. ibid., p. 74.

56. The distinction between an anthropological and ethnographic method is elaborated in (1) "Creation and the Church," pp. 206-304; (2) "Ansätze

Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," pp. 111-132; (3) "An African Theology or a Black Theology?" pp. 31-35; (4) "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa." We will analyze the four texts together due to the following considerations: (1) is the oldest and most extensive exposition; (2) and (3) are condensed and edited versions of (1), adapted to different contexts; (4) is, generally speaking, an English version of (2). Moreover, the different texts refer to each other. "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 75 n. 1; Tödt (ed.), *Théologie im Konfliktfeld Südafrika. Dialog mit Manas Buthelezi,* p. I l Aalen n. 88.

57. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 64.

58. Ibid., p. 57.

59. Ibid., p. 65. In "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 33, Buthelezi defines the starting point of the anthropological approach somewhat differently as "the existential situation in which the Gospel finds man." While "Creation and the Church" and "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa" stress the African person as the *causa efficiens* of an indigenous theology, the emphasis is on "the real situation ... the decisive factors that shape the mode of man's daily existence" in "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", pp. 33-34.

60. The argumentation against the ethnographic approach is not quite the same in the different texts. Argument (1) and (2) are elaborated explicitly in "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", while the four arguments are synthetized in "Toward an Indigenous Theology in South Africa" and "Ansätze einer Afrikanische Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika." In "Creation and the Church," finally, the critique seems to be somewhat less pointed.

61. Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 32; "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 67.

62. "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 68.

63. Ibid., p. 67. The quotation is from Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy.* In the original version, published in Dutch (1946), the corresponding sentences lack the arrogance of the English version. Cf. Buthelezi, "Ansätze einer Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 114 n. 93. It should be noted that Buthelezi's analysis of Tempels is not uncontroversial. For example, Upkong, *African Theologies Now,* p. 32, views Tempels as a pioneer of African theology.

64. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 68.

65. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 12-13.

66. Ibid., p. 11. See also p. 12: "During our time, the African is rebelling not only against the forces that oppress him, but also against his historical image: an image that projects him as object and not as subject in history; as one who is 'moulded into something' rather than one who creatively moulds."

67. Ibid., pp. 274-275: "If indigenization is thus conceived, it becomes a mechanical programme in which objectively identifiable motifs of the

African world view are used to indigenize an already existing church which is un-indigenized. In other words, we have before us two known objective entities: our task of indigenization consists in relating them. It is like a jig-saw puzzle in which you have, on the one hand, the design, and on the other the pieces that have to be fitted together in such a way that they image the design…. But if, by indigenization, we have in mind theology in its strictest sense, we are dealing with an internal matter of African genius which defies programming."

68. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 66: "There is a sense in which we can speak of scientific theology as an art form and the theologian as an artist."

69. Ibid., p. 68.

70. Ibid., pp. 66, 73.

71. See Buthelezi, "Black Theology — A Quest for the Liberation of Truth," p. 54: "If scientific objectivity is understood to rule out experience, then this means the bondage of truth." The relevance of Buthelezi's argument for the First — Third World relationship is noted by Becken, "Voraussetzungen und Möoglichkeiten eines Dialogs mit Schwarzer Théologie in Südafrika," pp. 163-164,

72. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 62.

73. Ibid., p. 64.

74. Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 32: "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."

75. Buthelezi, 'Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 63.

76. Ibid., p. 64.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid. p. 64. Cf. p. 67: "The missionaries who urge the production of 'indigenous theology' are really seeking a solution to their own problems: The Africans are only a means to an end."

79. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," p. 183: "The most explicit and often quoted criticism of African theology and religion, which feeds on this cultural self-hate, is the one made by Manas Buthelezi"; Motlhabi, "The Historical Origins of Black Theology," pp. 47-48: Buthelezi "might have moved from one extreme view to another. A present without a past is barren…. Without tracing our socialization into the African past in some way, it is wishful thinking to imagine that we can reflect the traces of the that past in our life and actions, even instinctively…. A man without childhood experiences, like one without a past, is like an uprooted tree which has lost all contact with the earth responsible for its nurture."

80. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 62. See also the discussion of memory of the songs of praise to the heroes as a potentially liberating memory in Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im

Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 43; "Creation and the Church," p. 277: The African past "seen as a world view is nothing more than a historical abstraction of 'what once was.' To be sure, as we have indicated above, we can still identify its residual elements in the present; but as a coherent whole, a real Weltanschauung, an alleged postulate for African indigenous theology, it exists as a memory and, at best, as an ethnographical reconstruction."

81. Buthelezi, "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 43.

82. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 271. See also, ibid., the juxtaposition of "realities" and "all idealism about 'African theology'". The issue of African identity recurs in Buthelezi's writings, as seen, for example, in "Creation and the Church," p. 5.

83. Ibid., p. 277.

84. In Buthelezi's distinction between the two approaches, "anthropological" obviously refers to the branch of systematic theology that deals with the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings from the perspective of their relation to God. Anthropology as a discipline of social science, by contrast, belongs rather to the ethnographic approach in Buthelezi's scheme.

85. Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 33.

86. Ibid., p. 34. The concept of blackness plays a crucial role in all expositions from the 1970s on the anthropological approach. "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", pp. 33-35; "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 74; "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," pp. 129-132.

87. Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 280.

88. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 70. See also "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 42: "True theology has always been the spiritual product of human beings who encountered the gospel in a specific cultural and philosophical situation."

89. Buthelezi, "An African Theology or a Black Theology?", p. 34. Cf. Buthelezi's analysis of how political and economic injustices may inhibit the theological work in "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 73.

90. Quite a few of the most famous missionaries are quoted as examples of this approach: John V. Taylor, Bengt Sundkler, A. H. Junod and—above all—Placide Temples, whose classic *Bantu Philosophy* is Buthelezi's favourite example of the ethnographic approach.

91. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 62.

92. Ibid., p. 68.

93. Ibid., p. 65.

94. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," p. 183, even though he acknowledges Buthelezi's critique of a reified concept of "the African past." As one argument for the criticism Mosala quotes from Buthelezi's critique of Lutheran confessionalism, where Buthelezi argues for a shift from

"ideological" to "human expressions" (cf. n. 10 above). Clearly, "ideological" here refers to Lutheran confessionalism but it seems that Mosala interprets the term as referring to ideologies in the sense of black consciousness.

95. Houtart, "Südafrikas schwarze Théologie in soziologischer Sicht," pp. 187-189. However, some formulations in Houtart's essay may convey the impression that he wants to discuss the relationship between socio-economic structures and cultural analysis in terms of "cause" and "effect" (p. 186), even though such a mechanistic notion is liable to criticism.

96. See, for example, Dammann, *Das Problem einer Afrikanischen Théologie*, p. 16, and, less pointedly, Hallencreutz, *Tro från tredje världen,* pp. 154-155. Analyzing American and South African black theology, Hallencreutz, p. 151, affirms that black theology is not primarily African in its content.

97. The title of Buthelezi's essay "An African Theology or a Black Theology?"—a short and well-known text—suggests that the two theologies should be seen as alternatives, which also has been a common interpretation. However, in the exposition of the essay, p. 30, Buthelezi implicitly distinguishes between (1) "African Theology" and (2) "so called 'African theology'." (1) "African theology" then is synonymous with black theology: "The quest for a Black Theology or, to use a more established phrase, 'African' or indigenous' theology." (2) By contrast, "so called 'African Theology'" denotes an alternative to black theology: "In a sense, the phrase 'black Theology' indicates a particular option of theological method *vis-a-vis so called 'African Theology'*" (italics added). The distinction is not elaborated, however.

Some years later Buthelezi, "Black Theology—A Quest for the Liberation of Christian Truth" (1978), p. 56, introduced the concept of "African theology in a generic sense," obviously denoting theology done by Africans. The methodological pluralism of African theology is acknowledged. "It would be wrong to assume that African Theology is a monolithic pattern of thought nor would it be correct to expect that African theologians should all follow the same style and method of doing theology." Implicitly, this view is advocated in the title of the Heidelberg lectures: "Ansätze *Afrikanischer Théologie* im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika" (italics added).

In an interview Buthelezi defined the two uses of "African theology" as follows: (1) A denotation of theological ideas and methods commonly found among theologians in Africa. This use of "African theology" is equivalent to phrases such as "German theology" or "English theology"; black theology is a species of African theology in this sense; (2) A denotation of theological ideas and methods commonly labeled "African theology." It should be noted that "African theology" in the second meaning is a part of "African theology" in the first meaning.

98. Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," p. 74: "'Black theology' ... is one case of what I called an 'anthropological approach'."

99. Naturally, there are also other reasons for the dissensus. In Mosala's and Motlhabi's critique, for example, one may also perceive a different perception of black consciousness.

100. Coe, "Contextualizing Theology," p. 20: "Indigenization ... is in danger of being past-oriented."
101. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 145-188; the quotation is from p. 153.
102. Ibid., p. 154.
103. Ibid., pp. 32-33. By contrast, Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," p. 83, is quite critical about Irenaeus' concept of human growth: "The notion of the progressive humanity of man does not seem to do justice to the integrity of man as he was created by God."
104. For a comparison between Buthelezi and Latin American liberation theology, see also Parratt, "Theological Methodologies in Africa," pp. 58-61.
105. Scherzberg, *Schwarze Théologie in Südafrika,* p. 156, relates Boesak's theology to liberation and Buthelezi's theology to hope. The former, she suggests, stresses the historical dimension of God's action, the latter is more eschatological in its scope. Such an interpretation neglects, however, the central place of creation and "the wholeness of life" in Buthelezi's theology.
106. The analysis of Boesak's theology is primarily based on *Farewell to Innocence, The Finger of God, Walking on Thorns,* and *Black and Reformed* but also on his articles and lectures.
107. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 11-12.
108. Ibid., p. 12.
109. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 25. In "Coming in out of the Wilderness," p. 88, Boesak suggests that he "speaks of 'total liberation' in the same way as Buthelezi speaks of the 'wholeness of life'." It seems, however, that the conflictual aspect of salvation is more accentuated in the former case.
110. Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa," p. 175.
111. Ibid.
112. Cf. Buthelezi, "The Minister," p. 4: "*The Minister and His Politics.* To preach the gospel means to be involved in the human situation of which politics is one dimension. It is impossible to preach responsibly without getting involved in politics" (italics in the original). To the concept of the Lordship of Christ, see the section on "Corporate solidarity under the Lordship of Christ" in Buthelezi, "Creation and the Church," pp. 173-205. It may also be noted that Buthelezi in the beginning of the 1970s advocated that the black should work for conversion of whites. See his "Six Theses" and Walshe, *Church Versus State in South Africa,* pp. 159-160.
113. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 87.
114. Ibid., p. 88.
115. Ibid., p. 22. See also, for example, ibid., p. 13, where "the departmentalized theology blacks have inherited from the western world" is juxtaposed with "a biblical, holistic theology" and pp. 87-88. Significantly, Boesak here draws from other Third World theologians such as M. M. Thomas and G. Gutiérrez.
116. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 12 quotes from Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context,* p. 85, the following statement by Max Warren to explain the

critique of "compartmentalization": "Without realizing it we have drifted back into the old polytheism against which the prophets of the Lord waged their great warfare. The real essence of paganism is that it divides the various concerns of human life into compartments. There is one god for the soil; there is another god of the desert. The god of wisdom is quite different from the god of wine. If a man wants to marry, he must pray at one temple; if he wants to make war, he must take his sacrifice elsewhere. All this is precisely where the modern paganism of our secular society has brought us today. Certain portions of our life we call religious. Then we are Christians. We use a special language."

117. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 12-13.

118. Ibid., p. 12. See also p. 17: "I do argue for preaching that speaks to the *whole* person and to *all* of life"; *Black and Reformed,* pp. 37, 64: "... salvation is the liberation, the making whole of the whole person ... the false dichotomy between the 'spiritual' and the 'worldly'." Cf. Engqvist et al., *Sydafrika: teologi och apartheid,* pp. 95-110, who interpret Buthelezi's and Boesak's theologies on the basis of a dichotomy between creation and salvation.

119. Ibid., pp. 14-15. See also *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 25, where Boesak insists that "the totality, the wholeness of God's liberation ... was characteristic of the ministry of Jesus."

120. Boesak, *Walking on Thorns,* p. 29; *Black and Reformed,* p. 85.

121. Boesak, *Walking on Thorns,* p. 2. See also Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 194-195, Miranda, *Marx and the Bible,* pp. 44-53; Miguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists,* pp. 31-32.

122. Botterweck, *'Gott erkennen,'* p. 45, suggests that "fraternal justice is for the king the sum total of the knowledge of God."; quoted from Miguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists,* p. 32. Also Miranda, *Marx and the Bible,* pp. 45, refers to Botterweck.

123. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 11.

124. See also ibid.: "Jesus Christ embodies ... true humanity."

125. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 84.

126. Boesak, "Jesus Christ the Life of the World," p. 4.

127. Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa," p. 175. See also *Walking on Thorns,* p. 58: "Salvation is the making whole of the *whole person."* See also his essay "Wholeness Through Liberation," *Black and Reformed,* pp. 46-56, that begins as follows: "'That all may be whole'—these are very beautiful words, not only because they echo so much of what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about, but also because they echo so much of the African understanding of life."

128. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 140-141, 151.

129. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 11, defines political preaching as follows: to "preach the word of God ... with regard to social and political questions," not "to give a lecture on politics or [to] preach politics."

130. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 4: "When we speak of innocence in this study, we mean ... pseudoinnocence."

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid.: Pseudoinnocence "is an innocence which, for its own justification, does not include evil."

133. Ibid., p. 93; Boesak quotes H. Wiersinga.

134. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 32. See also, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 30: "All this represents ... a process of real *metanoia,* conversion: for blacks, in order to become reconciled with themselves, but also for whites to become reconciled with *themselves* and to accept blackness as authentic humanity" (italics in the original). Cf. Mosala and Tlhagale, "Editorial Note," p. vii: "We would hope a reading of this book in the white context could foster something of that *metanoia* that white missionaries came to Africa preaching to black people."

135. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 4-5.

136. Ibid., p. 3. Boesak refers to Rollo May, *Power and Innocence.*

137. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

138. Ibid., p. 30.

139. Ibid., p. 103.

140. Ibid., p. 99.

141. Our interpretation is based on pp. 99-122.

142. Ibid., p. 104.

143. Ibid., p. 121: "Christian faith transcends all ideologies and all nationalistic ideals."

144. It seems, however, that Boesak at times recurs to a dichotomic conception. See, for example, Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 142-143: "In South Africa, therefore, dear brothers and sisters, we are not concerned in the first place with the life of Blacks, important as that may be. We are not concerned, in the first place, with the future relationships of Blacks and whites in South Africa, important as this may be. In South Africa, we are concerned primarily, with apartheid, and therefore with the word of God, with the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the integrity of the church of the Lord's witness.... We did not go to Ottawa in 1982 with political intentions."

145. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 121.

146. Ibid., p. 5, quoting Hansard, no. 17, June 4,1975, col. 7367 (Cape Town, 1975). In this context one may also note how *Steyn Commission,* p. 81, ridicules the commitment to international economic justice in the World Council of Churches: "The WCC is staffed by *professional ecumenists and conference-going 'intellectuals'* who exhibit all the symptoms of a sickness which is general in the West. Consumed by post-imperial and post-colonial 'guilt', they are convinced that the West can only expiate its 'crimes' by humbling itself before its former 'victims', the Third World, and its future destroyer, Communism. Politics are in effect for them an elaborate form of suicide for which Christianity affords a moral justification. The affluence of

the West is an offence to them; they will not be content until the West has penitentially stripped itself of its wealth and its armaments. They believe that it has a moral duty to do both" (italics in the original).

147. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 5. Italics by Boesak, who quotes Crafford, "Die Moderne Kruistog teen Suid Afrika," *Die Kerkbode* (Cape Town), January 6, (1971).

148. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 3.

149. Ibid., p. 116.

150. Ibid., p. 4.

151. Ibid., p. 6.

152. Ibid., p. 116. See also ibid., p. 5: "innocence which refuses to see"; *Walking on Thorns,* p. 16: "We challenged the white church to recognize its guilt in creating and maintaining apartheid; we urged repentance and conversion."

153. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 4.

154. Ibid., p. 93.

155. Ibid., p. 110.

156. Ibid., p. 108.

157. Ibid., p. 29.

158. Ibid., p. 32.

159. Ibid., p. 3.

160. Ibid., p. 147.

161. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 30, 71. To the significance of "a conversion of ourselves and our distorted relationships" in Third World theologies, see, for example, EATWOT V, p. 204, and Torres, "Introduction," p. xx, who describes the universality of the "dialogical process" of EATWOT: "God calls all of us to faith, obedience, and conversion. We are all sinners. 'If we say we are free of the guilt of sin, we deceive ourselves; the truth is not to be found in us' (1 John 1:8). When the twenty-two theologians from poor countries spoke as a group, they felt no superiority or exemption from this condition of sin."

162. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 99.

163. Ibid., p. 112, the ideology charges against black theology are answered with "an unqualified 'no'". In view of the subsequent discussion of black Christian nationalism, this answer seems somehow exaggerated.

164. Ibid., p. 143.

165. Ibid.

166. Even though there are no explicit references to Niebuhr, one gets the impression that Boesak draws from Niebuhr's oft-quoted analysis of Christianity and culture. Similarly, the quest for an ethic "beyond the Sorrow Songs" and the "search for a totally new social order," ibid., p. 151, may be understood as an implicit critique of Niebuhr's "Christian realism."

167. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 61 (italics in the original).

168. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 120-121.

169. Ibid., p. 121.

170. Ibid., p. 12. (italics in the original). Cf. p. 73, where it is suggested that Cone comes "perilously close to identifying" black power and the gospel. In explicit critique of Cone's position, Boesak, ibid., p. 144, asserts that "an ethic of liberation ... does not arise out of the situation, but in the situation."

171. Ibid., p. 12.

172. Ibid., p. 143.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid., p. 100.

176. Cf. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 10: "Black freedom should never be conceived of as a duplication of white, bourgeois individualism."

177. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 48-49. See also Boesak, *The Finger of God,* pp. 54-55, discussing pseudo-innocence in the context of the "coloured": "What do we want of life? ... Do we want a 'good' future for ourselves—economic and political prospects, built on 'colored preference'?"

178. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 149.

179. The temptation of absolutizing one type of oppression has been a main issue in EATWOT, as noted in the Introduction.

180. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* pp. 256-258.

181. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 133.

182. Cf. ibid., p. 151: "revolutionary revivalism."

183. Ibid., p. 150.

184. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

185. It is beyond the confines of this study to discuss in depth Boesak's interpretation of Cone. Two comments may be appropriate, however. First, even though Boesak's analysis of Cone may be justified in part, it seems to neglect Cone's dialectical style of writing. See, for example, *God of the Oppressed,* pp. 97-98: "When oppressed people are feeling proud of their successes in the struggle of freedom, and thus begin to think that *any* action is justifiable, as if their ethical judgment is infallible, then theologians, preachers, and others *in* the oppressed community must remind the people of the utter distinction between their words and God's Word. But when the oppressed are passive and afraid of the struggle of freedom, then they must be reminded that the gospel is identical with their liberation from political bondage" (italics in the original). The quotation may clarify statements, where Cone suggests that the experience of oppression must be the ultimate authority in religious matters. Second, Boesak's critique of Cone is misconstrued, when it is cited as an argument for a chasm between the two theologians. However, Kee, *Domination or Liberation,* pp. 54, 57, claims: "Boesak is suggesting that Cone's theology has no religious depth to it…. Boesak soon found that he had little in common with black American theologians." However, Boesak's and Cone's varieties of black theology—when analyzed in relation to the methodology of liberation

theology—are structurally similar, a fact to which Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 7, testifies when he wants to "protest very strongly against the total division (and contrast) some make between Black Theology in South Africa and Black Theology in the United States." In fact, Cone is the most quoted author in *Farewell to Innocence.* See also Boesak, "Auszug aus der Wüste," p. 133, who quotes Mokgheti Motlhabi with assent: "We feel what James Cone says in our bones." Kee's misinterpretation illustrates the importance of a definition of "liberation theology" that clarifies the profile of the new paradigm.

To the debate between Boesak and Cone, see also Boesak's "Coming in out of the Wilderness," pp. 87-89.

186. Cone, Black Theology," p. 98: "African, Asian, and Latin American theologians enlarged our vision by challenging us to do theology from a global perspective of oppression. Third World theologians urged us to analyze racism in relation to international capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, world poverty, classism, and sexism. For the first time, black theologians began to seriously consider socialism as an alternative to capitalism."

187. Here one may refer to the Freedom Charter and to black leaders such as Albert Luthuli, as well as to the emerging critique of capitalism in the first black theology writings of the 1970s.

188. Miguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian Political Ethics,* p. 114.

189. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 121.

190. Ibid.

191. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 26.

192. Ibid., p. 27.

193. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," p. 196. Chikane and Tsele, "Black Theology and the Black Struggle," p. 4, interprets this sentence differently, suggesting that "it" refers to the Bible as such, not only to the Book of Micah. They summarize Mosala's position as follows: "Both theology and the Bible are fundamentally ideological. *The particular ideology of the Bible is that of a ruling class, and the Bible was written, edited and censored by this dominant class in the service of its ideology.* The Bible can therefore be expected to serve the interest of this class. Black Theology must search for new hermeneutical models. This means that Black theologians, in their use of the Bible, must take serious cognizance of their situation and develop the sensitivity and perception to recognise the struggle in the Bible" (italics added). Our interpretation is justified not only by the grammatical structure of the text (which admittedly is somewhat ambiguous) but also, more importantly, by the context. See, for example, the proposition that the Bible is "a product and a record of class struggles," p. 196, suggesting that the Bible contains the ideologies of the oppressed as well as of the oppressors.

194. Ibid., p. 178.

195. Ibid., pp. 181,197: "The social, cultural, political and economic world of the black working class and peasantry constitutes the only valid hermeneutical starting point for a Black Theology of Liberation.... The history, culture, and ideologies of the dominated black people [are] the primary hermeneutical starting point" for those who are committed to black liberation.

196. The concept of "humanity" is also used differently by Boesak and his critics. In Sergio Rostagno's classical critique of "an interclass reading" of the Bible, he suggests that the category of humanity has been used to conceal differences between the contexts of the dominant class and of the workers. In reference to Rostagno's argument, Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," p. 180, argues that the "pro-humanity" position in black theology is a betrayal of the black proletariat in South Africa: The hermeneutics of the criticized theologians has been "*pro-humanity* but anti-black working class and black women" (italics in the original). It seems, however, that Rostagno's critique of "an interclass" concept of humanity does not apply to black theology which explicitly analyzes conflicts between blacks and whites.

197. Ibid., pp. 177-178.

198. Ibid., pp. 178-179: "If the Bible is the 'Word of God', therefore, the implication is that even the 'law and order' God of David and Solomon cannot be the object of criticism in the light of the black experience.... One cannot select one part of the 'Word of God' and neglect the other."

199. Boesak, *Farewell of Innocence,* p. 121.

200. Ibid. In this respect Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation,* p. 80, seems to be more lucid: "The norm of all God-talk which seeks to be black-talk is the manifestation of Jesus as the Black Christ who provides the necessary soul for black liberation."

201. For a clarifying discussion of these two concepts of ideology, see Cochrane, *Servants of Power,* pp. 204-208. A third concept of "ideology," virtually synonymous with "theological identity of a denomination," is presented by Buthelezi. When Buthelezi, "Toward Indigenous Theology in South Africa," pp. 71-73, advocates a shift from the "ideological" to the "human" in the Christian fellowship, his concern is not to deny the particularity of the context of the oppressed, as Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," p. 183, implies, but to censure a rigid confessionalism in Lutheran churches.

202. For an exposition of Marx's concept of ideology, see my *Materialismus Ideologic Religion,* pp. 117-119, 127-136.

203. For a discussion of the problem of relativism in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge see, for example, Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought,* pp. 430-437.

204. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 256: "Does this not represent an enormous relativizing of the struggle of liberation theologians? On the contrary, it *only* means that the struggles between the idols of death and the God of life ... is not the struggle between ideology and faith but that

between 'faith' and 'faith'." (Italics added) Arguably, such a faith-versus-faith stance implies not only relativization, but also relativism in ethical and epistemological issues.

205. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 28.

206. Ibid.

207. Boesak, "Courage to Be Black," p. 169.

208. Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 199, in reference to Paul Radin.

209. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 138.

210. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 17.

211. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 6, 28-29.

212. See, for example, ibid., pp. 5-6.

213. Boesak, *Walking on Thorns,* p. 20.

214. In an interview recorded in Hope and Young, *The South African Churches,* p. 186, Boesak describes what could be called his farewell to "innocence": "In my childhood and early youth, I felt I *ought* to belong to the White Afrikaner community, but felt rejected. I had a longing to be White. [Later] I looked into my family history and learned that the first Boesak—a brown-skinned Khoikhoi—shared with an African the leadership of a slave rebellion. I began to take pride in this, to see myself as a son of the soil. When all things came together, I lost my inferiority feelings. I looked at myself differently."

215. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 88.

216. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 104-105.

217. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 16; *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 167 n. 19.

218. Boesak, "Courage to be Black," p. 167: "Do we see in the Messiah the Jesus who was usually preached to us by whites? Is He really as Western as the civilization which so boldly claims Him? Powerless against the identification with their power and their oppression of others? Is He the Jesus our ancestors learned to know on the plantations where they were brought as slaves? The so white Jesus who taught us subservience and meek resignation?" Cf. *Black and Reformed,* p. 11, where these sentences are formulated somewhat differently.

    Similar criticisms recur in black theology writings. See, for example, Pityana, "What Is Black Consciousness?", p. 62: "We have come to live with the contrast between theory and practice—the white Church whose basic doctrine is love and equality between men is still an integral part of that social force, a white baaskap (Afrikaans, overlordship) on which is built the 'South African way of life,' with it the consequent hatred between men, and effective subjugation of the black masses. Christianity is rooted in an exploitative, basically selfish cultural system."

219. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 8; *Black and Reformed,* p. 13. See also ibid., p. 64: "White Christians … have tried to spiritualize the dynamic power of the gospel, almost succeeding in making it the opiate of the people." However, this analysis is no denial of the reality of "inner freedom": "We do not deny that it is possible to hold onto an essential inner freedom under the most

degrading and inhuman conditions" but this faith must not be used "to help black people 'forget' black reality," *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 138.

220. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 105.

221. Ibid., p. 74. Cf. p. 7: "The source of our certainty is God's righteousness, God's justice."

222. Ibid., pp. 74-75. See also p. 71, where it is argued that the vision of faith "rejects the false security of slavery."

223. Ibid., p. 105.

224. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. xi.

225. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 62.

226. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 151-152.

227. Cf. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 74.

228. Under the heading "No Reconciliation Without Confrontation," Boesak notes in "To Break Every Yoke..." p. 9: "Bonhoeffer has reminded us that grace is never cheap. Likewise, reconciliation is a costly thing." Cf. *Black and Reformed,* pp. 32-34.

229. Cf. *The Kairos Document,* p. 10: "No reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible without repentance" (italics in the original).

230. See, for example, Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 24.

231. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 68.

232. Boesak, " 'To Break Every Yoke…." p. 6. Cf. *Black and Reformed,* p. 62: "Black theology is indeed a ringing, honest, and absolutely necessary indictment of white Christianity in South Africa. It is a burning flame of legitimate anger at what is being done in the name of the God whose very name spells liberation, compassion, justice, love."

233. Boesak, "'To Break Every Yoke..." p. 7. Cf. *Black and Reformed,* p. 61: The demands of black theology "are clear for whites, but they are just as clear for Blacks", *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 135: "Recovering one's personhood in a situation where one's very thinking has been perplexed by the thought patterns of the oppressor is difficult enough. To think that black people could do this 'in the open' where even the most modest attempt could be smothered by the white power structure, to say nothing of the white liberal, is sheer wishful thinking."

234. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 41.

235. Cf. Tutu, "African/Black Theology," p. 489: In black theology there is "a burning and evangelistic zeal to convert the black man out of the stupor of his subservience and obsequiousness to acceptance of the thrilling but demanding responsibility of full human personhood."

236. Boesak, " 'To Break Every Yoke...'" p. 6.

237. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 13.

238. Ibid., p. 30.

239. Some quotations may illustrate how black theologians plead with whites to participate in a common liberation: Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness,* pp. 43, 87:

"We are committed to black liberation, because thereby we are committed to white liberation. You will never be free until we blacks are free. So join the liberation struggle…. Until blacks are free, the whites can never be really free. There is no such thing as separate freedom—freedom is indivisible. At the present time we see our white fellow South Africans investing much of their resources to protect their so-called separate freedoms and privileges. They have little time left to enjoy them as they check the burglar proofing, the alarm system, the gun under the pillow and the viciousness of the watchdog."

Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 19, 51, 62: "Black theology wishes to proclaim this message of authenticity to whites.... And when will they learn that if human life is broken in South Africa or Indonesia or El Salvador, there is no way that life can be whole in the United States?... Black theology offers liberation, not only to Blacks but also to whites, telling them that they will never be free from their fear until Blacks are free from bondage."

Boesak, "Liberation Theology in South Africa," p. 173: "We want [the whites] to stay [in South Africa], but not as they are now. What we need is a spiritual and a political Exodus out of the situation of oppression toward a situation of liberation, out of the situation of inhumanity, darkness, and hatred toward a situation in which we, both whites and blacks, can regain our common humanity and enjoy a meaningful life, a wholeness of life that has been destroyed."

240. Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 49.

241. Personality tests of South African whites suggest that their scores of neuroticism, anxiety and authoritarianism are significantly higher than those of British, Ghanian, and American samples. For references, see van der Spuy, "The Psychology of Apartheid."

242. Boesak, "Courage to Be Black," p. 152. Similarly, in "The Spiritual Crisis in the Metropolis of Capitalism," a paper presented at the Conference on Liberation Theology in the West European Context (Agape, Italy, 1986), I have argued that even though the First World peoples generally have benefited from the existing economic world order, the spiritual blessings of these economic benefits have been scarce.

243. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 152.

244. Ibid., pp. 151-152.

245. Cf. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. ix-x: "We wish to avoid, however, the kind of reflection which ... neglects the contribution of the universal Christian community." It should be noted, however, that some Third World theologians state a different opinion. It seems that Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," pp. 181-185, understands universality and particularity as two mutually exclusive options, when he criticizes other black theologians who have been "unable to explode the myth of the inherent universality of the 'Word of God'."

246. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. 16. In this argument Boesak refers to Ananias Mpunzi.

247. It seems that Beyers Naudé and M. M. Thomas have inspired Boesak's concept of idolatry. See, for example, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 83, 99.

248. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* p. xi.

249. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 31. One may also note Boesak's appreciation for Kaj Munk, a Danish theologian assassinated by the Nazis, and John Ball, a priest who participated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1318, p. 73.

250. Buthelezi's exposition in "Creation and the Church" is to a great extent a dialogue with theologians such as Irenaeus, Luther, Ebeling, Løgstrup, and Wingren; see, for example, pp. 35-62, 165-170, 173-181. According to the German editor of "Ansätze Afrikanischer Théologie im Kontext von Kirche in Südafrika," p. 40 n. 10, Buthelezi understands himself as a disciple of Wingren. It should be noted, however, that Buthelezi methodologically differs from the mentioned European theologians. As noted above, his question "But God, why did you create us?" differs from "the existential quest" of Western theology, since the former question is contextual. The "anthropological approach" implies that "the existential quest" must always be understood in relation to "environmental factors" in the actual context; the point of departure is the "created reality in all its forms of concrete historicity."

251. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 39, 42. See also p. 95, where it is argued that the Reformed tradition with its faith in Christ as the Lord of all life is similar to "the African idea of the wholeness of life." Concerning the relevance of Calvin, see also pp. 69-70, and *The Finger of God,* p. 14: "Reformed Christians know that political institutions do not exist autonomously. They are not a law unto themselves, not having to take the law of God into account. Scripture is the norm for all ethics, for all human actions. Political traditions, economic and social structures are not divinely ordained, unchangeable and eternal. They all fall under the critique of the word of God. And the church, through its preaching and other forms of prophetic witness, must formulate this critique and probe the realities of our lives for the truth of the gospel message." As seen in ibid, p. 96 nn.18-20, Boesak draws from Andre Biéler's research on Calvin.

      According to Leonard Sweetman, "Introduction," p. xv, the young black reformed theologians "wish to return to what they recognize as the vital and creative source of their tradition. They assert that they stand in a relationship of real and true continuity with this tradition; that they stand in direct continuity, therefore, with the authentic Christian tradition." Cf. Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 29: "We must come to understand that this faith is not a 'new,' faith, but rather the age-old gospel."

252. One of these quotations is the following admonition to a king: "Christians always have to be in a certain sense disturbers of the established order, because they have to point out, explicitly or implicitly, the unfairness and injustice of the society in which they find themselves, while they seriously take up the Word of God and live according to it." Boesak, *The Finger of God,* p. 60.

253. Also an accredited critic of black theology such as Carel Boshoff, *Swart Teologie,* p. 122, testifies to this analysis—against his own intentions—when he argues that black theology is not as black as it pretends; it draws from other theologies, Boshoff notes. Obviously, he interprets black theology in analogy with Afrikaner theology and, therefore, suggests a conflict between contextuality and a conciliar fellowship.

254. The interrelation between power and community may be clarified in reference to Rollo May's study of power and innocence, where one section in the chapter "Toward New Community" is entitled "Farewell to Innocence." In other words, the self-affirmation and the critique of ideology in th*e farewell to innocence* are seen as aspects of the building of a new community.

255. Buthelezi, "The Christian Presence in Today's South Africa," p. 8. Similarly, Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* pp. 18-19: "We are not eager to hate whites; we wish to treat them as human beings. If this causes whites to panic, that is their problem."

256. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 63-64.

257. Ibid., pp. 70-71; the text is, in part, a quotation from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Similarly, in "What Belongs to Caesar?" Boesak argues for a Christological interpretation of the key concepts of Romans 13:1-7, "submit," "servant of God," and "owe": "In Romans 13:1-7, Paul's concern is the same as in Romans 12 and in 13:8-14: namely the new transformed life in Jesus Christ, and the love which the Christian possesses, which forms the basis of the relationship with the world and with, especially, the neighbour," p. 153. On this basis, Boesak asserts, "we are participating in the struggle for justice, peace, and liberation in South Africa not in spite of Romans 13 but because of Romans 13," p. 151. (Italics in the original)

258. Ibid., pp. 134-135. See also p. 68: "If what one does is so closely linked to what one was meant to be, is there such a thing as the right to use violence? These are clearly questions only black people have the right to ask. Whites have lost that right, except those few who like live like Beyers Naudé." (Italics in the original)

259. Ibid., pp. 69-70, 135.

260. See, for example, Tutu, *Hope and Suffering,* pp. 116-117, and *Crying in the Wilderness,* p. 53: "People are quite happy to talk about so-called peaceful means of change, as long as you canvass methods that everybody knows will be ineffectual; for basically, most whites want change as long as things remain the same"; Boesak, *Black and Reformed,* p. 33, 53: "The unbelievable hypocrisy of white Christians on [the issue of violence] is appalling, and it will take all our resources to undo the damage done to Christian integrity on this point. The hypocrisy of white Christians on the issue of violence is incredible. You can hardly expect Blacks to believe the gospel of non-violence coming from those who, all through their history, have relied upon violence and military action to get what they wanted and to maintain unjust systems."

261. Mbiti, "An African Views American Black theology," p. 481. For a similar view, see Sawyerr, "What is African theology?", p. 22.

262. Boesak's critique of "a homeland theology," alluding to the apartheid euphemism of the Bantustans, has frequently been interpreted as a global characteristic of African theology, even though it rather seems to be directed to certain varieties of this school of thought. Since Boesak has not seldom been described as hostile to African theology, it may be worthwhile to quote exensively from his deliberations on this subject in *Farewell to Innocence,* pp. 14, 7, 14, 40: "An authentic contextual theology is a prophetic one; it is not merely an exhumation of the corpses of tradition as African theology *was sometimes understood to be,* but attempts to make critical use of those traditions from the past which can play a humanizing and revolutionizing role in contemporary society. It takes from the past what is good, thereby offering a critique of the present and opening perspectives for the future... We must protest very strongly against the total division ... some make between ... Black Theology and African Theology ... Black Theology is, after all, profoundly African, as we shall see.... It must be palpably clear by now: A black liberation theology shares a common basis with African theology.... The search for true and authentic human identity and liberation is also to acknowledge that one's Africanness is a God-given blessing to delight in rather than a fate to be lamented. Moreover, African theology wishes to be no more than the reflection of African Christians in the light of the Word of God, on the African situation, on African culture and traditions, on the African past and the African present.... For South Africans, blackness means Africanness. That is why ... Desmond Tutu holds that 'Black theology is an aspect of African Theology. That is to say not all African Theology is Black Theology, but the converse: that all Black Theology... is African Theology.'" (Italics added)

   The quotations make clear that Boesak does not juxtapose black theology and African theology. In this context it is also of relevance to note the significance of "African values"—such as the wholeness of life and the communalistic anthropology—for Boesak's theology.

263. Tutu, "Black Theology/African Theology," p. 490. It should be noted that Tutu's paper not only offers a profound and perceptive criticism but also demonstrates a sincere sympathy for African theology which is lauded for addressing "the split in the African soul," ibid., pp. 484-485.

264. Ibid., p. 490.

265. Ibid.

266. Setiloane, "Where Are We in African Theology?", p. 65.

267. EATWOT II, p. 192.

268. Cf. the statement from the *All Africa Lutheran Consultation on Christian Theology in the African Context,* p. 4: "Black theological concerns are thus subsumed within the broader concerns of African theology."

269. The persisting confusion of the relationship between African theology and black theology may be illustrated by some quotations from Muzorewa,

The Origins and Development of African Theology. On one hand, Muzorewa affirms that black theology in South Africa is a variety of African theology: "There is a contextualized African theology based on a particular area—such as black theology of liberation in South Africa—which at the same time contains a general theme of Africanization," p. 51; "African theology is influenced by black nationalism as well as African nationalism," p. 54; "An emphasis on *liberation* distinguishes black theology from other African theologies of which it is a part," p. 108; "black theology is the inner circle of African theology, the outer circle," p. 112. Moreover, Tutu's position is referred to with agreement, in explicit polemic against Mbiti: "African Theology, like liberation theology, is regarded as an umbrella under which are found various theologies, including black theology... By arguing that black theology is a smaller circle within the greater circle (African theology), black theologians retain their African identity," p. 107 and 124 n. 10. See also p. 120 n. 10. In a similar vein, the South African black theology is characterized as "an African voice," p. 101.

On the other side, Muzorewa also repeatedly describes African theology and black theology as two different types of theology with "different theological emphases," pp. 4, 109 (cf. p. 74), and they are, moreover, treated under different headings (ch. 7 deals with African theology and ch. 8 with black theology in South Africa). See also p. 55: "Both African theology and black theology in South Africa ... both theologies." The arbitrariness of a juxtaposition of African theology and black theology is corroborated by the fact that Muzorewa occasionally discusses Tutu and Buthelezi under the heading of African theology, not under black theology (pp. 89, 122 n. 8).

Also, Pobee and Hallencreutz (eds.), *Variations in Christian Theology in Africa,* p. v, separate black theology from "African Theology in a more specific sense." See also Hallencreutz, *Tro från tredje världen,* pp. 143-159, where he suggests that African and black theologies should be seen as two different paradigms, but with reservation for recent trends. A contributing reason may be that he seems to misconstrue Buthelezi's view on African theology. Remarkably, neither Muzorewa nor Hallencreutz or Pobee discuss the terminological issue in relation to the definition of African theology. Cf. Nürnberger's perceptive critique of "the utter confusion of concepts" and the lack of "clear-cut definitions" in the debate on black theology and African theology in "Comments," pp. 59-60.

270. It seems that the affinity between black theology in South Africa and theology in independent Africa is emphasized by those theologians who discuss neo-colonialism. See, for example, Chipenda, "Theological Options in Africa Today," who displays a keen appreciation of black theology in his analysis of neo-colonialism. Similarly, Bujo, "Dangers de bourgeoisie dans la Théologie Africaine," applies Boesak's analysis of pseudoinnocence to the situation in Zaire. In a similar vein, Upkong, "Contemporary African Theologies," p. 120, stresses the similarities between apartheid and colonialism: "What is happening in South Africa today epitomizes in the

highest degree what has happened already in a milder way in other parts of Sub-Sahara Africa" (Upkong's text has been made available to me by the courtesy of the author). See also Mshana, "The Challenge of Black Theology and African Theology," who at an early stage showed the affinity between black theology and African theology, reporting on a conference in Dar es Salaam in 1971 between Tanzanian theologians and black theologians from the U.S.A.

271. Tutu, "African Theology and Black Theology," p. 63. (Italics in the original)

272. Sundermeier, "Der Mensch in der Schwarzen Théologie Südafrikas," p. 149.

273. Ibid.

274. Bosch, "Currents and Crosscurrents in South African Black Theology," p. 233. (Italics in the original)

Chapter 6. The New Paradigm and Its Critics

1. For pedagogical reasons we will pay special attention to Latin American theology since it obviously is easier to understand for Westerners than Asian and African theologies. It may be an overstatement but not insignificant when Pieris, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation," p. 89, describes Latin American liberation theology as "thoroughly Western, and yet, so radically renewed by the challenges of the Third World that it has a relevance for Asia, which the classical theology does not have."

2. In other documents from the Holy See concerning Catholic social teaching the basic *Fragestellung* is more sophisticated than in the Instruction. Moreover, it may be noted that that there are several points of agreement between this document and the theology of liberation. Since the *Instruction* can be interpreted in different ways, we will here only deal with the ideas which form the logical basis for the critique of "certain aspects" of liberation theology.

3. "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'," pp. 871-872, 874. Significantly, the notion of the poor as interlocutors is absent in the *Instruction* which consequently misconstrues the new paradigm, as seen in its definition of liberation theology, p. 869: "The expression, 'Theology of Liberation,' refers first of all to a special concern for the poor and the victims of oppression, which in turn begets a commitment to justice."

4. To the dialectic between love and "class struggle," see Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 272-279.

5. "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'," p. 868.

6. Ibid., p. 871. Some interpreters—for example, Boff, "Die ambivalente Haltung der 'Instruktion zur Théologie der Befreiung' gegeniiber dem Marxismus"—see a contradiction in the *Instruction* between the theory of "an epistemological unique complex" and an openness to Marxism in other parts of the documents. Be this as it may, it cannot reasonably be disputed that

the theory of Marxism as a monolith is an important notion in the critique of liberation theology by the *Instruction.*

7. The simplistic conception of Marxism in the Instruction is criticized by several analysts of Marxism. See, for example, Post, "Wird die Sache der Armen verraten?" and Rottländer (ed.), *Théologie der Befreiung und Marxismus.*

8. Cf. Rottländer (ed.), *Théologie der Befreiung und Marxismus,* pp. 8-11.

9. This point is clearly demonstrated by Miranda, *Marx Against the Marxists,* pp. 197-223, even though one may doubt his thesis about a "Christian humanism" in Marx's thought.

10. In his analysis of Christian-Marxist encounters in Africa, Norman E. Thomas arrive, *inter alia,* at the following conclusion: "Out of a common colonial heritage, church leaders have come to accept the value of the Marxist critique of colonialism, of Western capitalism, and of neocolonialism on the continent. Second, traditional African values have been affirmed and found relevant for the contextualization both of Christian theology and of Marxism on the continent.... Major points of divergence occur most frequently among ideological fundamentalists, whether of the Christian or Marxist variety."

11. The discussion on "class struggle" in some varieties of liberation theology may be misleading, since the concept is obviously used differently from classical Marxism. It seems that "the oppressed class" in liberation theology frequently denotes "the poor" and that "class struggle" not only denotes a conflict between classes defined in view of ownership of means of production (as in classical Marxism) but also the struggle between people with very different degrees of economic, political, and cultural power. Some quotations may exemplify the ambiguity of "class" in liberation theology. In *The Power of the Poor in History,* Gutiérrez uses "classes" with different meanings. On p. 45 he affirms that "the proletariat," the oppressed class in the Marxian sense, is the most clear-sighted segment of the "exploited class," which consequently has a wider extension. "The popular class," p. 78, suggests a similar non-Marxian use of "class," while the concept on pp. 37-38 is used in a Marxian sense in reference to the means of production. Possibly, "class" in the first mentioned quotations could be defined as a group of people exposed to structural oppression. Similarly, Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 285 n. 60, suggests in reference to Althusser, that "the world proletariat" is one part of a "class struggle on a worldwide scale." Cf. the discussion of "necessary analytical mediations between the Marxist category of the 'proletarian class' and the biblical one of 'the poor'" in Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation,* pp. 112-113.

12. Interestingly, Cone, *God of the Oppressed,* p. 44, suggests that Mannheim, Stark, and Berger are "going deeper than Marx on the problem of ideology." It is difficult to know, however, if this position is representative for the new paradigm. So far, the profound differences between different types of sociology of knowledge (as represented, for example, by Marx, Mannheim, Stark, and Berger) have not been analyzed in depth by liberation theology.

13. The influence of the economic system on everyday life and culture is emphasized in liberation theology. See, for example, EATWOT III, pp. 152-153: "The consequence of this type of capitalist domination is that all things, time, and life itself, have become marketable commodities."

14. West, "Religion and the Left," p. 17. (Italics in the original)

15. Miguez Bonino, one of the Latin American theologians who have worked most extensively with the relationship between Marxism and liberation theology, defines in *Christians and Marxists,* p. 19, political experience as the main reason for the theological interest in Marxist analysis: "It is my thesis that, as Christians, confronted by the inhuman conditions of existence prevailing in the continent, they have tried to make their Christian faith historically relevant, they have been increasingly compelled to seek an analysis and historical programme for their Christian obedience. At this point, the dynamics of the historical process, both in its objective conditions and its theoretical development, have led them, through the failure of several remedial and reformist alternatives, to discover the unsubstitutable relevance of Marxism." (Italics removed)

    Generally, Latin American liberation theologians—similarly as the African theologians studied here—represent a theological position where Marxism is an instrument of social analysis, not an ultimate concern valued *per se.* In the interpretation of Marxism, there are important similarities between, for example, Banana, *The Theology of Promise,* written in the context of Zimbabwe, and Miguez Bonino's writings.

    The analyses of Piediscalzi and Thobaben (eds.), *Three Worlds of Christian-Marxist Encounters,* suggest a similar judgment. See, for example, Thobaben, "Conclusion, pp. 196-197.

16. See, for example, King, "The Task of Systematic Theology." For a theology where modernity is a central criterion, see Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine.*

17. Brian Hearne in "Readings on Liberation Theology," p. 110, goes so far as to claim that "Alfredo Fierro's *The Militant Gospel* is a valuable survey of the entire movement [of liberation theology]. It is the best general introduction to the whole area of political theology that this reviewer knows."

18. Ogden's *Faith and Freedom* spurred a heated debate, reflected in Mahan and Richesin (eds.), *The Challenge of Liberation Theology;* to the importance of Ogden's book, see ibid., p. 127. Significantly, the criticism of liberation theology in a textbook such as Hodgson and King (eds.), *Christian Theology* is based on Ogden's analysis, as seen in King, "The Task of Systematic Theology," p. 24. Lienemann, "Schwarze Théologie versus Moderne Gesellschaft," offers a similar but less pointed critique than that of either Ogden or Fierro.

19. Ogden, "Response," p. 17.

20. Ogden, "The Concept of a Theology of Liberation," p. 136, acknowledges Gutiérrez's insistence on the option for the poor as interlocutors of theology

without realizing that such an option invalidates his definition of liberation theology as a kind of liberal theology.

21. Ogden, *Faith and Freedom,* p. 23.

22. Ibid., pp. 30-31: "I myself share with these theologies the general outlook and approach of all liberal theology, according to which there is not simply one criterion of theological adequacy but two—not simply appropriateness to the Christian witness but also understandability to human existence."

23. Ogden, "The Concept of a Theology of Liberation," p. 132.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., p. 131.

26. Fierro, *Militant Gospel,* p. 18.

27. See, for example, ibid., pp. 265-267.

28. Ibid., p. 347.

29. Ibid., p. 360.

30. Ibid., p. 343.

31. Ibid., pp. 342-343.

32. Ibid., pp. 334, 331.

33. Ibid., pp. 341-342.

34. "Secularity is given ... by society itself. One cannot evade it unless one chooses to flee to a monastery or to some country where the sacred *still* holds sway," ibid., p. 348 (italics added). Fierro is convinced that "the views of advanced western culture," p. 420, eventually will stamp the whole world.

    The contextual methodology of the new paradigm is a critique of ethnocentrism, since it implies that the privileged can only properly understand their own context in the light of the presence of the underprivileged. In Fierro's interpretation, the contextual approach has only a formal character, pertaining to the historical relativity that theologies, both in the North and the South, have in common.

    The "eurocentric" perspective is still more emphasized in the discussion of contextuality in Rendtorff, "Universalitat oder Kontextualität der Théologie. Eine 'europaische' Stellungnahme," pp. 239-240. Rendtorff suggests that the important features of Third World theologies are "always" formulated with European theology as the regulative principle. Pointedly, he interprets the theological discussion of the oikoumene as a "monologue of European theology with extended participation" (Selbstgesprach europaischer Théologie mit erweiterter Beteiligung).

35. Ogden, "Concept of a Theology of Liberation," p. 134.

36. Ibid., p. 132.

37. Ibid., p. 131. The notion of the poor as interlocutor is also absent in Fierro's analysis of liberation theology. However, Fierro seems to be less consistent than Ogden in view of conflictual analysis, since he attempts a synthesis of Marx and Weber. The Marxian influence is seen mainly in Fierro's social ethics, where the inevitability of conflicts is frankly admitted, *Militant Gospel,* pp. 386-387. In epistemology, however, the Weberian influence prevails,

since Fierro seems to accept the dominant rationality in the First World as theological norm.

38. Ogden, "The Concept of a Theology of Liberation," p. 132.

39. Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives."

40. Cf. Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History,* p. 101: "A point of departure in [the context of the struggles of the poor] will enable the theologian to take into account the data of modern scientific exegesis and give it a new, radical dimension."

41. See the exposition of black pseudoinnocence in ch. 5

42. Hanbury Brown, "The Nature of Science."

43. Alves, "The Eating Habits of Science," p. 41. Italics in the original. The parable may, at least to some extent, be interpreted as a self-biographical account, expressing a disappointment with what Alves, "From Paradise to the Desert: Autobiographical Musings" p. 295, calls "the scientific ideal of objectivity."

44. Alves, "The Eating Habits of Science, p. 43. (Italics in the original)

45. Ibid., p. 41: "If you want to learn about wolves do not ask them to say what they are. This is a basic principle of sociological analysis.... If you want to know about science, beware of the explanations provided by scientists. Usually they say nothing about the scientist's eating habits. Most of the explanations that science proposes about itself are not only untrue; they are dangerous."

46. Ibid., p. 43 (italics in the original). Similarly, in a heated argument with an advocate of "Christian realism," Alves, "Christian Realism: Ideology of the Establishment," p. 176, denied the intellectual neutrality of this school: "We make truth claims for our theology. And when we say this, we are saying that the traditional ways of doing theology must recognize their ideological bias, their rather unambiguous relationships with colonialism, racism, and economic exploitation. We believe that your theology to a great degree — although it does not want to recognize this — is part of cultural imperialism."

In a First World context it may of importance to take cognizance of this critique which recurs in Third World texts, as two examples may illustrate. Chikane, "The Incarnation in the Life of the People in Southern Africa," p. 47: "The Western theology that was presented to us as a neutral and universal theology has since been exposed to be actually a theology of the liberal capitalist ideology. It is a theology of oppression, exploitation and domination"; Cone, "A Black American Perspective on the Future of African Theology," p. 180: "dominant European and American theologies have chosen an option that established their solidarity with western imperialism and capitalism."

47. Cf. the discussion of Afrikaner nationalism in ch. 4.

48. It seems that also Fierro and Ogden fail to perceive this distinction. Fierro, *The Militant Gospel,* p. 216, admits that his theology may be bound up with industrial society but finds this fact tantamount to the connection

between liberation theology and the semirural, semi-urban society of the underdeveloped countries.

49. Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History,* p. 47, argues that scientific reason in the fields of history and social studies is necessary to be conscious of the economic and sociocultural conditioning of human thought. Concerning the role of sociology of knowledge in the critique of modernity, see also his "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 231: "To consider Modern ideology ... apart from its historical agent (the bourgeoisie) would falsify sociology, philosophy, and theological as well as secular history."

50. Fiorenza, "Toward a Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics," p. 109 (italics in the original). In a First World context, the Third World experience may clarify the compensatory character of Christian values such as "love", "compassion", "community" etc. in a capitalist society. For such an argument, see my "The Spiritual Crisis in the Metropolis of Capitalism."

51. Ibid., p. 100.

52. Ibid., p. 109.

53. In reference to L. Goldmann's studies of the Enlightenment, Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 229, characterizes rationalism and empiricism as "expressions of individualism," arguing that in both cases "individual consciousness is the starting point of cognition and action." Individualism is therefore seen as a salient feature of the new epistemology and theory of ethics. Significantly, Gutiérrez insists that the individualism of modern epistemology should be discussed in relationship to the economic structure. The emphasis on individual reason is analyzed in relationship to the *homo oeconomicus* (even though the concept is not used) in bourgeois economy. "Where individualism is paramount, capitalism seems the natural economic order," p. 230.

54. EATWOT IV, p. 239. Similarly, p. 244: "If the church is not converted in its structures, it loses credibility and prophetic power. A rich, dominating church cannot make an option for the world of the poor and oppressed."

55. Gutiérrez, "Finding Our Way to Talk About God," p. 228. See also p. 227.

56. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 35, suggests an interrelation between an analysis of "the conflictual character of human history" and a central theme in Pauline theology, "the paschal core of Christian existence and of all of human life: the passage from the old man to the new, from sin to grace, from slavery to freedom." In explicit agreement with Gutiérrez, Maimela, "Current Themes and Emphases in Black Theology," p. 104, maintains that "conversion which alone overcomes human conflicts thus involves a total break with past oppressive and exploitative tendencies, behaviour and ways of relating to the neighbour."

57. In fact, the different perceptions of modernity may be clarified in relation to the different assessments of Kant's philosophy. The Kantian epistemology is the criterion when Fierro censures "certain naive ways of talking about God" in liberation theology. *Militant Gospel,* pp. 318-319. Consequently, the

alleged re-sacralization in liberation theology may also be described as an "obvious pre-Kantian ring," ibid., p. 345. Similarly, liberal theology and the Social Gospel, which are supported by Ogden, obviously are based on a Kantian or a neo-Kantian epistemology.

Third World theologians, by contrast, are critical about theologies revolving in a Kantian orbit since they think that Kant's harmonizing epistemology may be used to explain away the suffering of the poor rationally and to define God in a way which does not challenge social and political injustice. Pieris, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation," pp. 88-90. This conflict, it seems to us, boils down to a difference between an individualistic and a social epistemology. Cf. Stark, "Sociology of Knowledge," p. 475: "The problem of knowledge arose for Kant from the meeting of the *individual* mind with the *physical* world. The social element was missing at either pole." (Italics in the original)

58. These differences between First World religious socialism and liberation theology are overlooked by Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* p. 269 n. 30.

59. Concerning the critique of the Enlightenment in American black theology, see Witvliet, *The Way of the Black Messiah,* pp. 187, 227.

60. Cf. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 69: "The temporal-spiritual and profane-sacred antitheses are based on the natural-supernatural distinction." The dichotomy between personal and social sin has been criticized by African theologians since it is only valid in relation to an anthropology which regards the individual and the social being as separate entities. The concept of personal sin in the *Instruction* is discussed, for example, by Magesa, "Instruction on the 'Theology of Liberation': A Comment," pp. 4-5, who argues that personal and social sin are intrinsically related and, therefore, it is inadequate to describe one as the cause of the other, or to prescribe a certain order of priority between them.

61. "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'," p. 868: "Faced with the urgency of certain problems, some are tempted to emphasise, unilaterally, the liberation from servitude of an earthly and temporal kind. They do so in such a way that they seem to put liberation from sin in second place, and so fail to give it the primary importance it is due."

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid. The separation between the "spiritual" cause and the "temporal" effects recur in the document. See, for example, pp. 869-870: "the grace of Christ [must] have effects on the social level"; "social effects"; structures are "consequences more than causes." Yet, it is acknowledged that it is "a fatal error" to separate "bread" and "the Word of the Lord," p. 870.

64. Ibid., p. 872.

65. Ibid., p. 874.

66. Mofokeng, *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers,* p. 51, cites praxis as argument against dichotomy (here called "duality"): "There is a duality in thought

about church and world, salvation history and secular history, between the natural and the supernatural, the profane and sacred, between faith and human existence or social reality, between faith and political action. This duality poses a problem for Christians who are engaged in a liberation process as an actualization of their faith when they attempt to relate their engagement with their inherited theological tradition. It does not serve to dynamize and correct praxis. Rather, it threatens to lead to paralysis in the field of decision making and action in some cases, while in others it creates a schizophrenic Christian existence."

Similarly, Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* p. 70, argues that the unity of the Christian vocation is seen in praxis. Only on the basis of a historical, concrete analysis is it possible to maintain the fundamental unity and yet to see the differentiation within the totality of the commitment to God, he suggests. "In the concrete situation there is but one vocation: communion with God through grace."

67. Cf. Richard, "Nicaragua: Basic Church Communities," p. 31, who argues from a Latin American perspective that liberation theology is theology in a pregnant sense more than traditional theology due to its focus on the question of God versus the idols.

68. Chikane, "The Incarnation in the Life of the People in Southern Africa," p. 44 (italics in the original). The importance of a holistic *Fragestellung* in the new paradigm may be exemplified by a dialogue after Buthelezi's lecture "South Africa's Fears and Hopes in Theological Perspective," p. 112. A listener asked Buthelezi: "Is the liberation of the spirit a humanistic or a theological ideal?" and he answered, it is reported: "I do not make this distinction."

69. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 36-37. See also p. 176: "These three levels mutually effect each other, but they are not the same. One is not present without the others, but they are distinct: they are all part of a single, all-encompassing salvific process, but they are to be found at different levels."

For a similar view, see EATWOT IV, pp. 236-237, 240-241, where the incarnation is presented as a paradigm for the relationship between the Kingdom of God and "the historical processes of human liberation." Consequently, "a spirituality of liberation" cannot be properly interpreted within a dichotomic scheme.

70. Cf. n. 63 above.

71. The debate on Ogden's *Faith and Freedom* can exemplify the need for clear-cut definitions of the dichotomic and the holistic approach. Ogden rejects a separation between the spiritual and the sociopolitical dimension of reality and quotes with assent the liberation theology conception of liberation as "one process" (pp. 36-37 *et passim).* Yet, he describes spiritual "redemption" and sociopolitical "emancipation" as "two irreducibly different forms" and "two distinct and, in fact, very different things" (pp. 36,95). Moreover, he arranges "the two things" in an order of priority by claiming that liberation is "*primarily* the redemption from death, transience, and sin and only *secondarily,* though necessarily, emancipation." (p. 37, italics added). He

insists that theology must choose between taking liberation primarily as redemption or as emancipation. In fact, some formulations suggest that Ogden—like the *Instruction*—presupposes a causal relationship between "the two forms of liberation," e.g., when speaking of "emancipation that redemption itself makes mandatory" (p. 37). In sum, Ogden's discourse on redemption and emancipation does not only distinguish between two concepts but it also separates "two things."

The importance of this separation in Ogden's argument is evident from the fact that the proposition of an order of priority between the two "forms of liberation" serves as the logical basis for the criticism of existing forms of liberation theology. In fact, the duality of emancipation and redemption is the point of Ogden's argument. "If *[Faith and Freedom]* has a single thesis it is that the one process of liberation comprises two quite different, even if closely related, processes [namely] redemption and emancipation," p. 36.

Consequently, there is a clear and undeniable difference between the holistic paradigm of liberation theology and Ogden's redemption/ emancipation dichotomy—even though he presents it as the authentic liberation theology. Necessarily, Ogden will give a meaning to "one process" which differs from that proposed by liberation theologians since they use this phrase to exclude the order of priorities which Ogden argues for.

Accordingly, Dorothee Sölle, '"Thou Shalt Have No Other Jeans Before Me'," pp. 10-14, criticized Ogden, arguing for a holistic scheme. In response to her criticism, Ogden, "Response to Dorothee Sölle," refers to his affirmation of "one process" and his rejection of a separation between emancipation and redemption but he does not refer to the notion of a necessary order of priority ("primarily", "secondarily") which in *Faith and Freedom* was the logical basis of the critique of the holistic approach of liberation theology. Consequently, in the response to Sölle one may get the impression that Ogden advocates a holistic conception but if this is his actual opinion, then his articulate criticism of the existing varieties of liberation theology in *Faith and Freedom,* pp. 36-37—the point of departure of the debate with Sölle—is untenable.

In sum, even though Ogden in some texts advocates a holistic conception, his criticism of liberation theology as representing a wrong priority of "redemption" and "emancipation" presupposes a dichotomic conception.

72. See e. g., the discussion on a theology based on a distinction of planes in Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation,* pp. 56-77.

73. It is not difficult to find texts where a dichotomic scheme functions as a procrustean mould into which liberation theology is forced without accounting for the fact that this scheme explicitly and in no uncertain terms is rejected by the advocates of the new paradigm. As a sample we may quote the following:

When Gutiérrez Gonzales, *The New Libertarian Gospel,* pp. 65, 76, 78, labels the theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez "an evaporation of faith" and a "betrayal of faith," he presupposes a dichotomy between the "call toward God" and

the "temporal good" without informing the readers that this presupposition is not shared by the criticized theology.

The same observation applies to Wagner, *Latin American Theology,* pp. 103-108, who tacitly presupposes a dichotomic scheme in his critique of liberation theology, when he separates a primary and a secondary relationship of the church to the world; to preach the Gospel is of primary importance while social service is placed in second place.

A third example is offered by House, "An Investigation of Black Liberation Theology," who presupposes a dichotomic scheme, separating thisworldly and otherworldly issues, in the critique of black theology, even though he—paradoxically—praises its holistic conception.

Similarly, McCann, *Christian Realism and Liberation Theology,* argues in reference to "limit-situations" that there is an unresolved dilemma in liberation theology. "The most basic limit-situation is that represented by the antagonism between a world-vision that acknowledges God as the primary Subject of history and one that casts 'man' in that role." p. 197. Differently put, McCann is convinced that theology must choose between "an orthodox understanding of the Incarnation [that] makes God the primary agent or 'Subject' in human history" and "a dialectical interpretation of history [that] makes it possible for men to enter the historical process as responsible Subjects," p. 184. Correctly, he notes that liberation theologians want to have it both ways but he never contemplates that they may represent a different *Fragestellung* which should be tested on its own merits. It may be noted that in McCann's analysis of liberation theology there is no place for notions such as the poor as interlocutors of theology, the experience of oppression and liberation, or the epistemological rupture, Moreover, there is no discussion about the defining characteristic of liberation theology (at times one may get the impression that McCann may suggest "revolutionary enthusiasm," p. 186). Therefore, one may question Stanley Hauerwas's assessment on the book cover: "*Christian Realism and Liberation Theology* provides the best interpretation and critique we have of liberation theology."

In fact, also the author of the *Instruction* forces the holistic notion of "one history" (uniting the history of salvation and profane history) into a dichotomic grid, interpreting it as a reductionist, "historicist immanentism," p. 872.

In conclusion, one could note that this kind of criticism is a circular argument: The starting point is the implicit presupposition of a dichotomic scheme and at the end of the investigation the critic then finds that a non-dichotomic theology is illegitimate.

74. See, for example, nn. 63 and 71 above.

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Index

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Endorsements below of the 1988 publication:

Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa was for me a marvellous learning experience, even though I have been active around the issues it raises and have written on them since the 1970s. It is written with integrity and insight; the analysis is incisive and dispassionate, and knowledge of the subject deep and wide-ranging.

N. Barney Pityana, Director, Programme to Combat Racism, World Council of Churches

By far the most important western theology study of African theology yet to be published. Dr Frostin's work represents a truly pioneering achievement in taking the theology of Africa with the sensitive yet systematic seriousness in interpretation that it deserves. It is a necessity for any library concerned with liberation theology.
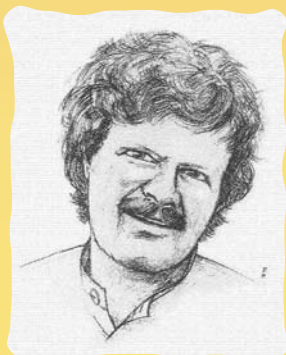
Adrian Hastings, Professor, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Leeds

I must say that I am deeply impressed and excited about the way in which Dr Frostin deals with Liberation Theology from Africa. It is not often that one has the opportunity of hearing from colleagues in the First World who can respond to Liberation Theology with so much clarity and sensitivity for all of the issues involved. I must also say that very rarely has a person from Western Europe understood so well my own theological insights and my understandings.

Allan Boesak, President, World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Drawing of Per Frostin
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