

BLACK THEOLOGY: A QUEST FOR A TRUE HUMANITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

J. J. LAPOORTA

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DR. W. MAZAMISA

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ABSTRACT

The Apartheid ideology and political system in South Africa has caused blacks to experience their blackness negatively. Being black is the reason for their pain and suffering. This is not merely a political problem but in its deepest sense it is a theological problem because it has caused doubt in the hearts and minds of blacks, as to whether they are created in the image and likeness of God. Apart from that Apartheid also presented itself as a command of God, and as such it is a pseudo-religion.

In the thesis this problem is examined from a biblical-theological perspective. Chapter one looks at humans created in the image of God, the dignity which implies their right and their equality before God. After investigating the insight of a cross-section of theologians, it is clear that the dignity of all people irrespective of race and colour is beyond dispute.

Chapter two examines the black experience against the biblical background. Despite the theoretical consensus regarding human dignity, blacks are experiencing their blackness in a negative sense. The reason for this is the negative anthropology of white

theology.

Chapter three discusses the emergence of the critical consciousness towards the negative anthropology. The Black Consciousness philosophy played a positive role in countering this negative anthropology. Black Theology used these insights to develop a positive anthropology. It brought awareness of human dignity, but it did not lead to action.

Chapter four discusses the total liberation from all situations of oppression, exploitation and dehumanization. The basis for this liberation is found both in the Old and New Testaments. In this regard the Exodus Paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto play significant roles as biblical models for total liberation. From these paradigms it is concluded that Yahweh in the Old Testament is the Liberator of the oppressed, and that New Testament salvation in Christ, links up with the Exodus model in which God sides with the oppressed. Biblical liberation and salvation is not merely spiritual but involve the total human.

Chapter five looks at the sources from which Black Theology draws in an attempt to define its positive anthropology. Apart from the already mentioned biblical sources and Black Consciousness, it also draws from the black experience and the Traditional Afri-

can Religions.

The final conclusions is that black theology brought a new appreciation to the fact that blackness is a gift of God and not a curse. The liberation of humans, an important emphasis in black theology is firmly grounded in the scriptures and involves the total being. That black theology is not racism in reverse, nor is it an ideology, but a quest for humanity, firmly grounded in the biblical tradition.

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PREFACE

In recent years Black Theology has become a crucial issue in ecclesiastical circles, including in my own church, The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. Unfortunately more often than not black ministers and church members were the silent listeners to the evaluation of white church bureaucrats.

This thesis is a humble attempt to understand Black Theology from a black perspective. It is my prayer that it will give other blacks, especially Pentecostals, new insight to Black Theology.

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INTRODUCTION

The indignities and injustices blacks are experiencing in South Africa (SA) is a direct result of their blackness. Their whole human existence is being determined by the colour of their skin, and not by their inherent qualities or abilities. Black experience under apartheid is not only a question regarding human existence, but it is also a theological question. Apartheid is a pseudo-religion in which the image of God in blacks is not acknowledged or respected. This is evident in white theology which actually nurtures and perpetuates apartheid as a God-given recipe for race relations, and mutual human existence.

White theology operates on two levels, viz. the theoretical level and the practical level.¹ On the theoretical level white theology offers a lot of positive affirmations, that are biblically correct and could be accepted by all earnest Christians, who seek a thorough biblical anthropology.² Principles like all humans are created in the image of God; all humans are equal in their original state, as sinners after the fall; and all are equal when they have been restored in Christ Jesus are acknowledged in white theology. Although white theology offer positive, biblical anthropology on the one hand the problem lies with the historical praxis, where white theology contradicts its own positive assertions, when it deviates from the well intentioned theoretical affirmations, of equality, freedom and responsibility.³ Both the past and present

history testifies to the fact that white theology in its historical praxis, adheres to a very negative anthropology, in which blacks are depicted as bad, lazy, inferior, dangerous people whom whites cannot trust.⁴ On the theoretical level white theology reiterates the fact that blacks are human in the same manner as whites, they are equals. On the practical level white theology eradicates all positive, biblical affirmations and it is blasphemous because it creates doubt in the hearts and minds of blacks, concerning the fact that they are children of God.⁵

This situation of pain and suffering, constitute the *Sitz im leben*⁶ where black theology begins its reflection. It is this situation of oppression, contradiction and confusion that "blacks understand the revelation of God in Jesus Christ".⁷ From this black context critical questions are: Did God make a mistake by creating people black? Are blacks inferior to whites just because of the colour of their skin? Who is responsible for this situation of oppression blacks are suffering due to their blackness? On whose side is God in this situation of conflict between white (oppressor) and black (oppressed) wherein blacks are struggling to redeem and maintain their true humanity? Blacks want to know what the Bible says about these questions. Black theology is an attempt to make the gospel relevant to the situation of black dehumanization. "It seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of blacks will begin to make sense".⁸

Apartheid has dehumanized both blacks and whites. This is the heart of the problem reflected in both white and black theologies that we will examine in this thesis. Both theologies address the question of humanity. We shall show that black theology attempts to redeem humanity that has been lost through the politics and theology of apartheid, whereas white theology with its inherent contradiction between theory and praxis worsen the situation. We shall use a biblical-theological approach which culminates in a sosiological analysis of the South African situation.

Chapter one deals with the biblical anthropology, in which the creation of humans in the image and likeness of God with its different facets; the fall and the influence of sin; and the restoration of humans in Jesus Christ. In chapter two we shall examine the historical praxis of black oppression which was brought about by the promulgation of apartheid legislation. This section we have termed negative anthropology, because it represents the deviation from the original plan of God for humanity as a whole. The enforcement of this apartheid system resulted in the negation of the black person's humanity. As negative anthropology it is actually dehumanizing both blacks and whites in South Africa: It has dehumanized blacks to such an extent that they doubt that they were created in the image and likeness of God and that they are therefore equal to any human being, regardless of colour. This negative anthropology with its psychological, physical and reli-

gious aspects has almost irreparable harmed the black person's dignity. This wrong view of humans has certain socio-economic and political implication for black personhood.

In chapter three we look at the emergence of the critical consciousness. Traces of the critical consciousness towards negative anthropology is evident in the early history, when the native people made contact with white colonialists, in the Ethiopian Movement and the Black Nationalistic Movements. In recent history the Black Consciousness Movement played a significant role in the emergence of the critical consciousness. Black theology articulates the emergence of the critical consciousness and the definite move towards a positive anthropology. This positive anthropology urges blacks to assert their blackness without feeling inferior or guilty because it encourages the black person to reorientate his or her mind, and attitude towards his or her black self. We shall close this chapter with a theological-ethical evaluation of positive black anthropology.

Chapter four continues our argument concerning the recovery and maintainance of a positive black anthropology. The recovery and maintainance of this true humanity necessitates liberation. A mere reawakening of the black person's mentality will not restore black human dignity - something concrete must be done. Liberation from apartheid on all levels of life is an absolute necessity.

Thus it is that liberation forms the theological hermeneutical key of black theology. Yahweh is the liberator who is on the side of the oppressed. In the South African situation of conflict where blacks are struggling to regain their true humanity, they assert that there is no place for a neutral God. We shall therefore look at the understanding of God in the Bible, the Exodus paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto.

In the last chapter we shall look at the sources from which black theology draws in its attempt to recover black personhood from the debris of racial oppression. These sources are as follows: The Bible, because black theology is in the first place a biblical theology. Secondly the Traditional African religions elements that bind the black community and serve as a cultural and historical past which blacks are reappropriating after the emergence of a new consciousness. Lastly, the black experience, because black theology is a liberation theology that commenced its reflection from the situation and context of black suffering.

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CHAPTER 1

BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Humans were created in the image and likeness of God. In this chapter attention will be given to the meaning of the image of God in humans as it is described in both Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalms 8:4-6. It is assumed that the image and likeness of God in humans presupposes a relationship and does not refer to any resemblance as such. Different relationships are implicit in this presupposition but we shall only concentrate on the relationship to God, fellow humans and the rest of creation.

The effects of the fall and sin will be the second point of discussion in this section, because sin disrupted these relationships. Sin distorted and disturbed these relationships to such an extent that it created alienation and enmity between God and humans, between humans and humans, between humans and the rest of creation. The restoration of all these relationships was made possible by the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Lastly we shall deal with the fact that humans are total and dynamic beings.

1.1 HUMANS CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

In Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:4-6 we read the following words regarding the creation of humans:

"Then God said, "Let us make man (humans) in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man (humans) in his own image, in the image of God he created him (them), male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (New International Version (NIV))

"What is man (humans) that you are mindful of him (them) ... You made him (them) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him (them) with glory and honour. You made him (them) ruler(s) over the works of your hands; you put everything under his (their) feet." (NIV)

The following aspects regarding humans are evident in these texts: (1) Humans are creatures created by God; they are not gods but are creatures like all the creatures created by God.

(2) It is also significant to note that out of the whole of creation only humans were created in the image and likeness of God. This in itself presupposes a special relationship between God and humans.

(3) Humans were commanded to rule over the fish, birds, and the earth, while they were instructed to be fruitful, to multiply and to subdue the earth, because they are the crown of God's creation.

1.1.1 The meaning of being created in God's image

The Hebrew and Greek used to describe "image" and "likeness" as *tselem* and *demuth*, (Hebrew), *eikon* and *homoises*, Greek).¹ According to Bushwell these words should not be compared with each other, but the latter actually includes the former. These kinds of parallel words are familiar in Hebrew.² The image and likeness of God in humans suggested in this context does not refer to any physical resemblance between God and humans, nor does it refer to any distinction between a mortal or an immortal

position of human nature. Both these views represent a puzzling and limiting view of humans, who are dynamic beings.

Carey asserts that it is evident in the context of Genesis 1:26, that the idea of humans being created in the image of God implies that certain responsibilities and obligations are conferred on them. These duties are inseparable from the image idea.³ The image of God in humans according to Moltmann constitutes the dignity of humans, which in turn provides the source and ground for all human rights.⁴ The dignity of humans presupposes their humanness and this humanness is indivisible and inalienable from their right to life, community and self actualization in history, here and now. This self realization in history refers to those rights and duties that are evident in the socio-economic and political realms of life.⁵

The responsibilities closely connected with the image idea are as follows. Humans are first of all creatures that stand before God, to whom they are always accountable. Secondly, God created humans in a polarity of sexes, but this in no way implies that they are not equal, because they are both created

in the image of God, and therefore they are both standing before God. Thirdly, God has given certain obligations to humans, such as the perpetuation of the human race, and to exercise dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the creatures that creep, upon the face of the earth, and the authority to subdue the earth. All these presuppose certain relationships, the prime one of which is the God - human relationship. The other relationships that flow from this fundamental God - human relationship are inter-human relationships and those of humans to the rest of creation.

1.1.2 The God - human relationship

Brunner states that this prime relationship consists of humans that stand before God⁶ in a worshipping and obedient manner characterized by a close union between God and humans. This worship is simply giving God the glory as a form of gratitude from the human side.⁷ The worship element of standing before God can clearly be seen in the fellowship and the first humans in the garden of Eden. The main purpose of the creation of humans was to glorify and honour God by standing in his presence and acknow-

ledging his greatness mercies.

Standing before God presupposes obedience unto God in everything, and a full awareness of the fact that humans are but creatures in his sight. Carey asserts that no matter how popular humans may be, or how bad their achievements, they have to remember their origin because they are only dust in God's presence.⁸ It is significant that when God faced humans in the garden of Eden he gave them certain instructions which he expected them to observe because they are his creatures that constantly stand before him, reminded of the fact that they are created for this purpose to worship, obey and to serve him alone. Thus it is clear that the relationship of humans to God demands total obedience. This relationship always involves certain moral obligations, as no privilege or blessing from God is without moral obligation. The narrative in the garden of Eden is an Example of this command - demand, privilege-responsibility dialectic. If you do this then I will do that.⁹ This responsibility forms the basis fo human morality, which is the essence that distinguishes humans from the rest of creation. While they as creatures are on the same level as the animals, there is this image idea that includes responsibility, which is the demarcation between humans

and animals.

Brunner sees this responsibility as a form of limited freedom, which in turn also marks the line between the profane and the divine freedom. Both God and the animals are excluded from this limited freedom, because God is above this level, and he has absolute freedom, while animals are below this level because they have no freedom.¹⁰

The divine-human relationship with its moral implications of responsibility to God, their neighbour and the rest of creation illustrates the fact that humans are created in the image of God. The purpose of this relationship is worship, obedience and service to God alone.

1.1.3 The inter-human relationship

The image of God in Genesis 1:27 refers to the relationship between husband and wife, but is also applicable to a larger social context of human fellowship.¹¹ From this it is clear that God did not create humans to be islands in themselves, but to live as humans in love, peace and perfect harmony.

The creation of humans to be social beings in fellowship and community does not erase the fact that humans are individuals. The principle of individuality and community, should maintain a reciprocal and mutual relationship in this regard.¹²

The fact that God created the different sexes does not imply that this biological and sexual difference can serve as a reason for the exploitation of women. Differences, be they cultural, racial or sexual, are no reason for discrimination. There are people in this country who use these difference as an alibi for discrimination and exploitation. The well known unity and diversity slogan is an example of the kind of argument used to perpetuate discrimination.¹³ But the Bible clearly provides no justification for doing this.

Despite sexual, cultural or racial differences all humans are created in the image and likeness of God, and they all share in this common universal reality called dignity. For this reason they all stand before God as equals, with the same rights and duties. Eichrodt emphasizes this principle of equality when he asserts: "All the more noteworthy is the equality, in principle, of men and women before God".¹⁴

The equality of sex, race, colour or creed applies to every situation dealing with humans. The correct understanding of the image of God is to live and let live, because human rights are indivisible; they are God given and not a human product or a privilege.¹⁵

1.1.4 The relationship between humans and the rest of creation

The fact that humans are created in the image of God implies further that they have to exercise dominion over nature. Both Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8 refer to the fact that humans were given the authority to subdue the earth and to rule over the non-human creation. Brunner describes humans as *homo faber* who have received the responsibility to create civilization.¹⁶

It is important to note that humans were given decisive power over the non-human, but this in itself does not imply that humans were given a *carte blanche* over the non-human creation. Humans have to subdue the earth in correspondence with the outlined principles that would reflect the image of God,¹⁷ because humans are and remain beings that stand before God. They

therefore have to comply with the implicit moral demands that accompany this standing before God. Therefore humans must be careful in their handling of non-human creation such as natural resources, animal and plant life.

Being created in the image of God clearly confirms the fact that humans are not mere objects of history, which are relentlessly pushed around, but according to the Bible they are makers of history. In all their relationships they stand before God to whom they are accountable.

1.2 SIN: THE CAUSE OF DISRUPTION IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS

In Genesis 3 and 4 we read how the harmonious situation God intended for his creation was disturbed. Sin, as expressed in the fall, disturbed and distorted all human relationships viz. their relationship with God, their relationship among themselves and towards the rest of creation. In Genesis 3 sin is described as rebellion against God, while in Genesis 4 it is described as sin against the brother or neighbour. Adam's fall must be viewed as representative of the whole human race, because through him all humans share in the fall and sin that is endemic to humanity as a whole.

Therefore sin is not only a matter of personal disobedience - we all are represented in Adam's disobedience. Humans are therefore all in rebellion against God.¹⁸

According to Berkhof, sin does not originate with God (Job 34:10; Isaiah 6:3), but in the angelic world written of in John 8:44, where Jesus refer to the devil as the killer from the beginning. 1 Joh. 3:8 and Jude 6 confirm this view. However this does not imply that humans have no part in sin, because the first sin was committed voluntarily.¹⁹ Based on his view that God is not the author of sin, Berkhof holds that sin does not logically fit into God's creation, but that it represents a different reality.²⁰

Berkhof remarks that sin causes the sinner to point at others. He further asserts that sin is a moral evil, because humans are free moral agents.²¹ Sin he holds, constitute the only reason why separation between God and humans could take place.²²

By whatever words sin is describe, its consequences are detrimental for human existence. Both the Hebrew and Greek words that are used to describe sin substantiate this point. Sin as *hatt at* (Hebrew) and *Harmontia* (Greek) means to miss the mark and it refers to the deviation from the right path.²³ Sin as *awon* (Hebrew) means to be fully aware of one's deviation from the right path, and it represents a deliberate choice between what is right and wrong.²⁴ Sin as *pasha* (Hebrew) means rebellion and this term is used frequently

by the prophets.²⁵

The nature of sin in the above paragraph, it certainly does not only refer to the vertical, God - human relationship for it penetrate into total human existence. The whole of creation suffers the consequences of sin; and there is no aspect of human existence, institution or society that does not bear the marks of the fall.²⁶

Sin is therefore not only individual or personal; it is also corporate and structural. It is not one dimensional, as in sin against God. Sin against the neighbour and against the rest of creation is also sin against God. Therefore whether it be vertical or horizontal sin, according to the Bible sin and sin as such is a deviation from the divine intention for creation. After the fall humans stand before God as sinners. All their relationships are twisted because of sin. The New Testament of humans actually starts at this point. According to the synoptic gospel, John's theology and Paul's theology, humans stand before God as sinners in need of salvation.

In all three of these New Testament proclamations humans are beings who stand before God called to be obedient to their Creator or otherwise stand before him as sinners who are bound for judgement.²⁷ The New Testament observed humans as beings desperately in need of salvation. This salvation is God's solution to the human dilemma

and it is a historical action in which the beginning of the new era is introduced. It is the only way whereby these sinners under God's judgement can be transformed into beloved children of God.²⁸

1.3 THE RESTORATION OF HUMANS IN JESUS

Jesus Christ the Son of Man, unlike the first Adam who was dedicated to sin, was obedient to God unto death. In him humans are restored to their original state of obedience, responsibility, freedom and dominion. In and through Jesus Christ humans can be reconciled to God, amongs themselves and with the rest of creation.

Accordingly restoration of humans in Christ takes place in their justification which is an act initiated by God, who is the origin, basis and revealer of the true law.²⁹

He further holds that this restoration is God's definite no to sin, but it is a simultaneous yes to the sinner. The no to the sins of humanity represents his pardon to humans. This integrated judgement and pardon in Christ forms the binding force.³⁰ In Christ we have the true obedient, human being who inaugurated the new era in which humans can stand before God as justified sinners who have received God's pardon. This pardon of God in

Christ is a divisive action which separates the old sinful human from their new status in Christ. Kümmel prefers to describe the sinful human according to Paul as the *sarkikos* (carnal human) and the pardoned sinner in Christ is called *pneumatikos* (spiritual human).³¹

The pardon which is granted to humans in Christ, is obtainable by faith alone. For Barth this justifying faith has obedience and humility in it, while it is not founded on any human efforts, such as works.³²

The restoration of humans in Jesus Christ transform humans from sinner before God to covenant partners. In Jesus Christ the divine has broken through in history and God has made it possible for humans to be accepted in faith in this world and society. The Son of God incarnate has become a Jew to live in the context of human life in a particular term in history.

It is in this regard that 2 Corinthians 5:17 states "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" Any human in Christ can once more stand before God as a justified sinner who need not be ashamed or feel uncomfortable of a previous sinful life because all things are made new in Christ. Humans created in the image and likeness of God after the fall need not stand before God as sinners but, in Christ they can stand before God in the restored or right relation.

1.4 HUMAN NATURE

Although many words like soul, spirit, body, heart and mind are used to describe the physical and psychological nature of humans, humans are total beings and not dichotomous or trichotomous, compartmentalized beings. In this section we shall focus on the different meanings of soul found in both Old and New Testament.

The Old Testament uses the word *nephes* to describe soul, while the New Testament equivalent is *psyche*. The word *nephes* is used to refer to the neck, throat or gullet, but it also refers to the breath of life - that proceeds from the throat. This constitutes the characteristic of life both human and animal.³³ Thus in this particular context soul undoubtedly implies the life that linked up with the body. In Ezekiel 17:17, Proverbs 28:7, Genesis 2:7 and Jeremiah 2:24 soul as *nephes* refers also to the living individual.³⁴ Soul also refers to feelings and emotions of the individual. When Hannah was praying in the temple in Samuel 1:15 the meaning is more specifically the feelings and emotions of the individual.³⁵

In the New Testament *psyche* also refers to life, especially in Matthew 6:25 when Jesus beseeches his audience not to worry about what they will eat, or drink, but to remember that life (*psyche*) is of more worth than food. But in Acts 27:37 (*psyche*) means individuals when Paul speaks about 276 *psychai* that were

saved.³⁶ Both these terms are also used clearly describes the life of the individual.

In addition to *nephes* and *psyche* two other words are used to describe the being of humans: *ruach* in the Old Testament and *pneuma* in the New Testament. Unlike *nephes* and *psyche*, *ruach* and *pneuma* were associated with God. Furthermore the New Testament concept was an important accent over the Old Testament understanding, *Pneuma* derived from the "Spirit of God" usage which actually refers only to Christians in whom the Spirit dwells.³⁷

According to the Bible human beings are viewed as dynamic beings who do not consist of different irreconcilable parts. They are regarded as individuals, that form total units in itself.³⁹

Therefore the dualism or dichotomy in humans is alien to the Bible and has no origin other than from the Platonist.⁴⁰

To summarize we can say that humans are created in the image and likeness of God. This image and likeness of God in humans consists of their dignity which in itself refers to their God-given rights to be responsible co-creators, who stand in a special relation to God, to their fellow humans and to the rest of creation. The relationship to God is viewed as a standing before God in worship and obedience.

As a result of the fall humans stand before God as sinners who are under his judgement. This state disrupted and distorted all human relations to such an extent that humans stand before God as sinners who have oppressed their neighbours and destroyed creation.

In Jesus Christ, God has restored the relationship through justification. This justification is both a no to sins and a yes to the sinner. The no represents God's judgement of humans in the crucifixion of Christ, while his yes is represented in their pardon on the basis of faith alone. This faith is both a step of obedience and humility.

Lastly the Bible clearly views humans as dynamic beings who are total units. This holistic view of humans derives from the concept of *nephes* soul and *nuach* spirit.

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CHAPTER 2

THE BLACK HUMAN EXPERIENCE AS NEGATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

We have now established what the Bible says regarding humans, and their inherent dignity, that implies responsibility, freedom and human rights. We shall now proceed to the discussion of the black human experience in the light of the Biblical anthropology.

The black human existence brought about by apartheid in South Africa can rightly be termed negative anthropology, because it is a definite deviation from the divine intention for humanity as a whole. In order to fully understand the impact of the negative anthropology we shall be dealing with the religious-philosophy of apartheid. We shall pay attention to the psychological influence and then proceed to the physical experiences of apartheid with its socio-economic and political implications.

Steve Biko explains the apartheid situation as follows: For years whites have exploited blacks. In this black-white relationship most whites believe that blacks are inferior. This idea was perpetuated for economic reasons, but later it developed into a serious problem: whites despise blacks simply because they believe that blacks are inferior and bad. This is the basic



pressuposition underlying the apartheid system, and this is what make South Africa a racist society.¹ This view in which black is identified as bad and inferior while white is identified as innocence and superior culminated in the domination and exploitation of blacks simply because they are black.

Mofokeng asserts that for blacks this domination actually meant the loss of land, political power, their creativity and imagination.² In the domination process blacks were moved into locations (slum areas) where they had to live under inhuman conditions. In these slum areas the facilities are of the poorest one can get in the country, with conditions no white person would choose to live under. Other factors which contributed to the perpetuation of this negative anthropology is the attempt to eradicate black culture and history. The alienation of blacks from their culture and history together with loss of the land is an attempt to wipe out their roots.

For Manas Buthelezi the black experience is described by the determining factor namely: Blackness. This blackness in South Africa prescribes what possibilities are open to every black child. It prescribes where blacks may live, worship, work, as well as with whom they should associate. The totality of human existence for blacks is determined within the limits of the black context.³

The whole understanding of the black anthropos in the South African context was shaped by the religious, psychological and physical aspects of this negative anthropology.

2.1 THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE NEGATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

Apartheid in all its facets was first of all religiously contemplated before it was legalized. According to Dr. F. O'Brien Geldenhuys apartheid entered into the political and social arena by means of a concession that was made in 1857 to accommodate the racial and cultural prejudice of a few Afrikaner Christians. This concession developed into a principle in which the following presuppositions were dominant, viz. no racial mixing, separate churches and schools for different race groups.⁴ These principles that constitute apartheid were theologically justified by the following Old Testament scriptures:

The Babel account in Genesis 10-11 was exegeted and interpreted in such a way that the differentiation of races could be proven.⁵ This event was used as a hermeneutical key to understand the creation of humans in Genesis 1-3. The apartheid theologians then automatically arrived at a conclusion that there was more than one Adam and the Adam we read of in the Bible was only a symbolic figure.⁶

In his book In die Stroomversnelling O'Brien Geldenhuys explains how the Afrikaner Christians interpreted their role as guardians of the blacks who were inferior and therefore not in a position to think for themselves. To enable the Afrikaners to be guardians of the blacks they were to retain political control.⁷ He continues to show how the church spelled out all the apartheid principles before the National Party came to power in 1948.⁸

*"In die denke van die N.G. Kerk het die rasseskeiding nou n byna heilige waas gekry. Identiteit is God-gewe, en hierdie beleid was daarop gemik om identiteite te beskerm en binne eie groepsverband volledig te laat ontwikkel."*⁹

This clearly emphasizes the fact that the Bible is misused to condone the ungodly system of apartheid in which the human dignity of blacks is denied. In any situation where the equality and dignity of all humans is not respected, especially where racism, racial domination and racial superiority, which is contrary to the biblical understanding of human dignity, is perpetuated.¹⁰

The religious understanding of white supremacy and black subjugation was indoctrinated in the minds and hearts of both black and white. On all levels of society white is associated

with adjectives such as good, innocent, pure, holy, etc. while black is identified with abnormality and concept such as evil, weak, not up to standard etc. In this racist society it means that blacks do not belong and their presence is a favour which is underservingly granted to them. This is the reason why in church and in theology whites have the tendency to preach and teach a 'pie in the sky when you die'-gospel. In order to prevent blacks from seeking and obtaining fulfilment here and now is this life.

2.1.1 The psychological aspects of the negative anthropology

The psychological effects of the socio-economic, religious and political experience of blacks in South Africa is enormous.

Blacks are brainwashed to such an extent that they would do anything possible to get rid of their blackness because it spells shame, oppression and destruction in a racist society. The black person is always trying not to be himself, but to be like the oppressor. Psychologically this has led to the idea that God made a mistake in creating them black. This is precisely the reason why Tutu holds that apartheid is both vicious and blasphemous, because not only does it degrade its victims but it has

the power to make believers doubt that they are children of God.¹¹

Manganyi asserts that there are two modes of being in the world viz. being black in the world and being white in the world. These modes of being are directly related to the different existential experiences.¹² He further analyses the black mode of being into the following three experiential categories: the body, the individual in society and the spiritual dimension of being black in a white world.¹³ This mode of existence has inherent negative sociological schema which culminate in a negative self image.

According to Manganyi, the black individual in society illustrates the fact that colonialism has eradicated the communal mode of being and has substituted it with an individualistic view. The authentic black leaders, who could have reinstated the corporative personality have been suppressed, while a white individualistic and materialistic view of existence prevails.¹⁴ This automatically leads to the situation where the black has to cope in a white world that has lost its spiritual dimension. The whole black existence has become an experience which mentally fosters the negative anthropology

because being black in a white world implies that all of human existence has as its frame of reference the white value system.¹⁵

The state of mind of the oppressed has a significant role to play in the whole liberation process, because you are who and what you think you are. If the oppressed people think that they are black and therefore inferior to whites they will definitely act inferior. It will not be long before this becomes an established fact in their whole system. For this reason some in the oppressed community are at ease with their situation because they are ignorant of what the Bible says about their human dignity. Boesak asserts that "the greatest ally of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed".¹⁶ Negative anthropology does not only operate religiously and psychologically, but it is something that is felt physically as well.

2.2 THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE NEGATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

The physical indignities and injustices blacks suffer today are a direct result of their blackness. Their blackness determines the fact that they are to live as second and third-class

citizens. Their blackness is a casting vote in the decision of their whole existence; their education, their earnings, their medical treatment, their living space, their fears of being evicted or forcibly removed.¹⁷

2.2.1 The socio-economic and political implications of the negative anthropology

The socio-economic and political implications of apartheid are far reaching. Most blacks in South Africa are not allowed to form stable social groups such as families, because of the influx control laws which have prohibited migrant workers from enjoying a normal family life. It has been reported that in 1983 women and children from Crossroads in Cape Town were forced onto trains and deported to the Transkei.¹⁸

Not only has family life been destroyed, but for years the public amenities were opened to only the white minority. Black children had to learn early in life that most of the parks throughout the country, were not meant for them, because they are black. Through these experiences the black children had to adapt themselves to a kind of colour caste, in which poverty and a low economic status

prevailed. Segregated schools and locations also contributed to this negative self image in which blacks were trapped because of their blackness.¹⁹

Mofokeng holds that in the South African situation, we have a class society based on both race and colour. In this stratification whites deliberately form the oppressor's community while blacks constitute the exploited and discriminated community. Whites are the 'haves' and blacks are the 'have nots'.

Flowing from these assertions is the fact that blacks constitute the labour force who earn very low salaries, while the white oppressors are enriched at the black people's expense. These blacks are relegated to the periphery of society due to their socio-economic status. In South Africa the country has been balkanized into certain homelands for blacks. The homelands will remain dependent on South Africa because they are not economically viable due to the fact that only a small group in these homelands are being well looked after, while the majority of blacks in the rural areas are relatively poor. David Smith refers to the situation as follows: "the operations of apartheid as a system of cheap labour production, and the role of the homelands in this process."²¹

Whites automatically constitute the ruling class who dominate blacks in all areas of life and especially in the economic sphere. On this front they contribute substantially to the suffering of the toiling masses. Some of the large, rich mining corporations are hiding behind apartheid legislation. They employ approximately 1,500,000 blacks who work as migrant labourers in South Africa living under the apartheid law's in hostels without their families.²² Zolile Mbali holds that "... the economic reason for apartheid can be seen as cheap labour ... that sustains the high standard of living of the whites."²³

The apartheid existence justifying white domination and black subjugation, was legally inaugurated in 1948 when the existing leader, an Afrikaner, was a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. The first step this government took was to remove political power from all blacks. Mbali states: "The first steps taken on the way to apartheid legislation were to dismantle what few constitutional rights black people had."²⁴ The government then appointed whites from their ranks to represent the blacks. These whites always spoke on behalf of the blacks, in the absence of the blacks, without their consent and most of the times against those whom they were supposed to represent.

They then promulgated the Group Areas Act and the Bantustans policy. The implementation and maintenance of the Group Areas Acts culminated in the largest single instance of the relocation of black people in the urban areas. It is estimated that in the past 20 years approximately 860,400 people were relocated under this act.²⁵

About "3,500,000 people were relocated within the Bantustans for implementation of betterment planning."²⁶

These resettlements caused a lot of human suffering and alienation, because people were brutally uprooted without any chance of legal recourse. As has been said earlier in this chapter, these Bantustans are dependent on the South African regime. Malnutrition, starvation, disease and the mortality rate amongst the blacks in these homelands is very high because of insufficient facilities. Mbali asserts that the resettlement of black is merely a way of evading the cost of apartheid by dumping sick, elderly people in these Bantustans.²⁷

It is no secret that the apartheid regime in South Africa is committed to its policies of oppression because the following laws still prevail. "The Population Registration Act of 1950"²⁸ which rates and classifies people along ethnic and colour lines; "The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953"²⁹ has led to unequal public facilities. Another critical area affected by apartheid

is education.³⁰ And finally the act that has caused so much suffering and has become the focal point in the contemporary political debate, is "The Group Areas Act of 1950".³¹

In this country the socio-economic and political system causing black oppression all boils down to one outstanding factor: blacks are not viewed as full human beings. This is a religious ideological understanding that forms the basis of the whole black - white relationship with its history of severe oppression. White supremacy and black subjugation operates on the premise that white is the norm and represents innocence, while black is inferior and represents all that is bad and not according to the norm. Society is further structured by the white ruling class on this religious understanding in order to serve the interests of whites only. Its intention is that whites should remain in control, while blacks are divided on the basis of ethnicity in South Africa. This will enable whites to remain powerful while blacks will be powerless.

The negative anthropology that is represented by the black experience in the racist society is a definite deviation from the divine intention for the creation of humans. This existence has caused doubt in the hearts and minds of the

oppressed community, due to the suffering they are experiencing because of their blackness. This negative anthropology is self-destructive for the oppressed community because it enables the white oppressor to remain in power and to exercise his grip on their lives via their mentality.

The main source of this negative anthropology is white theology that justifies this unbiblical theology on the basis of God's judgement on the people at the tower of Babel. The anthropology of white theology that is based on this assumption "teaches that humans have uncontrollable fractricidal drives which even the Gospel and conversion cannot tame."³²

This negative anthropology is a denial of the God-given dignity of all humans because it denies the basic human rights of blacks, such as the right to vote, and the right to choose where they want to live, attend school, what kind of work they want to do, who their friends may be or who their political leaders may be. Even their right to choose resistance against the system, through peaceful protests and the holding of public meetings where they could voice their opinion publicly, is not permitted.

The negative anthropology has the ability to have people assume that God made a mistake by creating them black. For this reason some blacks would do everything possible to escape from this black existence. It is precisely at this point that black rejection and self-hatred become a black response in a world controlled by white racists. This self-rejection on the other hand is an admission of the fact that such a person has accepted the assumption that his blackness makes him less human and therefore nobody.

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CHAPTER 3

THE EMERGENCE OF A CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE NEGATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY AND A MOVE TOWARDS A POSITIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

The courage to be black in South Africa is subversive because it represents the "dangerous memory"¹ for the oppressor while it is the "liberating memory"² for the oppressed. It is subversive and dangerous for the white oppressor because it makes demands concerning the dignity and human rights of blacks here and now in South Africa. It is liberating because it affirms the dignity and human rights of the oppressed in the mids of oppression. Therefore it inspires, encourages and reminds the oppressed that the struggle against apartheid is a noble and worthy struggle that needs to be continued until blacks have recovered their true, authentic black humanity.

In this chapter we examine the rise of a critical consciousness in the black community towards the negative anthropology perpetuated by the apartheid system. In the first section we trace the emergence of the critical consciousness in the history of black oppression and exploitation in South Africa. We shall then take a look at the parallels in American history.

We move on to make a theological - ethical evaluation of what is

called a positive black anthropology. Here we shall highlight the positive values of black humanity that are ethically justifiable. We shall also give attention to the following questions: Is the positive black anthropology not an emerging totalitarian ideological system in the miniature?

Does it not elevate itself above white dominating anthropology and becoming the criterion of the order for the South African Society?

Is it not promoting schism?

What is its ethical dimension?

3.1 EARLY HISTORY

The emergence of a critical consciousness can be traced back to the early contact between the indigenous people of South Africa and the white colonialists.

In 1652, under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company white settlers arrived in the Cape of Good Hope.³ At that time the KhoiKhoi, a pastoral people, occupied the Cape. They owned large herds of cattle and according to Debroey, Van Riebeeck was constantly tempted to rob them of their herds and subject them to slavery.⁴ For the white settlers this was not enough. They expropriated the pasture-land for agricultural purposes and even closed the paths leading to the drinking places.

These acts of aggression culminated in KhoiKhoi resistance to exploitation, oppression and the lack of freedom of movement. They reacted violently. Debroey mentions how they intimidated the white woodcutters, stole cattle belonging to the whites and destroyed their fishing nets.⁵ Clearly the whites were unwelcome intruders who threatened their whole human existence.⁶

This state of affairs sparked off the first KhoiKhoi attack against the white colonialist in May 1659, under the leadership of Doman.⁷ The second KhoiKhoi war against the white colonialist took place between 1673 and 1677 under the leadership of an influential KhoiKhoi Chief, Gonnema, from the Cochokwa sub-group.⁸ They were ultimately overpowered by the colonialists who drove them into the mountains, and they lost both their cattle and their lands.⁹

The KhoiKhoi were not the only people to resist white settlement in South Africa. A century ago the whites made contact with the Xhosa people in their movement eastwards in the Cape. These unwelcome intruders were resisted in eight so-called "Kaffir Wars". The first clash took place in 1779 and the last occurred in 1879.¹⁰ Roux comments that: "A century after the first clash west of the Fish River the Europeans had by-passed the Transkei frontier, conquered the Sotho, Pedi and the Zulu tribes and penetrated into southern Natal."¹¹

In all these battles black resistance revolved around the issues of land, independence and their right to shape, mould and determine their own destiny.¹² Their whole human existence were threatened by the white intrusion that culminated in their oppression and exploitation, and the destruction of their total value system.

The emergence of the critical consciousness is evident also in the rise of the Ethiopian Movement. Moeti makes the following relevant statements when he asserts that from the study of Ethiopianism it is possible to follow through successive stages of resistance to European domination, exploitation, and the form in which they (blacks) manifested themselves.¹³ The Ethiopian Movement was formed when black clergy moved from the Mainline Churches, because their humanity was not acknowledged. They resisted white domination in the Church and splitted off.¹⁴

Moeti contends that the Ethiopian Movement forms the separatist roots of the African National Congress (ANC).¹⁵ The ANC adopted the motto *Izwe Lethu*¹⁶ (the land is ours) and also the National Anthem *Nkosi Sikele iAfrica*¹⁷ (God bless Africa) which was assumed by the Ethiopian leadership in 1892.¹⁸

The Nationalistic struggles of both the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) are ways in which the critical consciousness emerged, in search of a true black humanity.

The ANC started in 1912 and its main objective was to unite the different, small bodies and organizations that participated in the struggle for liberation of blacks from white oppression and domination.¹⁹ This body was interested in obtaining a say in the "white only" union that came into being in 1910. It therefore wanted to fight for the right of the excluded black majority.²⁰ According to Roux the ANC wanted "to fight against both economic and political injustices."²¹ The fight for human rights in South Africa by the ANC in these years was by peaceful means, which included strikes, boycotts, protest marches, and defiance campaigns. "The Defiance Campaign, according to Luthuli was far too orderly and successful for the government's liking and its growing. The challenge of non-violence was more than they could meet."²²

The ANC's struggle for political, economical, social and educational rights was a struggle for integration with full citizenship and equal rights.²³

In 1959 the PAC broke away from the ANC under the leadership of Robert Sebukwe and Lebello, who became their President and General Secretary respectively.²⁴ The PAC assumed that the Africans were a class that constituted the proletariat while all the whites were the oppressors. They refused to be involved in what they called a collaboration between oppressor and oppressed, because they assumed that there could be no co-operation that would bring

about equality.²⁵

Motlhabi contends that the PAC did not operate from a racial or colour stance, but the prerogative the reinstatement of equality and birthright.²⁶ He further holds that there is a great deal of unfair criticism on the stance of the PAC, by liberals who are fully alligned to the ANC.²⁷ For the purpose of our theme it is significant to note that Motlhabi asserts that, "one credit is owing to the PAC for continuing resistance to apartheid and domination by a minority."²⁸

We have traced the early history of black critical consciousness toward the negative anthropology their resistance to oppression, exploitation and self-contempt. This self-realization and the assertion of their personhood is inextricably bound with the issues of their land and their cattle.

3.1.1 Recent History

In this section we shall look at the contribution of the Black Consciousness philosophy, the Kairos Document, the Evangelical Witness and the parallels in American history.

During the late sixties - early seventies the Black Consciousness Movement spearheaded the opposition towards the negative anthropology and it could fairly be viewed as a successor of the PAC, rather than a successor of the ANC. Goba describes the Black Consciousness as a political reawakening in the absence of strong black political leadership, because at that time both the abovementioned organizations were banned and its leaders were either in exile or in prison. He further holds that the rise to black consciousness marks the introduction of new hope for the disenfranchised blacks.²⁹

The black consciousness philosophy rejected non-racialism together with intergration on the grounds that it does not correct the evils of apartheid completely. Biko asserts that both non-racialism and integration are artificial, because it only provides a situation in which white supremacy and black subjugation are perpetuated. In these non-racial bodies whites do all the talking, while it is expected from blacks to do all the listening.³⁰

The Black Consciousness Movement was suspicious of any non-racial or multi-racial body, because they felt it was important for each group to assert themselves, and to accept themselves the way God created them. Biko comments: "At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self.

Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-style of the various groups. This is true integration."³¹

Black Consciousness assumes that those who participate in the integration exercise must be equals and those people at grassroots must become aware of their worth as humans, learning to manifest themselves in such a manner that they will claim what is rightfully theirs.³² For this reason blacks called a moratorium on their engagement in non-racial organization in an attempt to discover themselves, their God-given ability and rights. That is what the South African Students Organization (SASO) means when it says: "Black man, you are on your own".³³

Biko further remarks that Black Consciousness represents a mental attitude that originates from the black world, which is rooted in self-examination and their blackness, and serves to bind the oppressed together in their struggle for self-realization.³⁴ This expression of Black Consciousness as mental attitude corresponds with the

assertion made by Baartman when he says: "Black Consciousness begins when the black man asks the question: "Who am I?" He asks the question about himself in relation to his neighbour and his environment and most of all, in relation to his Creator, Saviour and Guide."³⁵

This state of mind or way of life is both a "No" and a "Yes". It says loudly no to everything and everybody that hinders and prohibits what God intended blacks to be viz. humans. On the ontherhand it says loudly yes to everything and everybody that encourages blacks to self-determination and self-assertion.³⁶ In this manner blacks are urged to discern evil and to resist it, while it enables them to acknowledge the right thing regarding their humanity. It implies both a critical approach towards the negative anthropology, and an affirmative approach towards the acceptance of a positive black anthropology.

Black Consciousness further expresses a group pride which enable blacks to boldly affirm their blackness which is not an issue of pigmentation but is a definite reflection of a mental attitude. It enable blacks to take pride in their God-given blackness. Black Consciousness also seeks to reappropriate the African culture and

history, from which blacks were alienated for years. Therefore Biko states: "Aspects of African culture such as man or community-centredness, eagerness to communicate in various forms with one's neighbours, joint ownership of land, neighbourliness and mutual help, which made poverty foreign to Africans, and a holistic view of life would have to be revived."³⁷

The main objective of the Black Consciousness philosophy was to make blacks aware of their value and own standards of judgement. It rejected the value system of the oppressor, as the criterion for civilization and humanness. Therefore the attempt of the reappropriation, rewriting and reinterpreting of black history was to recover the positiveness of black history from the debris of white oppression, because: "A people without a positive history is like a vehicle without an engine."³⁸

There is a heavy emphasis on black pride and the exclusion of whites in Black Consciousness hence some liberal whites make the allegation that Black Consciousness is racism in reverse. In this regard Motlhabi asserts that there is no comparison between Black Consciousness and Apartheid because discrimination, domination and subjugation is inherent, in the latter Blacks are not in a position

to subjugate whites, and therefore Black Consciousness is not racist.³⁹ Baartman confirms the fact that Black Consciousness is not racism in reverse when he says that white as the norm for civilization and humanness must be rejected.⁴⁰ He instead refers to the difficult part of Black Consciousness which is: "To love the white man."⁴¹ To love the whites actually implies that blacks must love themselves and accept themselves the way God created them viz. black. Without this self love there can be no true love for the white neighbour. In this regard Boesak holds that when blacks are asked to love themselves, it is not only to urge them to hate dehumanization and a slave mentality, but also to encourage blacks to realize and manifest their infinite personhood before God. They must resist with all their hearts every attempt to make them believe the opposite.⁴²

Based on the above one can therefore say that Black Consciousness is an operation of love. The whole intention of Black Consciousness according to Baartman is to "reconcile man to God and man to man, the black man to the white man Therefore unity is a man uniting with another man, a unity of equals".⁴³

The Black Consciousness philosophy gives pre-eminence to what they call God's deliberateness to create them black.⁴⁴ The fact that they are created black does not bother them, but Black Consciousness inspires them to take courage and pride to be black and fully human at the same time because it serves as an awareness of their humanness to freedom, love and justice.

The Black Consciousness philosophy is a psychological awareness of black dignity. Therefore it rejects every thing or system that attempts to degrade their humanity and to alienate them from their history and culture.⁴⁵ It is a definite no to the negative stereotype of non-white. It is a positive yes to the assertion of true humanity.

Black Consciousness philosophy is not only interested in the socio-political challenges, but it is also concerned about the spiritual dimension of the liberation struggle because religion has played a significant role in forming and establishing the apartheid system with its negative anthropology. Therefore Black Theology has to rewrite and reinterpret the Christian message from the situation of the oppressed.⁴⁶ That is exactly where Black Theology starts its quest to be a relevant

theology, and not only a theology concerning the suffering of blacks. It attempts to be a theology that addresses the issues of total black human existence here and now. According to its exponents Black Theology would not have emerged had the needs of blacks in the South African situation been adequately dealt with. Unfortunately this did not happen.⁴⁷ Both Black Consciousness and Black Theology emerged from the Black experience. Both attempt to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed and to articulate the grievances of the toiling masses in the South African context.⁴⁸ Both these movements constitute the emergence of a critical consciousness towards the negative anthropology and mark the definite move towards a positive black anthropology.

The emergence of Black Theology in both the U.S.A. and in S.A. inaugurated the theological basis of the critical consciousness towards the negative anthropology, as well as the outlines for an authentic black anthropology. Black Theology emerged from the black negative anthropology, to proclaim the good news in the midst of oppression, because it aimed to encourage blacks to be aware of their humanity as humans among other humans. Blacks are urged to stand on their own feet and to demand

those things that are their God-given right.⁴⁹ Black Theology therefore has the responsibility to exorcise the demons of inferiority, self-hatred and self-contempt out of the minds and hearts of the oppressed blacks. It further has the responsibility to tell them how to assert their own, black humanity.⁵⁰ The self affirmation by blacks according to Mpunzi is an absolute must, because God affirms their uniqueness as blacks. If they fail to do it, they fail to assert their own personhood, which is their blackness.⁵¹

The constant emphasis on the black assertion does not imply the denial of the white person's humanity. On the contrary, Boesak says that according to the Bible human dignity is the unalienable right of every human.⁵²

This view is also upheld by Gqubule when he asserts that all humans share in a fundamental humanity, because they were all created in the image of God. All are partakers in the fall through Adam, and all have a share in their redemption in Jesus Christ.⁵³

The authentic humanity black theologians are contemplating is not a Platonic dualistic view of humans, nor is it an anthropology that believes in the fact that humans are naturally evil. It is a more positive view of humans

that originates from the biblical view of humans who are created in God's image.⁵⁴ Black Theology reminds humans continually about their responsibility to construct and reconstruct social structures to the benefit of all humans⁵⁵ because that is God's purpose for them here and now.

The emergence of the critical consciousness towards this negative anthropology is continued in both the Kairos Document (KD)⁵⁶ and The Evangelical Witness (EW).⁵⁷ At this point let us look more closely at what each of these documents has to say concerning the above.

The KD critically examines the state theology, church theology, and contemplate a prophetic theology, in order to recover the humanity of the oppressed in the South Africa of the present.⁵⁸ The state theology perpetuates the oppression by misusing the well known Romans 13:1-7, where obedience to the authority is discussed. According to the KD it "is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism".⁵⁹ The proponents of this theology further use terms like "Law and Order"⁶⁰ in their justification and blessing of the oppressive situation.

In the section "church theology"⁶¹ the KD discusses the

problem of violence, and non-violence in a situation of conflict between good and bad, right and wrong.⁶² The document contends that distinction should be made between structural violence perpetuated by the apartheid system, and retaliatory violence or self defence of the oppressed in attempts recover their human dignity.⁶³ The document emphasis the fact that there is no place for some neutrality in the conflict between oppressor and oppressed.⁶⁴

The terms 'reconciliation and justice' are also discussed in this section. According to the KD reconciliation does not simply mean the holding of hands, and the arrangement of meetings between the oppressor and oppressed, without true repentance and conversion, because true repentance and conversion includes restitution.⁶⁵ It does not mean that two opposing partners gather around a cup of tea and after the meeting, each returns to his or her apartheid, abnormal existence.

The KD holds that in the prime act of reconciliation Christ had to die, in order to pay the price of sin and evil, it was a costly price that he paid, therefore the church theology is offering a kind of cheap grace.⁶⁶

In true reconciliation the sinners were reconciled with God, but the sin had to be renounced, because God and sin

cannot be reconciled, this is contrary to God's nature. The KD further asserts: "No reconciliation is possible in South Africa without justice, without the total dismantling of apartheid."⁶⁷

In the section on the "prophetic theology"⁶⁸ the KD contemplate a theology that will be relevant in the struggle for total liberation in which blacks will be able to recover the humanity. Therefore the KD contends that the prophetic theology should be based on the Bible and it should discern the signs of the time.⁶⁹ After these two things are accomplished, the time in itself compels the oppressed to action, that is both confrontational and spiritual.⁷⁰ It implies that the dreadful situation in South Africa compels the oppressed to turn to the Bible, their source of inspiration, hope and encouragement. It spells the time of reckoning, the time of confrontational action. This is the essence of prophetic theology because it asserts the "denounce of sin and the announce of salvation".⁷¹

The EW supports what has been said above about status quo theology, the church theology and the prophetic theology. The EW asserts: "We therefore need to realize that a call to repentance is an call to a radical change. It is a call

to a radical break with sin. A radically new life is expected from a penitent sinner, after repentance, confession and forgiveness."⁷²

The only significant difference between these two documents, is the issue on violence which was not dealt with in EW. All the other issues raised in the KD is reiterated by the EW.

In recent history the Black Consciousness philosophy, and the two documents discussed above, articulate the thoughts of the oppressed and their criticism of the negation of their humanity. These critical voices in contemporary history of black suffering under oppression of apartheid mark the efforts of blacks to assert their black humanness, and to determine their own destiny with pride. This self-assertion is an affirmation of their dignity as creatures created in the image and likeness of God. It further reiterates the fact that God did not make a mistake by creating people black, because black is beautiful.

3.1.2 Parallels in American history

The ancestors of the blacks in the U.S.A. were stolen

from Africa and taken to America as slaves. More than three centuries ago blacks were alienated from mother Africa. They were systematically stripped, physically and religiously, and were made to become strangers in a white dominated world where they were obliged to occupy the most degrading and humiliating position, viz. that of slaves. As such they were regarded as mere objects; someone else's property. They were not allowed to live as families together. They were scattered, and sold like animals from auction blocks throughout America.⁷³ Whites in the U.S.A. subjected blacks to situations of servitude in which they were brainwashed to believe all the negative stereotypes. The newsmedia assisted in disseminating these negative self-images viz. blacks were inferior, irresponsible, lazy, etc.⁷⁴

This mental attitude prevailed even after the Emancipation Declaration, because this declaration did not affirm or declare that blacks were humans, it simply said that they were free.⁷⁵ Jones contends that this negative self-image in recent history prevailed because blacks were associated with poverty and low economic status. The segregated social life, like schools and neighbourhoods, contributed to the furtherance of this situation that both psychologically and socially degraded blacks, and helped them to doubt

their human worth.⁷⁶

The emergence of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement in the U.S.A. spearheaded the critical consciousness towards the negative anthropology and contributed significantly to the emergence of the positive black anthropology. During the late fifties and the early sixties blacks in America became severely critical of their experiences of subjugation, exploitation and oppression because of their blackness.⁷⁷ Martin Luther King, an articulate preacher, criticized black oppression, "insisting upon his rights as a human being and equality as a citizen".⁷⁸ King's approach to bring about socio-political and economic change was a combination of what he called Christian love and non-violent resistance. Through non-violent resistance he aimed to resist the evil system and to be able to love the perpetrators of this system.⁷⁹

In their struggle for freedom and the total recovery of their human dignity, King constantly reminded blacks not to hate the whites, nor to use violence but to love the whites no matter how difficult it may be.⁸⁰ King criticized segregation because it desacralized human personhood, and the essential being, which is rooted in the freedom

of the total human.⁸¹ King also advocated that the "economy should become more person centred than profit centred".⁸² It is evident that King espoused integration as a way to escape from powerlessness, because he actually rejected the perpetuation of injustice, oppression and exploitation of blacks.⁸³

During June 1966, the Black Power Movement came into being. The birth of this Movement marks the split in the Civil Rights Movements on the issues of white participation and non-violence in the struggle for liberation.⁸⁴ Albert Cleage, Jr., asserts that the only way to move from powerlessness, is to reject what he calls the dream of integration.⁸⁵ Black Power according to Cone is the black person's emancipation from all oppressive hinderances. It implies black freedom and that blacks accept the fact that they are black and fully human with the ability to determine their own destiny.⁸⁶ Black Power is also an attitude of the mind, in which the black person freely say yes to his black being.⁸⁷ Major Jones agrees with Cone, that Black Power or black awareness primarily deals with all deep questions of personhood as the basic and essential issue.⁸⁸ Cone further holds that Black Power is a force of affirmation of the black personhood in spite of white social structures which dehumanize him or her into a

black or a non-being.⁸⁹

According to Jones, Black Power changes the aim of integration to a kind of semi-separation, in which blacks will be free from white domination and paternalism so that they can discover their own ability to give direction.⁹⁰ The Black Power Movement rejects integration insisting that the main issue is the emancipation of blacks from the view contemplated and perpetuated by the negative anthropology.

In both the early and recent South African history, as well as in the parallels of American history, it is evident that the critical consciousness towards the negative anthropology is a definite move towards a positive black anthropology. This black anthropology entails the human dignity of blacks from which their human rights originates. Black anthropology affirms their God-given rights, which are denied under the apartheid system. The recovery and maintainance of these rights in an oppressive situation necessarily leads to confrontation. This is evident in the KhoiKhoi wars, the so-called "Kaffir Wars", the nationalistic struggles, the Civil Rights Movements, and both the Black Awareness Movements. In South Africa where apartheid is alive as never before, the struggle continues for the assertion of the black peoples' dignity. The main emphasis

in all these struggles is to get the basic message across to the oppressor: blacks are humans and not things; they are somebodies and not somethings. They are black because God created them that way, and the colour of their skin should not be the determining factor of their existence. This message is especially for blacks to know that God loves them the way they are and they need not get rid of their blackness in an attempt to gain God's favour. It is also a message to whites that they may get used to the idea that blacks are humans who are here to demand what is rightfully theirs.

3.2 A THEOLOGICAL - ETHICAL EVALUATION OF THE POSITIVE BLACK HUMANITY

It is first of all important to mention that from a theological point of view no image of humanity or anthropology bears an inherent genetic moral superiority, or enjoys God's special favour. All anthropological models are subject to ethical criteria, that derive from the biblical anthropology.

When one examines the positive black anthropology according to the principles outlined in biblical anthropology, certain positive values that are ethically justifiable emerge. These values

are the emphasis on individual dignity a God-given universal aspect from which derives the principles of human rights. These rights presuppose equality, freedom and responsibility. Personal human dignity is what makes people human. According to black theology, this is not a human product or a favour blacks are receiving from whites - it is God-given and as such something in which all humans share.

From this fundamental dignity flows the basic human rights, such as the right to life, recognition, cultural identity, participation in the decision making process, freedom of opinion and speech, personal dignity and freedom.⁹¹ These principles presuppose equality in all spheres of life, for all people created in the image and likeness of God. It is significant to note that inspite of the raw deal blacks are receiving due to the apartheid system, they still cherish a system in which the humanity of both the oppressor and the oppressed is acknowledged and maintained.

The difference between Christian (Augustinian) anthropology and black anthropology lies in the fact that the Christian anthropology pays too much attention to the fact that humans are sinners. This according to black anthropology has contributed to the negative anthropology, that is perpetuated by the apartheid existence. To avoid that negative tone about humans, black anthropology places emphasis on both the original state of humans and the

restoration of humans in Christ. This does not imply that the fall is not taken seriously by black anthropology; it only states the fact that this is not the starting point of the positive black anthropology. Black anthropology does not believe that humans are evil by nature, but they proclaim that according to the divine intention humans were created positively, and the restoration in Christ is indeed a restoration of this positiveness that humans originally received.

Black anthropology did not have any schism in mind or on its agenda, because its main object has always been to encourage blacks not to believe all the negative stereotypes others have of them. Instead they should believe and assert their positive black anthropology. In the apartheid situation where the negative anthropology exists, the assertion of the positive black anthropology is emerging like a totalitarian ideological system in the miniature, which advocates schism between right and wrong, negative anthropology and positive anthropology. The negative anthropology perpetuated by white theology is unmasked as an abnormal, immoral theology that cannot be the criterion for black existence. In this way black anthropology elevates itself above white dominating theology, becoming the criterion of the order for the South African society. One can say that in the abnormal situation created by white theology, black anthropology promotes schism, because it contemplates a total break from what is called the negative anthropology to a positive black anthro-

pology. Black anthropology aims at normalizing of the situation, and it is particularly cautious not to make the same mistake white theology made, therefore it reiterates the fundamental human dignity which is the God-given right of every human being irrespective of skin colour. It does not advocate domination of one group over another.

The ethical dimension of the positive black anthropology lies in its attempt to avoid becoming an ideology though it may seem unlikely when one hears the phrase 'black anthropology'. This phrase should be viewed against the background of the negative anthropology in which black is automatically associated with bad, evil, inferior and sub-human, therefore black anthropology highlights the positiveness of being black and fully human at the same time. It emphasizes the principles inherent in the biblical anthropology, viz. equility, dignity, freedom and responsibility for all humans regardless of race or origin. In this regard one can fairly say, that the assertion of a positive black anthropology is centripital and that white anthropology is centrifugal in relation to the biblical anthropology.

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CHAPTER 4

THE QUEST FOR A TRUE HUMANITY NECESSITATES LIBERATION

We have identified the problem as being the oppression of blacks resulting in a denial of their God-given dignity and right to assert themselves. It is also a denial of the fact that they are created in the image and likeness of God, equal with other humans and having certain basic human rights that are not acknowledged and respected by whites.

The positive black anthropology that emerged as a critical consciousness serves as a corrective, to the negative anthropology. It is further a mental reawakening to their own human dignity and worth as beings, created in God's image. It implies liberation because it eradicates slave mentality and it asserts the humanness of blacks, while it affirms the fact that they are children of God.

Black theology, however is not satisfied with the mere positive mental attitude of blacks concerning their human worth. Its main objective is the total recovery of the black humanity on all levels of life. For this reason the positive black anthropology necessitates liberation. Liberation is not only the reawakening of black awareness, or a certain spiritual salvation, that is

confined to the soul of the individual. It is the wholeness of life that implies peace (shalom). The liberation we are speaking of is defined by Gustavo Gutierrez as follows: "Salvation is not something other-worldly, in regarded to which the present life is merely a test. Salvation - the communion of men (humans) with God and the communion of men (humans) among themselves - is something which embraces all human reality, transforms it, and leads it to its fullness in Christ."¹ For this reason we have to deal with liberation in this thesis.

In this chapter we shall examine the liberation motif in the Old and New Testaments. We shall take a close look at the Exodus paradigm in the Old Testament, and note its relevance for black theology, because liberation as outlined by these texts plays a significant role in black theology. We shall review the Exodus paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto against the backdrop of the different understandings of God in the Old and New Testaments. The different understandings of God in the Old Testament will be dealt with under the following headings:

God of the fathers;

God of the Exodus;

God of Sinai;

God of the conquest;

God of the Exile.

In the New Testament we shall look at the understanding of God in the Prologue of John's Gospel and in the Synoptic Gospels.

In the light of the above we shall examine the assumptions of black theologians regarding the liberation motif. The assumptions that Yahweh is the Liberator of the oppressed today, in the same way as in the Exodus paradigm, and that Jesus is bias in favour of the poor according to the Nazareth Manifesto. According to black theology, these two paradigms clearly illustrate the fact that God is on the side of the oppressed and the poor, in the situation of conflict where injustice, oppression and exploitation is perpetuated.

4.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

People are inclined to speak about the God of the Bible in terms of the Yahwistic tradition. They normally refer to Israel as twelve tribes, who are adherence of the Yahwistic tradition. These assumptions are mistaken, because there are different traditions in the Old Testament and Israel was not a unit of twelve tribes from the beginning.

According to Deist and Du Plessis in God and his Kingdom² when certain texts are closely examined, it becomes clear that there are at least three traditions on the origination of the Yahwistic religious tradition.³ These texts are as follows: In Exodus 6:2-3 Yahweh says to Moses that he did not

reveal himself as Yahweh to the patriarchs, but as El Shadday in Genesis 4:26, when the people began to implore God as Yahweh, by name, and when God told Moses at the burning bush that his name is I AM (Elyeh).⁴

4.1.1 God of the fathers

The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob referred to God as El of the fathers (Gen. 31:5, and 42).⁵

It is also important to note that in the patriarchal narratives we are dealing with different clans who worshipped an El of the fathers to whom they referred differently on different occasions. Therefore we have names like Elyon (Gen. 14:20-22), El Shadday (Gen. 17:1) and El Olam (Gen. 21:33).⁶

Certain significant characteristics were attributed to El of the fathers, such as omnipresence and the El religion did not make use of any intercessors, images, or mythology. While they acknowledged the existence of other gods, they worshipped only one God. The El traditions further revolved around the promise of a land and of descendants.⁷

4.1.2 God of the Exodus

The experience of the Exodus constitutes a fundamental religious significance which relates to the event of the liberation from Egypt. This event runs like a golden chord through the Old Testament and serves as an inspiration to renew and strengthen the faith of Israel in Yahweh no matter what their circumstances.

The El of the fathers from Moses onwards reveals some unique characteristics worth mentioning in order to obtain a clear picture of the whole important Exodus event. The God of the fathers made himself known as a God who has a special concern for the oppressed people in Egyptian bondage who called on him from their situation of slavery (Exodus 3). His reply to their cry was his intervention into human history to vindicate their liberation from bondage.⁸

This act of liberation also revealed the compassionate El of the fathers as a War-God who conquered the armies of Pharaoh, to fully realize the liberation of the oppressed who cried unto him. He further intervened in the course of nature, to enable the oppressed to flee from their oppressors, by blocking the waters of the sea like a wall, while he allowed the oppressors to be drowned.

The God of the Exodus wants to rule supreme.⁹

4.1.3 The God of Sinai

The names of Yahweh, Moses and Sinai are closely related, because Mount Sinai marks the place where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses and communicated with his people directly.¹⁰ According to the Sinai experience, the people realized that Yahweh lived on this mountain and he speaks through his servant Moses with whom he communicated regularly.¹¹

4.1.4 The God of the conquest

In (Joshua 24) it is assumed that the three traditions, namely the patriarchal people, the Joseph people and the Moses people, gathered at Schechem to form a unity of twelve tribes with their faith in Yahweh as the binding factor. The events of the exodus and the conquest were interwoven and it revolves around their acknowledgedment of Yahweh as the God of War, with monotheism as its fundamental principle.¹² The concepts of Yahweh that has a special concern for the oppressed is elaborated in the

community of the twelve tribes, when Yahweh is proclaimed as the God of justice, who does not tolerate injustice and exploitation of the weak. This basic principle of justice that originates from Yahweh, demands that equality and justice receive preference in society.

4.1.5 The God of the Northern Kingdom

In view of the fact that the Northern Kingdom relied so heavily on the Exodus and Sinai traditions, their whole understanding of God was aligned to that of these two traditions.

They interpreted and applied these events as rules for life. The great act of liberation as outlined in the Exodus was interpreted in terms of Yahweh demands of the people he liberated. he in fact demanded from them mercifulness towards others.

His presence and protection could not be taken for granted but he made covenants with those he liberated and they were to respect this covenant through obedience.¹⁴

In terms of the heavy reliance on the exodus event, the people in the Northern Kingdom clearly understood the fact that Yahweh was biased in favour of the weak and the oppressed who called on him. They therefore acknowledged him as a God with power to liberate or to rescue.¹⁵

Prophets like Amos and Hosea's whole understanding and proclamation of God was shaped and formed by these two events and its implications.¹⁶

4.1.6 The God of the Southern Kingdom

The experience of the Southern Kingdom differed significantly from that of their Northern counterpart therefore their history and view of God also differed from the view of those who experienced the Exodus and Sinai events. They depended on the patriarchal tradition and depended on their own experiences for their view of God.¹⁷

The King, the temple and the city of Zion were manifestation of God's will. These were also symbols of God's automatic presence and a legitimization of their faith.¹⁸

Some of the prophets in the Southern Kingdom were satisfied with the upholding of the status quo, while others

like Amos and Hosea had their doubts about God's automatic presence. They spoke out against this by demanding justice for all in Judah or Judah would face destruction.¹⁹

4.1.7 The God of the exile

The experience of the exile renewed the whole understanding of God, especially in the Southern Kingdom. It is significant to note that the Deuteronomist encourages the exiled not to blame God for their situation, but instead to confess their sins before God, calling them to repentance and conversion.²⁰

The Deuteronomist further reiterates the fact that God is just and merciful and has a special concern for the helpless and oppressed people who call on him.

4.2 GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

For our purpose it is only necessary to look at the understanding of God in the New Testament, to the gospels. We shall first concentrate on the prologue to John's gospel and then take a look at the revelation of God in Christ in the Sinoptic gospels. Here we

shall be able to see clearly how God in Christ reveals the same Old Testament characteristics of Yahweh.

4.2.1 The Prologue of John's Gospel

In the prologue concerning the Logos it is said that:

"In the beginning the Logos was, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God ... and the Logos took on flesh and descended to dwell among people of flesh and blood." (John 1:1, 14) According to Ladd, New Testament background, where Yahweh spoke a creative Word.²¹ The purpose of the Logos was to reveal life to all men (1:4), light (1:45), grace (1:14), truth (1:14), glory (1:14) and God himself (1:18).²²

God revealed himself in Christ as the Messiah, because in chapter 1:41 the brother of Andrew testifies to his brother Peter, by telling him that he has found the Messiah.²³ Secondly he revealed himself as the Son of Man. This concept is used frequently by Jesus concerning himself.

4.2.2 The Synoptics

With reference to the Synoptics this saying is used in

three different ways ... "the Son of Man ministering on earth, the Son of Man in humiliation and death, the Son of Man coming in glory to judge man and inaugurate the Kingdom of God."²⁴ In the Synoptic gospels God revealed himself in Christ as the merciful God who has a special concern for the sick (Matt. 8:17), the demonized (Mk. 5), the blind (Mk. 10), the hungry and needy (Luke 1:53) and the poor (Luke 4:18).²⁵

Lastly God revealed himself in Christ as the Son of God. This saying forms one of the significant differences between John's Gospel and the Synoptic Gospel, because it explicitly refers to Christ as the Son of God, and this constitute the main objective of the Johannine Gospel (chapter 20:31) where it is proclaimed, so that the people may believe it.

Having dealt with the concepts of God in both the Old and New Testaments we shall now examine the Exodus paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto. Thereafter we will be in a position to evaluate the assumptions of certain black theologians concerning liberation, which is the hermeneutical key in black theology.

4.3 THE EXODUS PARADIGM

For this exercise our focus is on Exodus 1-15. We shall initially review the situation leading up to the Exodus event. Thereafter we turn our attention to the actual event of liberation from Egypt and the implications thereof for Israel.

4.3.1 The situation of oppression

Exodus chapter one tells a story of immigration. The seventy member strong family of Jacob emigrated to Egypt in order to escape the famine that struck Israel. They joined Joseph who was already an Egyptian citizen. After Joseph's death his descendants multiplied to such an extent that they posed a serious threat to the ruling Pharaoh. This king did not know Joseph's history. He feared that in the event of war the Israelites might join Egypt's enemies and leave the country. The king then came up with shrewd plans to reduce the numbers of the Israelites.

The Israelites were severely oppressed by being forced into terrible conditions of slavery. They were compelled to build the cities Pitom and Ramses. In spite of both Pharaoh's forced birth control programme and their oppression they continued to multiply.

The king then commanded that all boy babies born to the Israelite women should be killed. This was a draconian act demanding that innocent boys must die because they were Israelites.

In Exodus chapter two we read of the birth of the Israelite Moses, his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter, the murder of the Egyptian slave driver, and of Moses subsequent flee to Midian where he married Jethro's daughter. During this period of slavery, the Israelites cried to God for help and deliverance. God heard their cry, he remembered his covenant with the patriarchs, he saw their oppression, he was concerned about their suffering (verses 23-24). Severino Croatto says: "The Hebrews 'cry out' to Yahweh while they 'hope' for liberation."²⁶

4.3.1.1 God's concern for the oppressed

In Exodus chapter three Yahweh called Moses at the burning bush and revealed himself to Moses as the God that hears, sees, remembers and is moved with compassion by the cry of the oppressed. The conversation between Yahweh and Moses in Exodus 3:11, 13 and 4:1, 10, reveals Moses'

fears and doubts regarding his new responsibility. He even asks Yahweh to send someone else. Croatto assumes that this dialogue was necessary because "only in this Yahwist-Elohistic account of Exodus 3-5 do the people come to 'believe'".²⁷

4.3.1.2 The attitude of both Pharaoh and the oppressed

Exodus 7-11 give an account of the plagues which was God's way of dealing with the oppressor. Here we see how difficult it is for oppressor to be obedient to God's voice, because of his own selfishness. Pharaoh's disobedience had a detrimental effect on the liberating process because it nurtured inner doubts and fears in the hearts and minds of the oppressed Israelites.²⁸

The events recounted in Exodus 1-11 served as a very important preparation period. After God saw the oppression and heard the cry of the oppressed, he called Moses and sent him to Pharaoh with a message to release God's people. In this time of preparation God hardened the

heart of Pharoah and thereby developed the faith of his people, so that they should know that in spite of the serverity oftheir oppression, there is a God who sees, hears, remembers and cares about them. He is moved with passion by their cry and he is deeply concerned about their suffering.

4.3.2 Liberation from Egypt

Exodus 12-15 relates the whole liberation event marked at the beginning by the Lords Passover.

Exodus 12:11 onwards recounts the actual liberation from Egyptian oppression and the necessity to annually celebrate this liberation. The annual celibration is a liberative memory for the oppressed, but it is a subversive memory for the oppressor.²⁹ On the one hand it implies freedom from oppression, while it implies judgement to the oppressor.

In the period of Exodus 7-10 God spoke to the oppressor by the mouths of Moses and Aaron in a peaceful manner, but when the oppressor did not listen to them God ultimate

ly used violent methods to bring about change in the heart of the oppressor and in the situation of the oppressed.³⁰ The death of the first borns of the Egyptians changed the hearts but not the mentality of the oppressor. After the Israelites left Egypt, Pharoah followed them in hot pursuit. Yahweh therefore took the Israelites through the sea in a miraculous manner while the Egyptians were drowned in the sea.

When the oppressed Israelites were trapped between Pharoah's men and the deep blue sea, their hearts were terrified and they immediately blamed Moses for the fact that they were going to die in the wilderness. They asserted that they preferred to serve the Egyptians, as slaves rather than to die liberated in the desert (Exod. 14:5-12). This reaction of the Israelites was due to the fact that they were liberated from Egypt, but Egyptian servitude was still reigning supreme in their mentality, and they therefore needed to be liberated from this dangerous oppression as well. Their inward fear to stand on their feet and to be what God wanted them to be also prevented them from entering the promised land (Deut. 1:27-28). The oppressed in South Afirca today needs to be liberated from this same inner oppression that prevents them from being what God wants them to be.

The event of the Exodus is essentially a religious phenomenon. The oppressed called to Yahweh from their situation of oppression and suffering. Yahweh replied by initiating liberation and therefore he is to receive all honour and glory.³¹

4.4 THE NAZARETH MANIFESTO

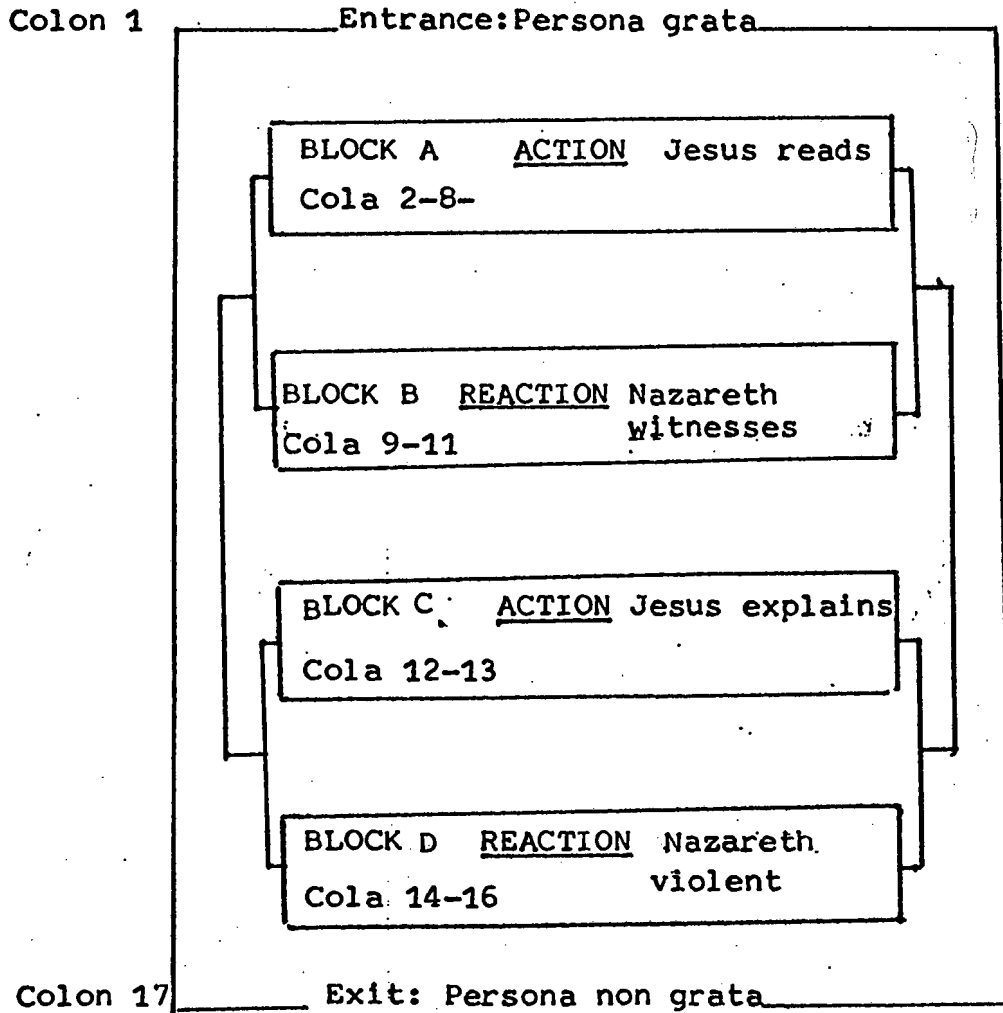
We shall do a detailed exegesis of the whole pericope Luke 4:16-30 which is commonly known as the Nazareth Manifesto. We shall use the structural analysis as outlined by both Combrink³² and Mazamisa.³³ Thereafter we shall be looking at the narrative and figurative organizations of the pericope. The detailed exegesis will enable us to see whether the pericope is marred with incongruities.³⁴ We shall focus on the quotation from Isaiah 61 which in turn refers to Leviticus 25 where the Year of Jubilee with all its implications is explained. It is within this context one has to understand Jesus' words in the synogogue, when he quotes Isaiah 61 and says that it is fulfilled in him. This quotation clearly alludes to the liberation of the poor and the oppressed.³⁵

Before moving to the structural analysis we should first of all take cognizance of the fact that certain biblical scholars assume that this difficult pericope is full of literary and

structural problems.³⁶ This pericope should be viewed in the context of the Luke-Acts framework.

4.4.1 Structural analysis of Luke 4:16-30

(b)



4.4.2 Explanation of the structural analysis

The pericope is divided into four blocks by both Dr. Combrink and Dr. Mazamisa. Dr. Combrink is a white theologian teaching Biblical Studies at the Rand Afrikaans University. Dr. Mazamisa is a black theologian teaching Biblical Studies at the University of Cape Town. They respectively numbered their diagrams (A,B,A¹,B¹) and (A,B,C,D).³⁷

BLOCK A constitutes cola 1-8

Colon 1 forms the introduction and need not to be coupled up with the preceding verses. According to Mazamisa Jesus entered the Nazareth synagogue as a very important or famous person, because verse 15 asserts that "everyone praised him".³⁸

Cola 2-3 consist of a cluster that describe his acquaintance with the synagogue and his actions in the synagogue.³⁹

Cola 4-6 form a cluster. Colon 4 mentions that Jesus read from the book of Isaiah, which is supposed to be read at the mouth of Tishri according to the lectionary theory.⁴⁰ Billerbeck's conclusion is that

in the time of Jesus, reader had freedom of choice.⁴¹ Colon 5 includes quotations from Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. Mazamisa asserts that these verses form their own structure, which is inverted parallelism and it is pivotal. The words *Keruxai* and *ephesei* also have pivotal meaning in the structure. Mazamisa compares the Hebrew versions of the structure and concludes that the Lukan version of Isaiah is not a word for word adaptation of the Masorete Text (MT). There are theories which hold that Luke used other versions or that he freely quoted, and though there are differences between the Lukan version and the MT, the nucleus remains the same.⁴² The quotations from Isaiah is not in Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-6.

Colon 6 concludes the above reading of Jesus uttered in cluster 4 and 5, while colon 7 alludes to the theme of the synogogue in cluster 2 and 3. According to Combrink this constitutes a ring-composition.⁴³ The *atenizotes* (gazing eyes) are significant in this colon.

Colon 8 completes the cluster of colon 5, as Jesus refers back to the Old Testament quotation. The keyword in both this colon and the whole pericope is *semeron*

peplerotai (today the scripture has been fulfilled).

BLOCK B links colon 9-11 together.

Colon 9 describes the response of the Nazareth people, "they all were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips" (verse 22 NIV). The key word in this colon is *Emanturon* (bare witness).

Colon 10 also refers to the response of the audience. Cola 4 and 10 constitute a "lexical unity"⁴⁴ because they both describe the behaviour of the audience. The reason why the people were amazed is not crystal clear.

Colon 11 "is a variant of Mart 6:3 where Jesus is called the son of Mary."⁴⁵

BLOCK A¹ includes cola 12-13.

Cola 12 and 13 Mazamisa's contends that it forms a step parallelism, and that cola 12 Jesus articulated the implicit demand of the audience to see miracles.

The keyword are *latne* (Physician) and *dektos* (acceptable). It is the only instance where Jesus refers to the real attitude of the people namely their implicit demand in 12a. This is also the beginning of the change of attitude of the people. The second part of colon 13 displays the anti-thetical parallelism. "The election-rejection motif becomes dominant. The election-rejection motif in colon 5 is repeated here, because there Jesus elects the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed."⁴⁶

BLOCK B¹ or BLOCK D constitutes cola 14-16.

Cola 14-16 reveal a structural unit that describe the reaction of the audience. What happened here seems to be absurd. The following questions need to be answered: how did Jesus escape the fixed eyes of the crowd? Or does it mean that violence and hatred has such blinding effects on its victims.⁴⁷

Colon 17 - Jesus left his hometown as a *persona non grata*⁴⁸, because the same audience that welcomed him so eagerly now wants to throw him over the brow of the hill on which Nazareth was built.

In conclusion it is important to note that both schematic analyse have four blocks, although there are some differences in their interpretations.

4.4.3 The explanation of the key word in Luke 4:16-30

We shall be concentrating on the key words which are valuable for the comprehension of this narrative, instead of doing a word by word exegesis. These key words are underlined in the above-mentioned blocks.

BLOCK A: colon would be linked with preceding narrative, ends with verses 14 and 15. After the ministry of Jesus in Galilea (verse 14) and Judea (John 1:35-4:44) Jesus returns to Nazareth where he was brought up. It seems that the inhabitants of his hometown had already received the news of its miraculous ministry in Capernaum and elsewhere. His return to his hometown provided them with an opportunity to see Him perform wonders, such a sensational welcome in Nazareth. He entered Nazareth as a *persona grata*. The key words in vers 16 are *Kai elthon* (and he came), *Kai* coupled this narrative with the preceding ones. *Elthon* text refer to a special or important visit to Nazareth.⁴⁹

In colon 3 the key words *aneste anagnomai* (stood up to read) refers to reading from the scroll of Isaiah, while standing, could be interpreted that he indicated to officiate the whole service.⁵⁰

In colon 5 we have a cluster which constitutes the heart of the narrative. It consists of the quotation from Isaiah which is actually an inverted parallelism, both the implicit and explicit conceptual movement hinges on *apestal ken me keruxai aichmalotois aphasin* (he has sent me to proclaim to captives release) and *kai tuphios anablepsin* (and to the blind-ones sight). The key word that forms this structure will be dealt with now.⁵¹

Pneuma kuriou (Spirit of the Lord: The *pneuma* in both the Old and New Testament has a variety of meanings. In the Old Testament *pneuma* (spirit) is translated as *ruach* (breath) and as such it means the breath of God which constitutes the personal will of God and moral objectives. Luke uses *pneuma* (spirit) and *dunamis* (power) which is translated power that proceeded from God in order to bring something in existence.⁵²

The *Pneuma kuriou* (Spirit of the Lord) in this peri-

cope has certain functions. He *enchrise* (anoints) Jesus, just like the Old Testament kings, prophets and priests were anointed, but while they were anointed with oil, Jesus is anointed with the spirit of power, to *euggelisasthai* (to evangelize) the *ptochos* (the poor). If we see this anointing with the spirit as the endowing of Jesus with the kingly office, then surely he is the king of the poor, who came to proclaim the good news to the poor. This does not refer to the idealisation of poverty, because it is seen in the Old Testament as a humiliating and abnormal state, which consequently leads to situations of dependence and oppression or the weak being dominated by the powerful rich.⁵³

The *Pneuma kuriou* that has sent Jesus *apestalken*, with a special mission. In this part of the pericope the servant image⁵⁴ of Jesus is confirmed, because he conceded to his mission in complete obedience. This mission of Jesus includes the proclamation *keruxai*, liberation or release to the captives. The key word *aphesin* has quite a number of meanings such as forgiveness, release and liberation.⁵⁵

Jesus also proclaimed liberation for the *Aichmalotois*

the prisoners of war and the *tuphlois anablepsin* (blind ones sight). In the light of the fact that these groups of people derived from the Old Testament inverted parallelism, it is clear that this poor, captives and blind, does not refer to some religious symbolic situation, but it addresses the real material situation of blindness for instance, because this could easily be the prisoners of war who were blinded by their captors.⁵⁶

The *Pneuma kuriou* (Spirit of the Lord) has sent Jesus to set the crushed ones free, *aposteilai tethrasmenos en aphesei*. This portion of Isaiah 58:6 were inserted and *tethrasmenos* actually describes a situation that implies to break, weaken or to oppress. Both the parables of the great feast (Luke 14:15-24) where the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame were gathered, and that of parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, describes these *tethrasmenos*. All these groups mentioned in this pericope are real human beings of flesh and blood.⁵⁷

This *Pneuma kuriou* (Spirit of the Lord) has also sent Jesus proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord -

eniauton kuriou dektion. The good news which the anointed servant of Yahweh proclaims to the poor has a jubilee undertone, therefore Sloan sees a direct relationship between Luke 4:19 and Leviticus 25, when the jubilee legislation entails, that all debts will be cancelled (whether it be characterized by mortgaged property, personal indenture, or outright loans).⁵⁸ This view is also reiterated by Yoder when he refers to certain characteristics of the jubilee year, viz:

1. "the leaving of the soil fallow;
2. the remission of debts;
3. the liberation of slaves; and
4. the return to each individual of his family property."⁵⁹

On the basis of Yoder's contribution concerning the jubilee year, it is clear that Jesus regarded the matter in a serious light, therefore he declared to the audience in Nazareth that in him this prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled.⁶⁰

BLOCK B: The key words in this block are *emarturon* (colon 9), *ethaunazon* (colon 10) and *tois lagois chariton* (colon 10).

In this block we have the response of the audience to the reading and words of Jesus in Block A. They bore witness (*emarturon*) and they marvelled (*ethaumazon*) at the gracious word of Jesus - (*tois logois charitos*). These words were even more gracious to the poor, the blind, the oppressed and the prisoners.

BLOCK A¹: In this block the two key words are *iatre* (physician) and *dektos* (acceptance). The implicit demand of the crowd in the synogogue were not satisfied, because they expected to see the miracles they had heard of. They expected Jesus to heal the sick, but when this did not happened, Jesus explained to them how they will scold him.⁶¹

Dektos (acceptance) should be understood in the light of *iatre* (healing). Healings were not performed in Nazareth because Jesus was not acceptable.⁶²

BLOCK B¹: In this block we have the reaction of the crowd in the synogogue after their curiosity was not satisfied. The key word is *thumou* (anger) - the crowd responded with anger and tried to kill Jesus.⁶³

This block illustrates the universal nature of Jesus and the kingdom of God in both the Old and New Testament. In cola 5-8 he outlines his mission to the poor, blind, captives and the oppressed while on the otherhand he describe Gods's concern for the gentile widow and the gentile lepers. After these words the people were so furious they tried to kill him, but their violence and hatred so blinded them that they could not see Jesus.

4.4.4 Narrative organization of Luke 4:16-30

Mazamisa constructs the narrative graphically in such a fashion that we have an (1) ordainer, which is Jesus, (2) a principle, which is the message, (3) a helper, which is the *Pneuma*, (4) the opponents, which is Nazareth, and (5) Recipients, which consists of the poor, blind, prisoners and oppressed.⁶⁴

He then assumes that Jesus is both the ordainer and principle of the narrative, who directs his message to both opponents and recipients. His words of grace assure the poor of the fact that in him there is hope and liberation, while it is also a transforming message to the opponents. They can be transformed from opponents

to recipients.⁶⁵

4.4.5. The figurative organization of Luke 16-30

In this section we closely examine the specific roles different people hold in this narrative.

Jesus' role is primarily that of the suffering servant who is sent by the Spirit (*Pneuma*) to herald the good news to the poor and to those on the periphery in society.⁶⁶

The *Pneuma kuriou* plays the role of the sender, anointer and helper of Jesus. Furthermore the *Pneuma* plays a prominent role in the liberation praxis.⁶⁷

The poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed are the very important persons in the whole narrative because they are the addressees of the message of liberation.⁶⁸

Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha, are mentioned because they were used by Yahweh to minister to the needs

of outsiders, and this parallelism is an indication that God has a universalistic nature.⁶⁹

The widow of Zarephath and Naaman are outsiders used in the narrative to represent an anti-type of Nazareth and as such they personify the outcasts in society.⁷⁰

According to Combrink the most important concepts are: the fulfilment motif, today and salvation.⁷¹ In regard to these concepts he asserts: "Not only is the place of the pericope in the structure of the Gospel as a whole important, but the fulfilment motif of colon 8 is a cardinal concept in the Gospel."⁷² Closely connected with the fulfilment motif is the today concept, therefore Combrink contends that: "the today of fulfilment continues right through into the time of the church."⁷³ He further holds that the "... declaration of Jesus in (4:21) indicates that His activity is eschatological ... This kind of exegesis is not strictly rabbinical anymore, but messianic and eschatological".⁷⁴ He continues to state that: "Another leading concept of Luke which comes to the fore in the quotation, is salvation."⁷⁵

It is significant to note the choice of salvation instead of liberation by Combrink. This choice marks a definite shift in Afrikaner theology. Before 1948,

Afrikaners used the similar language liberation theologians are using today. This statement can be substantiated with the following quotation from a speech delivered by Dr. Brink at a 'Volkskongres' in 1947: "The aim of the church is to bring about social justice. Justice must be done to the poor and the oppressed, and if the present system does not serve this purpose, the public conscience must be roused to demand another. If the church does not exert itself for justice in society, and together with the help she can offer also be prepared to serve as champion for the cause of the poor, others will do it. The poor have their right today: I do not ask for your charity, but I ask to be given an opportunity to live a life of human dignity."⁷⁶

In the structural analysis it is evident that this pericope forms a literary and structural unit. The exegesis of this pericope clearly shows that the Isaiah quotation alludes to the Jubilee Year in Leviticus 25, that has political and socio-economic implications. This quotation forms the core of this pericope and it is Luke's major concern. Therefore his gospel concentrates on social issues and on the poor, blind, sick, gentiles and socially outcasts.⁷⁷

We can see clearly that the Spirit of God has sent Jesus to be a servant of both God and humans. In this pericope

he is rejected by his own hometown, when he announced that he was anointed to be the servant of the suffering humanity.⁷⁸ Through this rejection he became the suffering servant that identifies with the suffering humanity.

The exegesis of this pericope therefore illustrates that the whole gospel can be deduced from these themes. It further has illuminated the suffering servant of God is anointed to preach good news to the poor and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord with all its socio-economic and political implications.

With the backdrop of the understanding of God in both the Old and New Testaments, the Exodus paradigm and the exegesis of the Nazareth Manifesto, we shall now proceed to the understanding of God in black theology.

4.5 THE GOD IN BLACK THEOLOGY

The notion that Yahweh is the liberator runs like a golden chord through the writings of black theologians. Boesak holds that the God of the Israelites in the Old Testament revealed himself to Moses and Israel as the liberator who is actively involved

in their liberation from Egyptian bondage.⁷⁹ He is a God that sees the oppression and exploitation of the enslaved peoples, he hears their plight and acts on their behalf to vindicate their liberation. In black theology God is not a metaphysical abstraction that is divorced from society, who "luxuriates in his eternal bliss".⁸⁰ He is a God who intervenes into history and is concerned about the socio-economic and political situation of the oppressed. Their liberation is his pre-eminence. Yahweh is the God of the Exodus that changed the course of history and the destination of nations. Boesak asserts that the God of Exodus is not an insensitive, "unmoved mover who engages in self-contemplation"⁸¹, but he is a God who is concerned about the suffering of the dehumanized oppressed and he wants to liberate them from everything that enslaves them.

Tutu holds that the oppressed people should be aware of the fact that the God of the Bible who has revealed himself as the God of the Exodus is on their side because of their oppression and not because of anything they deserve, God is on their side because of the injustice and suffering meted out on them by their fellow humans and because of God's special concern for the oppressed.⁸² This fact is reiterated by Baartman when he says that the oppressed, downtrodden and disenfranchised blacks need to be reminded constantly that God is for them and is on their side even if it offends the white oppressors.⁸³

From the above we can discern that black theology has no place for, or interest in a God that is neutral in a situation where the evils of injustice and enslavement prevail. God must be in favour of the oppressed and thereby be against the oppressor. Boesak says: "Loving his people means that Yahweh takes the side of his people against the oppressor, the pharaoh."⁸⁴

The liberation that Yahweh vindicated is grimly just because on behalf of the oppressed God judged the pharaoh in Egypt as well as the wealthy and mighty Israelites who exploited the poor in Israel. Yahweh demanded justice for the poor.⁸⁵

Black theologians inevitably arrived at the conclusion that the God of the Bible who is the God of the Exodus, the God of liberation, justice, freedom and humanity is completely in contrast to the God preached about, by whites to blacks for ages, because they preached a God of oppression, injustice, enslavement, subservience-hatred, self-interest and exploitation.⁸⁶

Lediga confirms this when he writes: "the God of the white man is sectarian and selfish, he is not abounding in love."⁸⁷

The God of black theology is the God of the Exodus who has a special concern and passion for the oppressed and poor. He is moved by their suffering and crying to intervene in human affairs, such as socio-economic and political dispossession. He

liberates them from everything that enslaves them, and he brings them into a new situation that is free from exploitation and dehumanization. By doing these mighty acts in history he clearly and publicly takes sides with the oppressed. He confirms the fact that he is an acting or doing God.⁸⁸

The Exodus event provided the Israelites with an understanding of the nature and will of Yahweh in history.⁸⁹ It was through the Exodus that Israel realized that Yahweh is a living, concerned and acting God, moved by human suffering to break through in history to set the oppressed free from bondage. Through the Exodus the minds of the oppressed were shaped and moulded to realize that Yahweh is a righteous God who has a special concern for the down-trodden and exploited. He will surely liberate the poor and oppressed and he will turn against the rich and powerful oppressor.⁹⁰

The Exodus provided the prophets in Israel, who demanded justice for the poor, with a solid base to love mercy and to walk humbly in God's sight.⁹¹

Yahweh brought about the Exodus on behalf of the oppressed in Egyptian bondage, and "it provided liberation theology with a striking paradigm of God's liberating power".⁹² Therefore the Israelites understood both the creation and the future in terms of the Exodus.⁹³

Tutu contends that the Exodus was not a spiritual happening but a historical, tangible experience that involved people of flesh and blood. He therefore would use the term *shalom* (peace that implies wholeness) because it clearly describes the liberation of the whole human existence, including the socio-economic and political realms of life.⁹⁴ This holistic view of the Hebraic understanding of life that encompasses the total human existence provided black theology with a model that can work in the situation of political oppression. Therefore Boesak says blacks in South Africa "need a spiritual and political exodus".⁹⁵

Liberation in the New Testament is proclaimed as a continuation of the Old Testament, because Jesus was a Jew and he did not disassociate himself from the prophetic proclamation of the Old Testament.⁹⁶ In the Nazareth Manifesto he clearly outlines his ministry as a mission in which he favours the poor and the oppressed. His chief concern is to proclaim good news to the poor, release the captives, heal the sick, feed the hungry and proclaim the Jubilee and Sabbatical Year. Boesak says that the proclamation of Luke 4:18-21 must be examined against the backdrop of the Old Testament tradition of the Torah and the prophets.⁹⁷

The poor in this text according to Mosothoane refers to the materially poor and not the poor in spirit, and they are called

hoi ptchoi.⁹⁸ Luke 4:18-21 therefore undoubtedly has socio-economic and political implications and this is confirmed by the praxis of Jesus. He healed the physically sick, he fed the materially hungry, he frequently appeared in the company of the downtrodden and outcasts in society. He did not only spiritually edify those that listened to him, but he also met their physical needs because as a Jew there was no dichotomy sacred and secular, material and spiritual, religious and political.⁹⁹

The expression *hoi ptchoi* not only includes the economically deprived but also the *am ha-arez* the people of the land who were viewed as sinners by the religious leaders in Israel.¹⁰⁰ This is significant because the poor as outlined in the Nazareth Manifesto refers to the socially outcasts, the marginalized.

The public appearance and ministry of Jesus in the synogogue in Nazareth marks the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was at the heart of the mission and proclamation of Jesus. Mosothane states that this Kingdom did not refer to a title or metaphysical idea of kingship, but rather to an act of ruling, a deed in which authority is exercised.¹⁰¹

The Kingdom of God is further viewed and understood as "a saving act".¹⁰² This act liberate from all kinds of sicknesses and diseases placed on people by the chief foe of both God and humanity namely Satan.¹⁰³ This does not mean that the Kingdom is

restricted to healing in only the social, economic, cultural and political situation.¹⁰⁴ It confirms that black theology proclaims and envisages a "total liberation"¹⁰⁵ which includes all spheres of human existence. For liberation theologians the Kingdom of God undoubtedly means the transformation from an oppressive, dehumanized situation to a free situation in which there will be no oppression.¹⁰⁶ This also means that Jesus would side with the poor and oppressed in the same manner that Yahweh is identified with them and against the oppressors.¹⁰⁷

By proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus came into direct conflict with both the religious and political leaders of his day.

Healings on the Sabbath stirred up the anger of the religious leaders on the one side while on the other side Jesus posed a threat to the political leaders like Herod and Pilate. "His life was an example of divine radicality, a profound disturbance of existing order."¹⁰⁸

4.6 EVALUATION

The biblical accounts of the understanding of God, the Exodus paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto are our criteria in this evaluation. The questions that lies before us is to determine

whether or not black theologians come to the Bible with pre-conceived ideas and read these ideas into the Scripture? This question implies that the context of the reader receives preference above the context of the Scripture.

The liberation motif in the Bible is not a part of its *kerygma* (proclamation). It is the essential message that runs through the pages of the Bible. Both Yahweh as liberator and Christ as Anointed messenger of God have a special concern for the oppressed, the poor and the outcasts. God's concern is the liberation of peoples, the perpetuation of justice and equality for all in society.

The liberation that the Bible speaks of is not a highly spiritual experience nor is it a merely political event. It is a total liberation that speaks both to the personal, individual and private matters in life, as well as to the historical, socio-economic and political matters in life. This is a contentious point in black theology because it seems as if the historical, socio-economic and political implications of liberation are emphasized at the expense of the personal, individual and evangelical aspects of liberation.

This might be due to the fact that the oppressors in the South African context hijacked the concepts of reconciliation and salvation. It has been interpreted as something otherworldly that does

not includes social political justice. It therefore emphasized salvation at the expense of liberation. Be that as it may it still does not provide sufficient reason for then to under-emphasize the personal dimension of liberation.

The South African situation in some ways resembles that of the oppressed in Egypt. The cry for liberation is uttered by many oppressed people today. There is therefore no way in which we could assume that the black theologians come to the Bible with preconceived ideas. What is vital is that they read the Bible from their context and hear the Spirit speak to their hearts and minds about their suffering.

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CHAPTER 5

THE SOURCES FROM WHICH BLACK THEOLOGY DRAWS TO DEFINE ITS ANTHROPOLOGY

In South Africa blacks are oppressed because of the colour of their skin. The humanness of blacks is negated or denied only because they are black, and this has resulted in the negative anthropology. . Black Consciousness marks the emergence of the positive black anthropology, and black theology is the theological expression of this positive anthropology. Liberation plays a significant role in this positive anthropology. In this chapter we shall discuss the sources from which Black theology draws in order to define its anthropology.

There are some Black theologians who assume that the Traditional African Religions offer some positive aspects that are significant to the whole understanding of the positive anthropology.

There are different sources from which black theology draws in order to define its understanding of a positive and authentic anthropology. According to Mgojo and Muzorewa these different sources are as follows:- the Bible, the black experience in South Africa, black history, black culture, black tradition and the Afro-American theological heritage.¹

In this chapter we shall divide these sources into three sections, namely (1) The Bible, (2) The black experience, and (3) The Traditional African Religions. In the latter we shall be dealing with the black history, black culture, black tradition and the relationship between black theology and African theology.

.1 THE BIBLE

The Bible is undoubtedly the most important well from which black theology draws in its pursuit of an authentic anthropology amidst confusion and contradictions in the situation of oppression. This prominence of the Bible in black theology is expected because black theology professes to be a Christian, biblical theology that serves as a corrective towards the apartheid theology in South Africa.

Black theology, as well as other liberation theologies, concentrates on certain biblical notions such as the liberation-Exodus paradigm, the original divine intention for creation, the gospel of the poor and oppressed, the biblical interpretation of love (especially neighbourly love), justice and reconciliation.

Boesak assumes that the Exodus-liberation motif throughout the Old Testament and Jesus' proclamation of his concern for the poor, oppressed and captives forms the *cantus firmus* of the entire biblical message.² He argues that liberation is not merely a portion of

gospel message nor is it in line with the gospel but it constitutes the whole content and frame of reference of the entire gospel of Jesus Christ.³ Liberation therefore is not a flash here and there of God's activity in human history, but it runs like a golden chord throughout the entire Scripture. It serves as a witness to the oppressed, and it confirms the fact that the God of the Bible is the God of the Exodus. Therefore liberation theologians approach both creation and the eschatology in the light of the Exodus.

Boesak holds that the Exodus occurrence in the Old Testament is as important as the resurrection in the New Testament, because both represent and symbolize the same reality, namely hope for the oppressed.⁴

The preferential option of the liberation motif in the Old Testament statement is upheld by Jesus in the New Testament. When he defined his ministry in the synogogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21) he clearly opted for a bias in favour of the poor and the oppressed. In his whole ministry he concretized this definition of his mission, because he openly identified with the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden in society. Boesak asserts: "This text lies at the heart of the theology of liberation."⁵

It is not only the liberation motif that features mainly in liberation theology, as the essence of the biblical proclamation but the God of the Bible is portrayed as the Liberator, who break

through human history to vindicate the liberation of the oppressed.⁶ The God of the Bible according to black theologians is a anti-metaphysical God who hears the cry of his people, the oppressed, he remembers his covenants, he sees their suffering, oppression and exploitation, he knows who is responsible for this state of injustice and dehumanization, he is moved by their suffering and cry, therefore he acts on their behalf to set them free from oppression. Mosothoane significantly notes that black theologians approach the revelation of God in both Old and New Testament in the light of Exodus 2-3 and Luke 4:16-21 respectively.⁷

Beside the liberation motif black theologians are very much concerned about the divine intention for creation. They want to adhere to the biblical teaching in this regard as well, therefore they do not assume that creation and humans came about or into being by some evolutionary accident. They clearly observe the fact that humans are beings whom the God of the Bible created.

Manas Buthelezi argues that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. He holds that this image does not refer to physical resemblance but rather implies a relationship between God and humanity. This he calls the unique dignity of humans. This dignity, he further argues, implies that God had delegated some authority to humans, therefore they were commanded to subdue the rest of creation, in the same manner that God would have done it as his representatives in this world.⁸

Boesak is in complete agreement with Buthelezi when he says that dominion supposes that humans should be liberated persons who are the subjects of their own humanity who accept total responsibility for the complete realization of their own being and that of their fellow humans.⁹

Tutu also analyses the two creation narratives in Genesis 1:26 and 2:7. He concludes that in the first narrative God commands and enables humans to exercise authority over the created universe as God's representatives. The second narrative implies that humans were in complete harmony with God, one another and the whole of creation and that individuals were at peace with themselves.¹⁰

These proponents of black theology do not merely appropriate the original divine intention of creation with its positive view of human being. They are also willing to take cognizance of the negative side of the first human beings in Genesis who, through dis-obedience to God, fell prey to sin. They stipulate how sin caused disruption and alienation and separation that was brought about by sin, but they proclaim that God in Christ reconciled the world to himself.

Tutu holds that reconciliation implies the restoration of broken friendship and fellowship, between God and humans, between humans and humans and between humans and the rest of creation.¹¹ This is what "at-one-ment" means.¹²

Buthelezi and Boesak argue that reconciliation is not only the ending of animosity, but in Jesus Christ God has made it possible for new humans who have encountered him to become new creatures (according to 2 Cor. 5:17) to participate in the everyday life here and now.¹³

The biblical concepts of love, reconciliation and peace receive special attention in the writings of these liberation theologians, because apartheid theology has hijacked these concepts and spiritualized them to such an extent that they can speak about love without doing love; speak about reconciliation without breaking down the structures of apartheid; speak about peace while they are doing nothing to obtain real peace. Boesak holds that no peace, love and reconciliation is possible where there is no justice, because the Bible clearly states that God's love is always accompanied by his justice. Love is not a misleading affection but rather startlingly concrete. To love God is to do justice. God's justice is the well from which black theologians receive their certainty that God cares.¹⁴

Black theologians are not satisfied with the spiritualization of the biblical portions that refer to the concrete situation of oppression and liberation. They therefore attempt to deal with the Bible in a concrete historical manner. For them the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt were both a religious and political community and it was very difficult for them to make a Platonic

distinction between the secular and sacred, because their Yahweh was concerned about their spiritual and physical being.

In the same way, they adhere to the fact that Jesus was a Jew and to his understanding of his mission which he outlines in the Nazareth Manifesto. Therefore we should understand Jesus' ministry and life in the tradition of the Old Testament. Mosothoane says that black theology approaches the Bible literalistic although they are not fundamentalistic, and he further holds that their hermeneutical key is undoubtedly liberation. This is because black theologians turn to the Bible with a burden due to their oppression and they are in quest of God's purpose for human existence.¹⁵

Black theology has a strong soteriological approach because of the liberation motif that plays a fundamental role in its use of the Bible. The Exodus-event is evident in the whole life of Israel throughout the Old Testament and culminates in the Nazareth-event. This clearly shows that the liberation notions of the Old Testament is fundamental to the New Testament. Understanding of salvation or liberation as wholeness of life in Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-18 constitute "a liberating deed which creates room for reconciliation, for the return of true community and authentic humanity".¹⁶ Therefore the liberation that black theologians pursue is a total liberation that demands justice, just as the Hebraic understanding, *shalom*, does.

Black theology attempts to highlight the original meaning of Scripture because the apartheid theology has distorted Scripture with its spiritualization and compartmentalization of life.¹⁷ This has created the impression that the Bible was nothing but an ideological tool used by the white oppressors to keep the oppressed people in subservience and to prevent any progressive action such as riots and boycotts. Therefore black theology as a Christian and biblical theology attempts to correct this misuse of Scripture and at the same time assure blacks that the Bible, when correctly interpreted, actually condemns the apartheid status quo. They assume that the original meaning of Scripture correctly appropriated becomes a dangerous threat for the status quo, because of its subversive and revolutionary nature.

The idea of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years in the Old Testament has drastic social and political implications, because it speaks of the return of property to its original owners¹⁸ or their descendants, and the setting free of slaves (Ezek. 46; Isa. 61; Lev. 25). Black theologians assert that they should be more obedient to God than to any earthly power when it comes to their existential situation where injustice and oppression are perpetuated. They prefer to be obedient servants unto God and to speak out against or defy the unjust rule as the Old Testament prophets. Bishop Tutu in a personal letter to Mr. Botha, which he (Botha) made public, in The Argus, commenting on a march undertaken

by several church leaders to deliver a petition against new restrictions against 17 progressive, democratic organizations, asserts that their marching orders originate from the God of the Bible and not from any other human being or political ideology.¹⁹ In his letter Bishop Tutu demonstrates the importance of the Bible as a source in black liberation theology's attempt to define their authentic humanity amidst the horrendous oppression of the unbiblical, unchristian immoral nature of the apartheid system of South Africa.²⁰

5.2 THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

The second source from which black theology draws in its endeavour to come up with authentic positive anthropology is the black experience of oppression and religious contradictions. In the ranks of black theologians there are some differences on the importance of the black experience and the Bible. It seems as if Cone places more emphasis on the black experience when he assume that there "is not truth for and about black people that does not emerge out of the context of their experience".²¹

Boesak, Tutu, Mgojo and Buthelezi seem to regard the Bible as the main source of black theology, while they also affirm the importance of the black experience as an important source, because black theology is a contextual theology.²²

Black theology as contextual theology attempts to understand the revelation of God in Jesus Christ from a situation of oppression. This experience of oppression and exploitation which is the point of theological reflection, is the black experience, because blackness operates as a determinant in the situation. Buthelezi argues that blackness has theological, social, economic and political implications. It determines and embraces the whole existence of peoples. Where they should live, whom they should marry, who their friends should be, what kind of education they should receive and in which trains they should travel.²³ The possibilities for blacks in the apartheid system are being determined by the colour of their skins and not by their intellect, qualifications of ability.

Boesak argues that the greatest evil and threat of black humanity is their existence in a racist society, but he says that the greatest evil of it all is the fact that Christians are perpetuating this racism.²⁴ It is in theological reflection on the black experience that the oppressed blacks encounter the contradictions between the biblical source and their experience. Therefore black theologians are attempting to make the biblical revelation relevant for the situation and that is why they constantly ask critical questions regarding their oppression in the light of the Scripture. These questions include the following: Why

did God create us black? What does it mean to be black and to be a Christian at the same time in a racist society?

These questions are directly related to the unfair treatment blacks receive solely because they are black. The life and humanity of all black people is negated on biological grounds, such as race and colour. Boesak holds that the apartheid experience for blacks in South Africa " means bad housing, being underpaid, pass laws, influxcontrol, migrant labour, group areas, resettlement camps, inequality before the law, fear, intimidation, white bosses and black informers, condescension and paternalism, in a word, black powerlessness".²⁴ The black experience is a situation of enslavement to conditions of subservience, oppression, exploitation in which blacks are deprived of their humanity and God-given right to exercise dominion over the rest of creation as representatives of God. The situation of the black experience calls for justice because it constitutes a cry unto God.

The black experience and the message of the Bible are interrelated. The one should not be emphasized at the expense of the other, because they complement each other. Therefore liberation theology is a continual action -reflection process, that encompasses both praxis and theory. The black experience says all the negative things about the black humanity, while the

Bible through the eyes of the oppressed provides the positive elements that confirm the fact that the black experience is not God's intention nor his will for creation. When the black experience says you are non-beings because you are not white, the Bible says God created you black and in his image and likeness. When the black experience says you must be separated from each other along ethnic lines, the Bible says God created us for fellowship and togetherness. When the black experience highlights the issues that divide us in society, the Bible according to black theology offers the remedy to bring about wholeness. Cone asserts: "We cannot afford to do theology unrelated to human existence."²⁵

5.3 TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS

The scenario of the sources from which black theology draws is incomplete without the significant contribution of the traditional teachings that undoubtedly have a major contribution to add to the biblical experiential sources. The traditional and cultural value of life as wholeness, the respect for human life and the sense of belonging and togetherness are some of the basic tenets that Traditional African religions have to offer.

Buthelezi explains how the native peoples in South Africa viewed

life as wholeness in which religious, social and political life constitute the holistic approach. The social, political and religious community were one and the same community. There was no separation between sacred and secular, individual and community but the whole reality was under God's supreme reign.²⁶ This corporate understanding of reality coincides with the Hebraic view of life in the Old Testament, where Israel was viewed both as a religious and political entity.

Black theology goes back to the time before colonialism and theologians are reappropriating for today the essence of human existence of communion, fellowship and solidarity so important in the Traditional World view. The sense of togetherness and belonging instead of the Western philosophy of individualism is embraced. Dwane refers to Mbiti's proverb of "I belong, therefore I am".²⁷ In this same manner Boesak also quotes the well known African saying, "*Motho ke motho ka batho*" which means one is only human because of others, with others, for others".²⁸

These idioms confirm the fact that black theology is a theology for and about blacks, wherein they are constantly reminded that they are human beings, only when they respect the humanity of others. Humans are never created to be islands in themselves but they are created for fellowship, togetherness and harmony. This implies that they should strive for the full realization

of their own humanity which is so intimately bound up with the humanity of others. It means to live and let live with the emphasis on the let live because one is only human through and with others.

Black theologians are attempting to reappropriate the past in order to root black theology in black history, culture and tradition. However Mosala warns of the dangers of reappropriating the past without acknowledging its limitations and deceive ourselves like other before us.²⁹

This brings us to the question about the relationship between Black and African theology and the limitations of both. The debate concerning the relationship between the Black and African theology revolves around the methodology, the context and history of the two theologies. Some proponents of these two advocate an absolute division, while others are in favour of a constant dialogue, mutual critique and possible intergration. Clearly some of the exponents of these theologies believe they are siblings while some view them as distant cousins.

The major issue is that African theology's approach is ethnographic, culturally concerned and has indigenization as its main objective. Black theology's approach is anthropological, socio-economic and political with the liberation of the oppressed

blacks from all bondage as its main objective.

The main conflict between these two theologies was started by John Mbiti in an article "An African Views American Black Theology".³⁰ In this article he asserts that: "Black theology was born from pain and communicates pain and sorrow to those who study it ... One would hope that theology arises out of spontaneous joy in being a Christian, responding to life and ideas as redeemed. Black theology, however, is full of sorrow, bitterness, anger and hatred."³¹ This assertion assumes that black theologians does not know the joy of being Christian in Africa, because black theology was born out of a situation of pain, suffering and oppression, while African theology claim to be the authentic theology that communicates the joy of being a Christian in Africa.

Manas Buthelezi launched a vehement attack on African theology for what he calls the "ethnographic approach"³² which features in its tendency towards cultural objectivism and the tendency to overlook present-day realities. In his contribution Buthelezi assumes that African theology is politically docile because it fails to take the situation of political, socio-economic dehumanization seriously.³³

Kwesi Dickson explains the differences by saying that African theologians outside South Africa are not ruled by white oppres-

sors therefore they do not see any sense in addressing the socio-economic and political issues, but are rather concerned about the indigenization of Christianity in Africa. He assumes this is because of the attitude of the colonialist to regard African culture tradition and values as primitive and therefore inferior to Western culture. Now, in post-colonialism African theologians are only concerned to substitute Western culture with African culture.³⁴

While Mbiti and Buthelezi represent the two extremes there are people, like Setiloane, who view African and black theology as stable mates with different roles to play in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. Gabriel Setiloane asserts: "African Theology should never, inspite of all the taunts of failing to be 'prophetic' in the traumatic situation the black people find themselves in South Africa, cease to see its role as sending the Blacks back to their grassroots. In doing so it is a Theology of Hope."³⁵

Tutu and Boesak assume that South African black theologians are African theologians, because they are very suspicious of what they call a theology of indegenization that devides people.³⁶

Mosala holds that both black and African theology are incomplete without the other but he holds that the problem lies with the proponents of these theologies. He further asserts that both

these theologies and their exponents are rooted in liberal ideology. The failure to acknowledge fully the contribution of and intergrated relation between the two, is a direct result of their liberal ideological captivity. African theology is apolitical because it ignores the present day realities, and Black theology is ahistorical because it ignores the past. Mosala views the difference between the two theologies as their weakness. He says what is needed is a inseparable and reciprocal relation.

The relationship between African and black theology should be a reciprocal existence in which the political and the historical actually serve and enrich each other, in order to eradicate the weakness.³⁷ What is needed is that these two theologies should support each other and contribute towards the solidarity of the black struggle for justice in South Africa.

We have seen that the three sources from which black theology draws in its attempt to recover and assert the authentic black anthropology are interrelated and each has a significant and unique contribution to make. The Bible provides the basis, the positive elements of human and community centredness from the Traditional African Religions, and the black experience that constitute the context of everyday life under Apartheid. Clearly in South African situation of oppression and exploitation blacks are enduring, there is only one answer viz. black theolo-

gy because black theology addresses the issue of black human suffering.

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CHAPTER SIX

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

We have examined black theology against the backdrop of the Biblical anthropology. In this section we have seen that all humans are created in the image and likeness of God. This image and likeness implies human dignity, human rights, freedom, responsibility and the equality of all humans regardless of race, colour and sex.

We have seen that apartheid dehumanize blacks in South Africa, because of their blackness. Their total human existence constitutes the negative anthropology. In this negative anthropology their humanity is not acknowledged and respected as God-given. This negative anthropology was initiated by apartheid and is maintained and perpetuated by apartheid. The apartheid philosophy is not only a political system, but it is a pseudo-religion, in which the human dignity and human rights of blacks are denied on the basis of their otherness. This pseudo-religion is vicious because it has the ability to make blacks doubt the fact that they are created in the image of God. Apartheid operates on two levels; a psychological one because blacks are brainwashed to believe all the negative things whites say about them; and a practical one where blacks and whites are not allowed to live

together in the same residential areas, to worship together in the same churches as brothers and sisters in Christ, to use the same public amenities, and to participate in the same decision making processes.

We have traced the history of the emergence of the critical consciousness of the negative anthropology, and the move towards a positive anthropology. We have seen how blacks in both the early and recent history resisted the attempts of the negative anthropology to subjugate and further dehumanize them. We have seen that this rejection of the negative anthropology was articulated in black consciousness and black theology. Black theology declares this black negative anthropology biblically unjustifiable and morally repugnant. It attempts to give a positive answer to blacks in this situation. Black theology therefore is a theology for and about blacks. It articulates the grievances of blacks and it attends to their aspirations concerning their humanity. It attempts to address the issue concerning the dehumanization of blacks. Black theology works with the biblical anthropology. It proclaims and adheres to the divine intention for humanity as a whole. In regard black theologians assert that all humans are created in the image and likeness of God. This image of God is developed into a positive anthropology over and against the negative anthropology. Another aspect of the assertion of the positive anthropology, is the contribution of the Black Con-

sciousness philosophy as awareness process to their humanity. The contribution of Black Consciousness philosophy is evident in black theology when it urges blacks to accept their blackness with pride and gratitude towards God, who not did make a mistake by creating people black.

We have seen that black theology is not merely satisfied with the positive mental attitude, therefore it proclaims liberation as outlined in both the Exodus paradigm and the Nazareth Manifesto. In the Exodus paradigm Yahweh has revealed himself as the Liberator of the oppressed, who called upon him. He is the God who was concerned about the suffering of the oppressed Israelites in Egyptian bondage. Similarly he is concerned about black suffering in South Africa today, and he is willing to intervene in human affairs to change the destiny of nations. This liberation motif is also evident in the Nazareth Manifesto in which Jesus identified himself with the poor and outcasts in society.

In South Africa today black theology proclaims that the God of the Exodus who revealed himself in Christ Jesus, in the New Testament is always moved by the cry of the oppressed and he always intervenes in history to vindicate the liberation of the oppressed. Therefore God will vindicate the liberation of the oppressed from the shackles of the demonic apartheid ideology they will recover their full humanity here and now.

We have looked at the sources from which black theology draws in

its definition of black positive anthropology. We have seen how the Bible, Traditional African Religions and the black experience are interrelated.

We have shown that black theology is the only way out of the situation of dehumanization. It is only black theology that can recover the deprived humanity of the dehumanized black in South Africa. What has been lost through apartheid can be regained by black theology.

We therefore draw the following conclusions: Black theology is not an ideology or racism in reverse. It is an earnest attempt to address the issue of black suffering from a biblical point of view. Clearly black theology is a quest for a true humanity in South Africa.

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