

### **3. HUMAN DIGNITY AND IDENTITY; ACCORDING TO APARTHEID AND ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD**

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The old apartheid order has come to disintegrate very rapidly during the past two years (since 2 February 1990). This does not, however, imply that we already know how the new order would be like. The reason is that apartheid's *day* has passed, but not apartheid *itself*. It has been *scaled down*, but has not yet been *obliterated*. This will only happen once a whole new dispensation dawns.

#### **1. Introduction**

For that reason we have to be careful of an euphoria which expresses itself in, for example, an expression such as "a *new* South Africa". Euphoria tends to blind people to reality.

The idea of a brand-new South Africa can be concomitant with or be a sign of the fact that one is unwilling to be confronted with the realities of the "old" (apartheid) South Africa and to be able to discuss them openly. "We now have to forget what is past, because it is unproductive to discuss it", is often said. The idea of a "new South Africa" is supposed to indicate a complete break with the past. We can now start anew — like Adam and Eve in the Paradise! — and the past is erased as if it had never been.

This idea could further mask the fact that there are still fundamental differences in the present about what the "new" South Africa is going to look like. I can understand "a new South Africa" as rhetoric of political parties and even advertising slogans of beer breweries, but this should not deceive us. We cannot obtain a *new* nation as one buys a new shirt, a dress, a car or a house. We can mostly expect *another* —hopefully *better* — South Africa. (In the last part of this paper I will give a few outlines of the Biblical principles on which such a better South Africa should be built.)

Because apartheid is not yet dead and finally buried, it is still important to reflect on it — outside South Africa too. Should one wish to fully break away from apartheid, one should know what apartheid is exactly, for one may wrongly assume that one has finally broken away from it. And I am convinced that many people — not only abroad but even in South

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Africa — have never fully plumbed the depths of apartheid. This is also true of many of those who drove the apartheid vehicle.

In the course of the last ten years the Institute for Reformational Studies has made an attempt by way of conferences, both nationally and internationally, to break down the Berlin wall of shame between white and coloured in South Africa. There were many days when 'I have felt helpless and mired in doubt as to whether the day would ever dawn that one would no longer need only to *criticize and demolish* but would also be able to begin *building a new future*. The time for rebuilding has, however, approached more closely. To be able to rebuild, one has to know what exactly apartheid was and recognize the width and depth and breadth of the damage done by it.

Apartheid is an ideology, and moreover a dangerous one. I could easily indicate that it is an ideology by way of general traits which one finds in practically all ideologies, but I do not intend to follow this way. I would rather start from the presupposition that it is an ideology and then try to typify this specific ideology. My own (preliminary) definition of what an ideology is (see Appendix, p.52) serves as background for the following analysis.

From my characterization it will emerge that the ideology of apartheid reveals many different faces — it is like a many-headed monster. What will also emerge from my analysis is what this ideology's vision of human dignity and identity is. I would therefore like to briefly indicate what I consider to be the Biblical vision of human dignity and identity. From this it will become clear that the two visions of human dignity and identity are diametrically opposed to each other.

My final introductory remark is important: I use South African apartheid simply as an *example* of how people should *not* relate to each other if human dignity and identity are to be realized. In many other countries in the world apartheid also occurs, or human dignity and identity are violated. I therefore do hope that people outside South Africa will also find something of meaning in this section. I especially hope that the universal Biblical message (the last section) — even if very elementary — will be of value to all my readers.

## **2. The ideology of apartheid**

Apartheid is not simply a *political policy*. It is also not simply a collection of *segregational laws* so that, as soon as the laws have been repealed, apartheid will also disappear. It is a stubborn *ideology* which causes people to view reality in a certain way. This is the *foundation* of the whole South African societal order. It has also led to a physical *condition*

of unequal distribution of power and prosperity.

The religious explanation (a kind of Calvinism) or romantic definition (for example, Voortrekker history) given to apartheid is not the essential one. The “philosophy” behind it is the most important. I do not here intend to give a detailed analysis of all the possible influences that led to the origin of this ideology. There are studies available which mention, among others, Mussolini and Salazar’s fascism, late feudalism, German romanticism, national socialism, racism, colonialism, etc. as possible influences.

At least the following six ideological characteristics can be discerned in apartheid:

*\*A nationalist ideology*

Nationalism has had as aim to break with the inequality of the feudal system and the hierarchical view of authority on which it was built. The important question, however, is how the diversity among people should be understood should they all be equal. The solution proposed by nationalism has been that people do not stand beneath each other (as for example, in the hierarchical feudal system), but in clearly distinguishable groups *next to* each other. In other words, there is not a vertical but a horizontal distinction between people. This is not a distinction of non-equals but of equals. (Cf. the well-known apartheid credo of “separate but equal”.) This separateness would at the same time imply the freedom of a nation (“volk”) as well.

Afrikaner nationalism should be understood against the background of the threats to the address of the Afrikaner nation: first by British colonialism, and later on the black people were regarded as a danger because they outnumbered the whites. There is nothing wrong with being proud of one’s own national identity and to try to protect and to maintain it. (All over the world we today experience a revival of ethnic nations.) What is wrong, however, is to absolutise national identity and to uphold it to the disadvantage of other ethnic groups, as happened in the case of the apartheid ideology. National pride and identity are something good, but nationalism is wrong.

*\*A communalist ideology*

There are no ranks among human beings but rather categories, and each human being belongs to such a homogeneous category which encompasses the individuals. The individual is not, therefore, the basic building block of humanity. Individuality is totally subservient to collectivity. The group is a closed entity in itself. The diversity does not primarily lie in the individual, but in a number of homogeneous groups which exist *adjacent to* each other and which are called nations (“volke”). Each nation is unique, has a

unique “national soul”, its own language, culture and communal history.

The national group therefore demands primary ontological status, it exists prior to the individual. The nation does not come into being through free association — one cannot choose the group to which one wishes to belong, one cannot acquire the group character. One is born into it, inherits it.

Man can furthermore only live meaningfully if man has a place within the group. For that reason it is necessary for each group to have its own church, education, government, etc. In order to be fully human, each person has to be among his/her *own*. And in order to realize the *own* group, *others* should be excluded. The group may never be a *mixture!* For the sake of the complete development of man, humanity has to be sorted into purified nations. This should be done not only biologically, but also with regard to the entirety of their existence: political, ecclesiastical, educational and even geographically. From this it clearly emerges that apartheid is not merely an innocent theory but a restrictive, totalitarian ideology.

As soon as one has brought together “that which should be together” (D.F. Malan, first apartheid prime minister), with each nation having its own territory, without interference in each other’s affairs, “separate equality”, “peaceful co-existence” or “maintenance of diversity” has been achieved.

At first glance it seems to be very positive. The idea of the maintenance of diversity contains, however, something of a dialectic or tension. A nation can only exist if there are other nations from which it can be distinct! But at the same time these other nations constitute a threat to the own nation. (The existence of the own nation is therefore negatively bound to the other!) The own will therefore have to be defended continually. “Order” is, in this framework, essentially a concept of hostility. Inherent in the concept of apartheid is the possibility that violence can — must — be evoked.

#### *\* A racist ideology*

In the early phase of the development of the ideology of apartheid the concept of “race” was rejected as part of its viewpoint. The primary idea was diversity of *national* groups and not *racial* groups. For that reason proponents of apartheid indignantly rejected suggestions that apartheid could be no other than Nazi philosophy. Nationalism (which apartheid stood for), after all, acknowledges the equality of all nations. Nationalist collectivism or communalism is not a suppressive but a liberating policy. A shared democracy would, in accordance with this view, however, lead to the suppression of one or more groups. Apartheid then seems to be the only way to effect real equality in a heterogeneous society.

Theologians and politicians advanced the idea that European cultural values in Africa should at all costs be protected, that the own cultures of Africa should not be destroyed and that (gradual) political and economic “enfranchisement” should be given to Black people to discourage them not to enter into immediate competition with highly developed Europeans. In this way conflict could be avoided.

Proponents of apartheid did later acknowledge that racist elements intruded, but according to them it was not the intention to discriminate (or, in their jargon, differentiate) on the basis of skin colour. The *pure* theory of apartheid (nationalism) has to be distinguished from the *impure* (racism). In the eighties many of the measures of petty apartheid were repealed. (These were measures which determined ad hoc contact among people of different skin colour at the individual level, for example separate facilities, work reservation, marriages, etc.) The idea of apartheid was narrowed down: it would only apply to the mutual individual *relationships* of people in society and not to the *ordering of the whole* of society (grand apartheid). In this wale idea has been created and also disseminated that apartheid was dead.

Racism, however, is not only a superior or hostile *attitude* towards somebody with a different skin colour. Such attitudes of prejudice have been the *results* of racism. Racism is also an ideology of a totalitarian nature. It influences the structures and not only the individuals of a society. And for that reason one does not simply get rid of it by a change of heart.

Just like nationalism, racism also emanates from people's group allegiances. There is a twofold difference, however:

- (i) Racism views the cohering factor of a-group as being biological. What binds people together or conversely distinguishes them, is their genetic similarity. There is a biological determination (for example, skin colour) of who should be together. In this ideology therefore one has even less of a choice than in the case of nationalist communalism, which also considers among others, issues such as language, culture and religion.
- (ii) Racism does not accept the equality of people. The whole of mankind is viewed to occupy different levels of development. Racism sees mankind as consisting of groups “by nature” higher and therefore better, and “by nature” lower and therefore inferior. In full-blown racism man is nothing more than manipulable matter. Those who are by nature “on top” have the right to subject those by nature “below”.

After forty years of apartheid one also does not see a societal order which reflects the idea of national-collectivism. Although the *theory* concerned national groups, the *practice* never

went further than division between black and white, that is, races. (The homeland policy is an exception.) Racism was especially rampant and visible during the phase of petty apartheid (the fifties to the middle eighties) with all the infamous apartheid signs. Fortunately petty apartheid has been abolished by law —something at least to be grateful for.

Racism, however, still emerges from the tricameral system in Parliament: Whites (first-class citizens) have the power and rule with the “contribution” of Coloureds and Indians (second-class citizens) while the Blacks (third-class citizens) have been excluded. This is far removed from a theory of equal nations — one cannot here speak of either equality or of nations.

Racism is thus no coincidental adjunct to the apartheid ideology. It also does not only manifest in the form of petty apartheid. The *foundation* on which the whole of society has been organized is racism. Therefore it has to be changed *radically* and mere *adjustments* will not suffice.

The good intentions with which nationalism has been dished up, have blinded us to the fact that racism has been the controlling order in South African society. It will then be of no help, in the establishment of a new South Africa, to simply choose between nationalism and racism. (Which emerges today in the “group” rhetoric.) Nationalism and racism are twin brothers. A collectivist nationalism Cannot function without racism. The vague group concept of nationalism does not enable apartheid ideologues to divide people into nations, but the concept of race does offer the possibility of classifying people into groups, and is easier to administer.

#### *\* A security ideology*

Within the concept of diversity of the apartheid ideology one finds an awareness of insecurity locked up, because the unity (the homogeneous nation) is continually threatened by the diversity of nations or races.

Maintenance of the own and defensibility (spiritual and physical) have become key concepts. Salvation is to be found in the own ideology. In a way as is typical of ideology, the image of the enemy (to which the own image is negatively linked) is blown up. The world (outside the nation) is wrong and has to be recreated. Debate and compromise are also not possible.

Opposition only demands redoubled vigilance. Violence, however, is not viewed as violence

as such, but is simply self-defence against the “criminals” who do not wish to comply with the reigning order.

What is also typical of an ideology is the fact that mirage enemies are created. The slogan of the preservation of Christianity as against the totalitarian onslaught of godless Communism or Marxism — or even the Illuminati and the New Age — was a well-known way of convincing people to accept the apartheid ideology. Anyone who does not tread the prescribed route, is dismissed by way of a cheap epithet such as “traitor to the nation”. It is understandable that a growing resistance has come into being against this security ideology. During the eighties naked violence became the main political power ploy in the guise of the state security ideology. This extended to include not only the government but also the ANC and the PAC. Violence incited counter-violence and the violence spiral went out of control. This finally culminated in the announcement of a state of emergency. What is also known is South Africa’s violence and destabilization in even its neighbouring countries. I do not want to repeat the well-known history here.

What is clear is that a security ideology such as apartheid cannot be realized without violence. In order to reconstruct the whole of society, to make a success of social engineering, an enormous input, equal to a war effort, was needed. Apartheid has been a total onslaught on South Africa! In order to stop violence in principle, then, means to stop apartheid.

*\* An ideology of prosperity*

The architect of hyper-apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, taught that apartheid was merely a political and not an economical issue. Apartheid is not economically neutral, however. In essence it is an economic policy. Why else does the present abyss between rich and poor coincide almost fully with distinction in skin colour?

This began with the poor economic conditions whites found themselves in after the Anglo-Boer War and the Depression of the thirties. And this is still true today when whites allege that they will be robbed of their possessions when a black government takes power. The mere thought of the division of prosperity is enough to evoke a hysterical reaction, while South Africa at present is one of the countries with the greatest contrast between rich and poor.

Because the ideological propaganda positioned apartheid against Marxism, South Africa is regarded, in economic terms, as die model of a free-market economy. South Africa, however, is not at all an example of a free or capitalist economy. Its economy is nearly as

centrally planned, manipulated and orchestrated as that of any communist country. And how could this be otherwise? A programme of social engineering, as has been the case with apartheid, cannot let itself be prescribed to by a free-market directed economy!

The South African economy has clearly been a kind of “affirmative action” in favour of the whites in general and the Afrikaners specifically. Prosperity has been channeled consciously to be concentrated in certain places and to the advantage of certain groups. Apartheid could therefore also be described as an oligarchy, a government for the rich.

Such a bureaucracy, however, does not *create* prosperity but simply *consumes* it. All the control measures prevent creativity and in the end strangles the economy of a country. For too long there has been total dependence on the export of gold and minerals, and the private and industrial sector has not been developed adequately. Large sums of money later had to be borrowed from abroad. Add to this the astronomical defence expenditures demanded by the security ideology and inflation upon inflation, and it becomes clear why consumption has overtaken productivity. The ideology of prosperity has begun to take revenge!

The irony is that (grand) apartheid was seen as a policy of liberation. The separation of black and white in the homelands was seen as liberation from the yoke of white exploitation. Separate equality, after all, means political sovereignty, independence and the opportunity to take decisions without outside interference. The creation of black states was seen as monuments of equal rights and justice.

The practice, however, is that these states have become more and more dependent on white economic aid. In order to render these states viable, billions of rands have been spent on the establishment of (unproductive) so-called border industries and the purchasing of land areas. Today the inhabitants of these states live in the most poverty-stricken circumstances in the whole of Africa — within the borders of one of the richest countries in Africa. Even if we find a satisfactory political solution for South Africa, it will still take decades before the economic imbalance which came into being because of the policy can be eliminated.

#### *\* A revolutionary ideology*

By calling the apartheid ideology a revolutionary one, I might well be causing the architects and administrators of grand apartheid turn in their graves. They were, after all, used to call people such as myself and others who could not go along with their policy revolutionary.

I do think, however, that any totalitarian ideology (and most ideologies are probably

totalitarian) does have a revolutionary character, because it strives to change a whole societal order against the wishes of most of the members of that society.

I also, however, intend “revolutionary” to carry a deeper meaning. Should a government consistently for own gain act only for a specific group of citizens and suppress and reject with contempt and even violence the rights of others, then it is rejecting the will of God for the state, which is general, impartial justice. Such a government has then become revolutionary in the most profound sense of the word: it commits revolution (resistance) against God. A citizen can in such a case no longer accept the exercise of power and authority of the state. This would be glorification of power (power for the sake of power) — while we are only called to glorify God. Citizens who come to oppose such a government cannot simply be branded as revolutionaries, as they are in fact antirevolutionary, that is, against the revolution of which the government is guilty in the face of God. And their (positive) intention is to bring the government back to its real calling.

\* *The religious face*

Perhaps this is the aspect of apartheid which has caused the greatest indignation among Christians world-wide: How could all this be justified in the name of God?

In order to render such a terrible ideology acceptable to the whites of whom the majority were Christians, it had to be sanctified in the name of the gospel. It was therefore derived from the Bible that the national group was the divinely ordained way in which societies had to be ordered. The division of languages in Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), the nation (“yolk”) of Israel in the Old Testament, the New Testament image of the church as the chosen people (“yolk”) of God and the group character of the covenant were interpreted in such a way that it could justify apartheid. Up to 1986 the Dutch Reformed Church (in *Church and Society*) only rejected specific *elements* in this theology, only the wrong *implementation* of it, and not the theology itself. The “problem” of South Africa is still seen in this document as residing in the diversity of nations! And even while I am writing this book, most whites will not accept — and openly confess it and ask for forgiveness — that apartheid *as such* was wrong, because its *intention* was so good!

I think I am not totally wrong if I conclude that very little — if any — human dignity and identity is realized in apartheid. Only the people who suffered under this terrible ideology will be able to fully tell you how it dehumanized them.

### **3. The effects of the ideology of apartheid**

In the preceding part I described the ideology as if it were not linked to certain dates, and also as if it had not changed in the course of time. For that reason I now supply a few flashes to indicate briefly how it came into being and how the adherents of it were gradually forced to make adjustments.

*The first phase* was the period from the discovery of gold (towards the end of the previous century), Union (1910) and the period after that (until 1948). From 1910 all was set in motion to counter the process of social integration which could not be stopped anymore after the discovery of gold. During the first fifty years, however, the policy of political segregation was only applied by means of measures which would later be known as petty apartheid.

*The second phase* began in 1948 (the accession to power of the National Party) when a fanatic process began not only to counter social integration, but also to stop it. The existing segregational measures were extended. But apart from that, grand apartheid was also instituted. In this way the reconstruction of the total societal structure began. Soon after 1948 legislation was promulgated which juridically fixed separation of people on the basis of colour. According to the population registration act each individual had to be forced into one or the other predetermined group and allocated (with the exception of whites) to a specific residential area in a city or homeland. This also meant geographic separation.

*The third phase* was the period from about the middle sixties to the end of the seventies. The process of achieving ultimately separate, independent national states progressed with agonizing slowness. The government, however, pretended that this had already been realized. The millions of blacks in the “townships” adjacent to the white cities were made citizens, overnight, of other “countries” — countries where most of them had never set foot. People who had lived in certain areas for generations were suddenly declared “temporary” inhabitants of their country of birth. Because blacks from then on did not live “permanently” in cities any longer, the building of roads, houses, schools, shops, hospitals etc. ceased, and the provision of infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, electricity and telephones was not extended — because these amenities now had to be supplied in the homelands. People who did want to work in the cities, had to apply for this privilege under a barrage of bureaucratic red tape, because they had become simple guest labourers. Where this process did not work of its own accord, it was helped along by forced removals. In this way an estimated 4 million people were forcibly uprooted.

*The fourth period* lasted from the late seventies to the end of the eighties.

By the end of the seventies it had emerged that hyper-apartheid could not succeed and a number of reforms were instituted. Petty apartheid was suspended, the rigid application of the homeland policy was watered down by the abolition of the pass system and influx control, the permanence of blacks in the cities was acknowledged and limited property rights were reinstated, and — although totally inadequate in scope — the provision of infrastructure and houses in the black areas was stepped up again. In 1989 the provisions underlying job reservation were finally abolished and in 1990 also the law on separate amenities. This was a great relief to the blacks in urban areas, but not to the homelands, which were now neglected. Incredible conditions prevailed there due to over-population, unemployment, inadequate education and disintegrated social structures. The result was that millions of them flocked into the cities to find a livelihood. For many crime and theft, however, have proved to be the only recourse.

Apart from reforms in the socio-economic area, 1983 also saw an effort to achieve political reform through the creation of the tricameral parliament. “Democracy” was “extended” by offering Coloureds and Indians their own Chamber in Parliament. This has merely been another cloak for white supremacy, however. The reaction from black circles was predictably violent. A volcano of frustration and anger has since 1984 erupted as a result of this insult. The dam wall broke and the only way to curb it was to announce a state of emergency — in other words, more force and violence, and another indication of the essentially violent nature of apartheid.

By 1986 the efforts towards reform had again begun to slacken. Factors which contributed to this included the moral repugnance about violence in the townships, the declining economy (as a result of disinvestment and international sanctions) as well as increasing militancy (especially the war in Angola and the formerly Southwest Africa). By 1987 the apartheid ideology had shed its *élan*.

The damage done by it over the course of decades, however, was clearly visible: the destruction of social structures in large parts of the black communities, the establishment of a culture of fear, suspicion and violence, the violation of the human dignity of all in this country, the practically total isolation of South Africa in the international community and the waste of billions of rands.

*The fifth period* began in 1989. This might perhaps one day be regarded as *the* turning point in the history of South Africa. The war in Angola ended, Namibia became

independent, the anti-apartheid parties were unbanned and in February 1990 Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years in jail. The grip of the securocrats gradually eased and South Africa could begin to disarm.

All this cannot be viewed in isolation of world-shattering events elsewhere in the world. In a spiritual-historically sense the twentieth century had culminated and ended in 1989. The time for ideological, absolutist politics and styles of government and command economies had passed.

The era of the cold war was something of the past. The world's economic problems won! The wave of democratization, which started in South America earlier and extended to Eastern Europe, is now washing across the whole world. In one country after the other (in Africa too) all citizens are obtaining equal rights. All this has made the need for change in South Africa that much more urgent. Here too the scope of the reforms will have to be great and comprehensive.

At the beginning of 1990 (cf. the opening speech for Parliament of the State President, Mr F.W. de Klerk on 2 February 1990) a new era dawned in South African history. The *time* of apartheid has passed. The *results* of apartheid, however, are still with us, and apartheid can therefore only be regarded as ambivalently dead. This is bound to create great problems for the future — our next point.

#### **4. Challenges for the future**

As has been said at the outset, the struggle against apartheid (or any other sinful social system) may not only exist in the (negative) rejection of the system — especially not if it is clear that the system is breaking down. The real struggle against false ideologies lies in the fact that a committed effort has to be made to work on more humane alternatives for the future. In a future South Africa we have to start building a home for all in this country.

Perhaps I should mention a few problems *en route* to a new South Africa in order to eliminate the idea that a so-called new South Africa has already been born. The problems I will mention are of course not the only ones. The present spate of violence in the country — not only of a political nature but also violence due to poverty and crime — as well as the dangers inherent in rightist white radicalism, are other examples. By pointing out the obstacles, however, I do not deny the great progress already made to achieve consensus between the NP and the ANC. Two years ago, for example, it was totally unthinkable that the NP should accept the principle of a universal franchise. In the meantime it has also been accepted by the NP that one or the other form of economic reorganization will have to take

place.

*\* The condition created by apartheid*

Apartheid ideology has had concrete effects. Among these are maldistribution of wealth and other backlogs, hatred, fear, suspicion, a decreasing level of respect for the law, a culture of violence etc. These results will not be cancelled out simply by abolishing the apartheid laws — or even by accepting a new constitution. The flood of apartheid may have washed past, but the damage done by the flood is still clearly visible!

*\* The continued existence of the concept of nationalist communalism among most whites*

Not necessarily as a result of a conscious choice, but out of habit most whites still maintain the old ideological points of departure. The more traditional rightists maintain it more or less unchanged, while the more progressives do this in an adjusted form.

The erstwhile idea that the national groups of which mankind is constituted could only continue to exist if they were separated from each other geo-physically, has been abandoned. The idea of intrinsically homogeneous groups as constructional units of a “new South Africa” has, however, remained intact. It is precisely on the basis of this theory that attempts were made to build the “old South Africa”. The new formula for division is not according to land areas but according to power circles.

If it is accepted that racism is not the principle for division any longer, what principle will be used for the distinction of “new groups”? And how will this help equality and justice to triumph? Will the geographical (plus a veiled racist) principle perhaps be replaced by an economic one?

*\* The type of democracy which may possibly be practiced by a black majority government*

I cannot speak on behalf of black people. They are more than capable of doing that themselves. And they are also very influential. The future of South Africa has long since ceased to be determined in Parliament! It is very clear that the blacks will not accept any variation on the group model built on the principle of nationhood. Although opinions might vary (cf. for example the Inkatha Freedom Party and the Zulu's), all agree on one point: a new dispensation for South Africa that does not rest upon a fully non-racial, democratic basis, is totally unacceptable.

The million dollar question however, is, what form of democracy would be installed. The concept of democracy is vague and hard to define. What one person may regard as an

example from the text book of democracy, may be rejected by another as totally undemocratic. It has become a catchword to describe one's own system of government — even though it may be very far from democratic — and to use it to reject the case of your opponents.

The National Party advocates a *representative* democracy. According to this model the political will of the community will be expressed in the programmes of the different political parties. Candidates for government are therefore elected on the basis of their affiliation with their various parties. Once they have been elected, they are to a large extent free with regard to their decisions concerning politics. It also seems as if the National Party still hold the view that power-sharing and self-determination (by minorities) can be reconciled. This is not the case — unless one makes an effort to entrench minority domination by way of constitutional gimmicks. Most whites still hold the view that majority government is the end of the world.

The ANC, on the other hand, is strongly convinced that it should be a *participatory* democracy. According to such a model, the accountability of the elected representatives towards those who elected them is not merely *one* of the criteria, but rather *the* criterion. People are elected with the explicit presupposition that they are the direct representatives of the will of the people and that their power to make decisions is accordingly limited.

Although one could well ask the question whether the track record of the ANC confirms their adherence to this type of democracy, it does not seem as if the ANC is willing to make concessions on this point. For that reason they are strongly in favour of an interim government creating a new constitution. They do not, like the NP, simply tend to go to the electorate with a final draft for their approval, because that would not be an expression of the will of the people and could therefore not be legal.

The fears of many whites should not simply be rejected as being unfounded. Their fear's are located in the fact that traditional African communalism (which closely approximates white nationalist communalism) plus the socialist trait prominent in the ANC, may have an important influence on the future democratic dispensation. And if the influence is too strong, this may nullify the best democratic intentions, and may bring us back to a black totalitarian ideology.

Totalitarianism — modernized tribalism — is in reality a great danger in a future South Africa too. The whole of life (art, religion, economics, education, etc.) will then be *forcibly* organized into a single system, as happened in traditional tribal life. Totalitarian systems also

further presuppose an elite, people who know. They believe that ordinary people do not understand their own interests. Whoever therefore refuses to tie in with the system should be forced to accept this “freedom”.

When I say this, I do not mean that totalitarianism only occurs among blacks. The National Party apartheid policy strived to force everything — from sex and rugby to religion — into a single political system, and then to enforce this by legal means. Practically all political groups in South Africa have totalitarian tendencies. While each ideology is intolerant, a totalitarian ideology is really intolerance squared.

It is therefore important to state it clearly and unequivocally in South Africa that no tribe, ethnic group, party or government is God, and that no single leader is the infallible pope of this god!

The pluralist reformational vision of society offers a way out, as opposed to totalitarianism (whether it be of individualist or socialist origin). According to that vision no group (tribe, party or nation) or societal relationship (state or church) may, in totalitarian fashion, lord over another. The unique (although not divided) liberties of the different societal relationships have to be respected in order to establish a true liberated society.

*\* Different views of the economy*

The National Party is in favour of minimal government involvement in a mainly “free enterprise” economy. Privatization is important — with the result that the whites will remain economically the strongest.

The ANC, representative of the poorer part of the population, proposes much more radical government involvement and much more comprehensive restructuring of the economy. As against privatization they speak of nationalization in order to try and eliminate the present economic inequalities.

These two different visions on the economy are of course a concomitant of two different views of apartheid. For the government apartheid is simply the sum of apartheid legislation and a race-based constitution and the possibility that some people still cling to racist attitudes. In order to establish a “new” South Africa, one then only has to abolish apartheid legislation, hold negotiations for a new constitution and make some propaganda aimed at changing people’s racist attitudes. That a future South Africa therefore needs (limited) economic restructuring and a high growth rate, is accepted, but this is not viewed as essential to make a new society work, and it is not essential for the elimination of

apartheid.

The ANC views radical economic change as Indispensable for the phasing out of apartheid. Apartheid and economics cannot be divided. Economic dominance by whites has been the *reason* for apartheid and not merely a coincidental *result*.

A South Africa freed from apartheid therefore demands economic re- structuring and the re-allocation of wealth as well as the means of creating wealth for those who had been impoverished by apartheid. The mere creation of a fund to help the poor Is not adequate. Enormous amounts will be necessary for the backlog in housing, education, health care, supply of Jobs, etc. Whether this could be achieved, is of course another question. Yet, this remains an important part of the political programme of the ANC, and they will have to show visible economic advantages to their electorate should they wish to be elected again.

## **5. The Biblical view of man as a reply to apartheid**

Both apartheid and my own vision rest on a specific anthropology or view of man. These anthropologies again determine what somebody's vision of society will be like. I would therefore like to propose the following Scriptural anthropological viewpoints.

### *\* Human equality and equal dignity*

Since the earliest days of Christendom the-fact is emphasised that all men were created by God in his image (Genesis 1:27). This underlies our conception of the equality of all human beings. Human existence is not an achievement of man, but is given to all by God and is therefore to be shared by all on an equal basis.

Through the fall into sin, which intervened, man (not God!) brought inequality to bear among men. Christ's redemptive work, however, reaffirmed the equality. Obvious differences between people do not obviate this fundamental equality.

Because people owe their existence (and believers also their redemption) to God, they are not only equal in principle, but also equal in *dignity*. God grants his dignity to man among others by creating him/her as the crown of creation and also by appointing mankind as stewards of creation, to control, nurture and preserve creation (Genesis 1:28). The dignity that man has is thus not his by virtue of himself, but by virtue of that which God grants him. This is the most profound base of human dignity, and for that reason it cannot be dissolved by other people.

To see to the welfare of oneself and one's neighbours is undoubtedly one of the central

themes of Scripture. The purpose of the great love commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) is to protect and promote our humanness.

And we are not allowed to limit the scope or the breadth of love for the neighbour. We are clearly warned against that by for example the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). God's love is unconditional and limitless and our love for each other should be the same. God loved us when we were still his enemies (Romans 5:6-10), and for that reason we have to love our enemies too. God's love, and therefore our own, is thus not even limited to believers. In this way He maintains the dignity of all people. We may therefore never interpret the concept "neighbour" in exclusive terms.

The reason for protecting and maintaining human dignity is of course sin, which leads to theories (as in the apartheid ideology) of pride, self-elevation and superiority. Against this we have to stress, in the light of Scripture, equality in existence and in dignity as a fundamental given of human existence. When this is not acknowledged, it is to the detriment of the individual (not only for so-called inferiors, but also for so-called superiors) and the whole of society, which in the end is totally destructive.

When some (for whatever reason) choose to elevate themselves and to fix this in deeds and in structures, it is in direct contravention of God's meaning for human life.

*\* Human diversity and unity*

Equality does not mean similarity (just as diversity need not mean separation). There is definitely a rich diversity of people and of human groupings. God does not create uniform mass products like a factory!

Should we see this diversity not as a threat but as a positive attribute, we will realize that meaningful human life is not possible without this diversity.

Such a vision is diametrically opposed to the exclusivity of the apartheid vision, which views meaningful human unity only as similarity of attitudes or uniformity within a group (the nation or "yolk") and diversity or difference as a threat for the own. People are then divided into opposing camps. Interaction between different cultures can then only be interpreted in terms of conflict, with resultant victory or defeat. The tragic part of this is that the false idea is established that human diversity is the cause of human dividedness. This is not the reason — the reason is to be sought in the sinfulness of man. To **see** this as the reason for conflict is to pile the guilt upon God — and so to deny man's guilt and sinfulness! — because He created the diversity.

Unity and diversity are therefore not opposing concepts which (through one policy or the other) have to be kept in balance. Rather (as has been said already), unity is created by the co-operation of a variety of people. Diversity is thus, apart from being a *gift* of God, also a *duty* – even more: it is a *condition* for human unity.

The *unity* between God and man in the covenant, after all, does not mean that God and man become *similar* (God man, or man God). God remains totally different from man and man totally different from God, even in the deepest and most profound religious bondedness. Stated in different terms: only because God is God and man is man is this bondedness possible.

A relationship between different people also does not remove the own identity, but rather creates it. Diversity does not divide but unites.

An example from the Bible to illustrate this is Paul's image of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:14-31). To form a unity as a body and to function effectively, there can not be only one member, but there should be a variety of limbs. Because of their diverse nature each member can contribute to the one body. More: exactly because each member retains its own character (the foot remains a foot, the eye an eye, etc.) can they contribute to the unity. The church is unity *on the basis of the diversity* of its members. The church is an integrated diversity –think of the well-known verse from Galatians (3:28): “So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women: you are all one union with Jesus Christ.”

I am convinced that this vision with regard to the church should also be applied to other societal relationships.

According to the Bible people are therefore different not in order that they can come into *conflict* with each other, but precisely the reverse, viz. that they should be of *service* to each other, each with his own character, gifts and talents. In this way a true community can be established and unity can be established among people.

#### *\* Human interdependence*

Closely linked to the foregoing is the idea that man is not simply an isolated individual. A well-known proverb in many African languages is: “Man is only man through his fellowmen”.

This is a prominent idea in the Bible as well. Adam attains fulfilment only in his relationship with Eve and *vice versa*. And this is not only true of the marital relationship, because there is human interdependence in each societal relationship. Man only comes to full humanity in and through other people. One has to complement the other.

Human existence therefore reveals a relational structure. In its very being it is community-directed. If the apartheid ideology or any other view therefore maintains that some people cannot or should not in principle enter into a relationship with others, or that they do not qualify to participate in society, it is a fundamental transgression of the essential communical directedness of human existence and also of the will of God.

\* *Human (individual) responsibility*

The preceding does not mean that man is only a social being and does not have any individual existence and responsibility.

God created people, individuals, and not groups. Christ came to redeem people — not nations. And when God judges one day, He will not do it on the basis of our membership of one group or the other, but everybody will be judged according to personal actions. God's law, in accordance with which He will judge in the fullness of time, is in the first place individually directed.

Listen to what Paul has to say of himself in this regard: "I was circumcised when I was a week old. I am an Israelite by birth, of the tribe of Benjamin, a pure blooded Hebrew. As far as keeping the Jewish law I was a Pharisee, and I was so zealous that I persecuted the church: But then he continues "But all those things that I might count as profit I now count as loss for Christ's sake ..." (Philippians 3:5-7).

When the New Testament speaks about nations, then the concern is not with *ideologically* defined homogeneous social units, but simply *sociological* entities. In the New Testament the concept *nation* ("*volk*") is largely a geographical term. It indicates the region from where someone came, and the concept is not nearly as loaded as South African apartheid theologians wanted to represent it!

Group formation as such is not wrong. What is wrong is to allocate too high a status to any group (tribe, nation, race, people), because it then happens that individual people's humanity is defined from within the parameters of the group.

#### *\* Human groups and societal relationships*

What is the purpose of groups? Groups and societal relationships (I distinguish between a nation which is a group and a state which is a societal relationship – and so also between other groups and societal relationships) are structures intended to promote certain individuals, to render service, to provide right and justice for all and to promote unity. Groups are bound by the same ethical laws as the individual, and are never elevated above this.

The example of the government of a state can serve as an illustration: In the well-known Romans 13:4 it said of the government that “he is God’s servant working for your own good” (Good News Bible).

This biblical concept of service also in the final instance means that one’s own freedom is always linked to the freedom and dignity of others. When we have been liberated from ourselves, we are also free unto others – so that they too can be free. True freedom is inclusive and not *exclusive*.

*The apartheid ideology did not distinguish between ethnic nation (Afrikaans “yolk”) and political nation (the citizens of a state).* The presupposition of apartheid was the nation state: Each nation should have its own state (government and citizens). It is, however, not necessary for each ethnic nation to have its own territory and own government. Most political communities in the world are multi-nation states, sharing the same territory and government. In a future South Africa more than one ethnic nation will also have to live together in one country with one government.

## **6. Conclusion**

A Christian vision of man and human society to my mind means openness and communality as against the exclusivity and emphasis on the own as a characteristic of the apartheid ideology. In accordance with this view cultural diversity is not an embarrassment but rather an opportunity, not a threat but rather the source for human unity. Relations with those outside the group do not destroy but rather enhance the own identity.

In the interaction of diversity, communality is established – the basis for a stable society. The openness towards others is at the same time the guarantee for freedom, peace and social justice, because it counters the greed and power-hunger which emanate from national exclusivity.

*Appendix: Definition of an ideology*

“Ideology, which usually comes into being in a situation of threat, is a substitution of true religion with as its highest ideal an all-encompassing purpose, to the attainment of which any (power) means may be used, norms adapted, sacrifices demanded, and a specific image of the enemy propagated” (B.J.v.d.W.).

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