

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES IN A SOCIAL TRANSITION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN SEARCH FOR RECONCILIATION

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ABSTRACT The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been argued as one of the prominent cases by which post-conflict societies coped with difficulties. Discussions have tended to criticize its effectiveness and limits. That tendency is more marked when the discussion is on the applicability of that kind of activity to another society.

This paper features the particularity of South African society without particular evaluation of the TRC, especially dealing with its religious implication. This standpoint is effective for the analysis of the transitional society which is identified from its relative lack of legitimacy on due process.

This paper traces some religious discourses, which have affected the TRC body implicitly and explicitly in historical transition. Two prominent figures to whom I give my attention are Desmond Tutu and Charles Villa-Vicencio. However the two Christians' discourses have incompatibilities with each other to some extent, both still show a tangency which can be interpreted as a unique function in a sheer estrangement of post-Apartheid transitional society. Tutu's Ubuntu (cultural syncretism) and Villa-Vicencio's restorative justice through negotiation (political secularism) are considered in this context, and both suggest that they let the 'divided' people negotiate over conflicting plurality in a transitional society.

Key Words: South Africa; Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Institute for Justice and Reconciliation; Post-Apartheid transitional society; Ubuntu; Restorative justice.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL TRANSITION SINCE 1994

I. Background

Reading the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) reports on March 2003⁽¹⁾, we are able to recognize its authenticity as an effective social device to cope with dissension after a conflict. There have been criticisms on its limitations and fundamental difficulties and questions still remain as to applying its form to other social contexts. The typical opinion on the limitation is based on surveys, such as the one conducted in 2001, which showed that only 10% of whites indicated that they were personally ready to contribute to reparations to Apartheid's victims (Villa-Vicencio, 2002a: 4).

I attempt to trace the characteristics of the South African case from a certain point of view without being involved in a general evaluation on its legitimacy or effectiveness. This paper examines the South African uniqueness through the relationship between Christian principles and TRC orientation. In develop-

ing my argument I firstly outline the political state since 1994 concerning past and present racial issues which have been especially dealt by TRC. In particular, the following analysis will be based on the comparison with two Christian ideas which have influenced the political direction both implicitly and explicitly. In other words, I consider the impact and function of religious factors in social change.

Above consideration may be particularly necessary when we review the transitional processes towards democratization after a conflict where ordinary due process does not often function for precisely the reason that society is in a transitional condition. One well-known TRC researcher pointed out this difficulty as a fundamental question raised after a dictatorship or repressive regime (Hayner, 2001: 12). Judges and judicial authorities may sometimes be timid and corrupt, and therefore cannot gain enough credibility from a civil society. (I call readers' attention that the Apartheid system was constructed as a legal and judicial system). Furthermore, in the South African political negotiations around 1994, it was decided not to recognize the past political violence itself as criminal. This made the situation complex: the South African authorities were prevented in many cases from prosecuting criminals among the former government and its followers. With some exceptions and reservations the present court cannot judge the past atrocities in general. This mess appears as a kind of anomie which needs to be redressed by whatever means outside of the logic of law to restore social norms. In the case of contemporary South Africa, some social ideas which have Christian background might have played prominent roles in that dimension. This viewpoint contributes to understanding not only the South African uniqueness since 1994, but the general possibility of establishing social norms after political conflicts.

II. TRC and IJR (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation)

In 1994 the newly established government launched the official organization which would deal with the past human rights violation mostly through statement-publishing and judging amnesty applications. The South African political transition was based on a sort of peace pact, and a subsequent political challenge was whether to adopt blanket amnesty or rigorous prosecution. The TRC was conceived as a necessary and important compromise in between. Its attempts not to distinguish between anti-Apartheid violence from violence by police/defense force, as well as its attempt to put particular stress on ordinary voiceless peoples, and not to depend on retributive justice towards perpetrators have attracted positive international attention (Christie, 2000; Hayner, 2001; Rotberg & Thompson, 2000; Graybill, 2002; Wilson, 2001; Ericson, 2001)⁽²⁾.

The TRC has no doubt been the most important organization dealing with the post-conflict racial/ethnic relationships in South Africa, and its importance has prompted debate as well as expectations for healing. Even before the TRC ended its activities, debates and criticisms diffused around various areas. Some vindicated the TRC for its achievement in spite of its relative lack of resources

including time, funding, and political power. Questions on representativeness and the extent of positive feedback still remain.

The IJR was founded in 2000 as a successor to the TRC and has promoted cooperative tasks with societies in and outside South Africa. Unlike the TRC, it is an NGO and manages programs and projects without government funding. Again in light of representation, IJR has been criticized from its conception for its political inclination and connection to the TRC commissioners⁽³⁾. Dr. Charles Villa-Vicencio, former national director of the TRC research department, presides over the IJR as the executive director under the patronage of Reverend Desmond Tutu, former TRC chairperson. The institute also holds several other directors who had been committed to the TRC and a strong ex-collaborator Alex Boraine, former TRC vice-chairperson, as the executive director of the New York-based Institutional Center of Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in its fellowship program. The ICTJ has been committed to establishing TRC-like organizations for the former Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone and other countries. We even find Yasmin Sooka, former South African TRC commissioner on the board of the Sierra Leone TRC⁽⁴⁾. Villa-Vicencio stressed the nature of IJR as an NGO and one of its primary orientations to counter the present government's failure to implement TRC's recommendations⁽⁵⁾. While most political organizations continue to criticize the TRC, the IJR may be the only venue which will carry on with the unfinished work of the TRC.

The list of the IJR activities are as follows⁽⁶⁾.

- a. South African Monitor: collecting and analyzing relevant information on following issues⁽⁷⁾: race relations/land affairs/poverty and justice issues/reparations and prosecutions/case studies and debate on reconciliation.
- b. National Survey on Social Consciousness: two surveys being conducted.
- c. Transitional Societies Fellowship Programme: accepting interns from various third world countries in conflict and offering them opportunities to experience South African NGOs connected to TRC, and studying in South African universities.
- d. Comparative Transitional Justice Programme⁽⁸⁾: monitoring social conditions and the nature of conflicts mainly in Africa, and holding symposiums, conferences, workshops or seminars with governments or civil institutions in the cooperating countries of Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Burundi, Uganda, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, and East Timor.
- e. Publications: regular contributions to newspapers, and publishing books and VTR.
- f. Holding conferences and seminars to cover a wide scope of issues.

The IJR is oriented toward information-sharing with international societies. It is partly dependent on foreign funds which have a Christian background⁽⁹⁾, but the activities are totally secular and implemented without any religiosity.

But the emphasis on nation-building during the TRC period contrasts with the networking and analyzing emphasis of the IJR. We are still able to pose a doubt on the presupposition that the IJR is a successor to the TRC. To what

extent and in which context do the two bodies share common ground? One key to these questions comes from a reference to Tutu's words, saying that South Africans need to close the historical door to the past.

III. A Tangency amidst Differences between Two Prominent TRC Defenders

The political and social evaluations of the substantial effectiveness of the TRC have come to a critical point⁽¹⁰⁾, however, no one can know its latent range of validity. Even in the days of the TRC mandate, negative comments on the ultimate principle, reconciliation, were publicly expressed.

Most white citizens avoided involvement in TRC events, because "it is not impartial. It lacks cross-examination" (Jeffery, 1999), or "it humiliates our soul (identity)" (*The Citizen*, 21 February 1998). Most black citizens showed disappointment when they realized that concrete reparation seemed absent. Radicals demanded rigorous justice rather than reconciliation and socio-economic improvements. Some journalists reported relative indifference from Coloured/Indian communities for open hearings held in areas even where residents were 50% Indians⁽¹¹⁾.

But along with various criticisms, two prominent vindications were voiced.

One was by Desmond Tutu, asserting that there was no future without forgiveness, and that "once we know the truth, we can enter the way to reconciliation" (Tutu, 1999).

The other was by Charles Villa-Vicencio (and Erik Doxtader, one of editors for TRC's final report with a complete overview of amnesty issues), who said that TRC was a preliminary space to create "talk about talk." From their viewpoint, reconciliation could be posed as a practical metaphor for allowing negotiations (Villa-Vicencio, 2002b).

In outlining the orientations of the two organizations of TRC and IJR, we have to recognize the parallel aspects between the orientation of the organizations and the discourse expressed by these Christian leaders. In short, the TRC and the IJR may not necessarily be viewed as successive, while these Christian leaders' positive assertions on the legitimacy of the TRC and the indirect Christian roots of those assertions should be paid much attention.

For instance, Villa-Vicencio admitted his Christian motive for his social engagement as: "While working in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I was asked by a journalist whether my theological career had prepared me for my work as Research Director of the Commission. I told her that while I scarcely used a theological word or symbol in my work, it was probably the most theological exercise I had ever been engaged in" (Villa-Vicencio, 2002b: 226).

On the other hand, when Tutu was once questioned by Alex Boraine about his distinct emphasis on Christian contexts, he replied, "The President knew that I was an Archbishop when he appointed me!" (Boraine, 2000: 101).

But the mandate of neither the TRC nor the IJR was authorized by reference to any Christian values. What I find significant is that the characteristics

of both organizations are paralleled by the discourses which have been declared symbolically by their leaders, and that the discourses have Christian connotations. I describe the connotations by expanding the time-span of my concern going back to 1980's in the next section, but before doing so, I sketch the profiles of Tutu and Villa-Vicencio.

Desmond Tutu, former TRC chairperson, belongs to the Anglican Church, and is a renowned Nobel Peace Prize laureate of 1984. He was born in 1931 in Transvaal, and later started his career first as a high school teacher. In 1975 he was appointed Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, as the first black to hold that position, and in 1978 became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. In short, his role was a pioneer in the white-dominated church society.

By contrast, Villa-Vicencio has been active in the academic realm, ultimately becoming professor of Religion and Society at the University of Cape Town, then Research Director of the TRC. He is a Methodist and ordained. He occupied a radical Christian position in the 1980's, sometimes was critical even towards Tutu, and demanded fundamental social changes. But around 1990, his political direction shifted from resistance towards reconstruction, *i.e.* nation-building. The transition in his publications shows that he highly regarded networking and dialogue with people of other values and social backgrounds⁽¹²⁾. This tendency has now gained prominence in the IJR projects he manages. Especially after the TRC, he has rarely used the word, "theology," and instead concentrated on providing practical ideas for social terms such as justice or reconciliation.

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS IN SEARCHING SOCIAL NORMS

I. Two Standpoints in the Apartheid Era (1980's)

Tutu and Villa-Vicencio's political expressions show a remarkable contrast to those in the 1980's.

"This was at the time when the country was experiencing enormous political conflict and the government had earlier resorted to a declaration of a State of Emergency in order to seek to compel its rebellious citizens to comply with official policy of apartheid" (Hulley & Kretzschmar, 1996: 11).

"International pressure on the South African government intensified further in the mid-1980's. --- In 1984, 40 US companies pulled out of South Africa, with another 50 following suit in 1985" (Villa-Vicencio & Ngesi, 2003: 285).

The above quotes describe South Africa in the 1980's, when political activists needed to show clear social visions than ever before. Among various problems that anti-Apartheid people faced was the discussion whether the step to reconciliation should be taken or not. The discussion raged in the Christian society as well.

“The Church of England’s 1985 national synod expressed its ‘abhorrence of all violence and all oppression’... while the Church of England expressed the view that the ‘only solution’ to the problem of violence was to deal with sin through ‘reconciliation to God,’ the United Congregational Church claimed that the only answer... was justice for the people of South Africa” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission and thereafter the Department of Justice, 1998: 84).

1. *Comparing Tutu and Kairos Group’s Paths to “Reconciliation”*

a. Quest for Reconciliation with the Apartheid Government

A meeting was held between the South African Council of Churches (SACC), of which Tutu would be general secretary, and the government (August 7, 1980). Tutu wrote of this meeting, “while one might be justified as regarding it as an occasion when the SACC was out-maneuvered by the government, this meeting stands out as a courageous act on the SACC’s part, an attempt at reconciliation and bridge-building” (Tutu & Webster, 1982: 55). Tutu also reminded “his audience that it is God’s justice, peace and reconciliation which requires them to be agents of the destruction of the South African social order” at the 1984 SACC Annual Conference (Maimela, 1987: 53). He also said: “And I care about black liberation, it is because I care about white liberation” (Tutu, 1989: 77). The principle of social reconciliation in TRC may have been derived from the religious activism at that time. But this attitude was truly inadequate for other radical Christian groups, and even drew furious reactions. Among them especially, the Kairos group of theologians castled a strong suspicion against SACC and the Anglican Church. Villa-Vicencio was one of the members who were dedicated to their manifesto, Kairos Document.

The Kairos group condemned the English-speaking churches’ stress on reconciliation, that “The fallacy here is that ‘reconciliation’ has been made into an absolute principle that must be applied in all cases of conflict or dissension. But not all cases of conflict are the same. --- In our situation in South Africa today it would be totally unChristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed... no reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible *without repentance*” (Kairos Theologians, 1986: 26-27). The range of their criticisms stretched around the following notions. Firstly, love: “The present crisis... is ample proof of the ineffectiveness of years and years of Christian ‘moralising’ about the need for love.” Secondly, the “top-oriented stance” of the English-speaking churches: “Why then does ‘Church Theology’ appeal to the top rather than to the people who are suffering?” Thirdly, legitimacy of violence: “How can acts of oppression, injustice and domination be equated with acts of resistance and self-defence?” Fourthly, rationalizing the situation: “‘Church Theology’ has not developed a social analysis” (Kairos Theologians, 1986: 29-34).

b. Reconciliation with Whites

Tutu appealed at a Black Sash Conference (10, March 1980): “To the white

community in general I say... express your commitment to change, by agreeing to accept a redistribution of wealth, and a more equitable sharing of the resources of our land.... All the current black political leaders, who are acknowledged as such by the black community, are ready to talk.... Please let us talk while we can, whilst there is a real possibility of an orderly evolution to a shared society” (Tutu & Webster, 1982: 20). But because of his strong commitment to reconciliation between blacks and whites, Tutu provoked the wrath of young black radicals who regarded him “as soft, and delaying liberation through his contacts with whites” (Maimela, 1987: 55). In addition, even black Christian delegates “were very angry with Desmond” (Mogoba, 1987: 27) when “he pleaded with the Dutch Reformed Churches to return to the Christian fellowship of the South African Council of Churches and to join in finding a Christian solution to our problems” (Mogoba, 1987). Kairos group on the other hand rejected neutrality and stated that the “Church must avoid becoming a ‘Third Force,’ a force between the oppressor and the oppressed” (Kairos Theologians, 1986: 49).

In understanding Tutu and the Kairos group’s stances for commitment to overcoming Apartheid, we need to pay an attention to their ways of legitimizing their resistance against Apartheid through religious logics. What I mean is that they brought their unique contributions into their struggle to collect broader array of peoples, not just accusing the factual and material inequalities in every social sphere.

2. *Difference between Their Theological Backgrounds*

a. Liberation Theology: Common Ground

Tutu and Kairos group primarily shared the concept of liberation theology⁽¹³⁾. Tutu said, “... some of the best theologies have come not from the undisturbed peace of a don’s study, or his speculations in a university seminar, but from a situation where they have been hammered out on the anvil of adversity, in the heat of battle.... Consequently we have in our midst now the theology of Liberation, as developed in Latin America, and Black theology, developed in the USA and Southern Africa.... The Church in South Africa must be the prophetic Church, which cries out ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ speaking up against injustice and violence....” (Tutu & Webster, 1982: 35-36). Villa-Vicencio also regarded liberation theology as important for that political stage and mentioned in his essay that, “it has taken theology out of the academic ivory tower of Europe into the streets and shantytowns of Latin America” (Villa-Vicencio, 1994: 184), and stressed the concept’s shift away from the discourse of Western philosophy. Despite this, his understanding differed from Tutu’s in his emphasis on the inattainability of neutrality.

Tutu and Villa-Vicencio’s theological references were not only to liberation theology. Tutu was firm in his deep belief in the need to Africanize the church. Villa-Vicencio constructed his theological thought on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s works⁽¹⁴⁾. That is, each of them can be seen to have grafted their original

interpretations of African theology and Bonhoeffer's theology into the primary requirements for liberation theology.

b. Africanization of the Church: Tutu

Tutu's famous slogan was "radical spiritual decolonization." This creed has been expressed on many occasions and was even embodied in certain liturgical improvements that he initiated. Notable instances include his approving African cultural elements in the Anglican Church, where:

"In South Africa, the introduction of marimbas (African xylophones) into worship in the 1980's was strenuously resisted as being 'un-Anglican,' until Archbishop Tutu gave them the seal of approval at his consecration service" (Hodgson, 1996: 107). And also, "We have had our own way of communion with deity, ways which meant that we were able to speak authentically as ourselves and not as pale imitations of others... Why should we feel that something is amiss if our theology is too dramatic for verbalization but can be expressed only adequately in the joyous song and the scintillating movement of Africa's dance in the liturgy?" (Hodgson, 1996: 109).

In general, Tutu's emphasis on the necessity to relate Christianity to African culture is noted as a significant contribution (Ndungane, 1996 : 76). He accepted the fact that Christianity had a colonial origin, and was heavily influenced by imperialist and racist ideas which reject all that didn't fit into European and missionary world views, and thus argued for the necessity of Africanization. It was not just a cultural re-implantation. Of course, this kind of cultural contextualization still had to be confronted by some stubborn suspicions in the form of anxiety over the taboo of syncretism. But Tutu's answer required the questioner's fundamental reflection with a sense of wit:

"For goodness sake, God was able to look after God long before we were around. It is not for us to decide who God is and where this God is to be found" (Villa-Vicencio, 1996: 46).

Tutu's words above is an indication of his positive stance toward cultural relativism and syncretism. It is also possible to say that Tutu has been trying to execute his slogan, spiritual decolonization, though cultural relativism and positive approval of syncretism.

c. Secularization: Villa-Vicencio

Villa-Vicencio's theological thought, near the end of apartheid regime, was marked by political and secular inclination with reference to the German theologian who attempted to resist the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer. He shifted his theologically based political goal from resistance to reconstruction around 1990, and stated: "Bonhoeffer's words need to remain central to a theology of reconstruction" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 8). In his understanding of Bonhoeffer in the South African social context, a quest for reconstruction was a quest for social norm:

"'Religion and Law' could become the next vital point at which theological growth should take place. Bonhoeffer's concern to affirm the renewing presence of God at the centre of life and to discern the presence of God in the 'ordi-

nary' has long haunted theology.... It is the challenge of our times, Bonhoeffer thought, to speak of this presence in a *religionless* way.... In secular parlance this has something to do with promoting the rule of law and facilitating liberatory law-making as a basis for social transformation" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 12).

Villa-Vicencio noted, "it is to enable people to find unity in action as they respond to the liberatory events of life by drawing on a variety of different cultures, speaking a variety of different languages and by employing many different interpretative frameworks" (Villa-Vicencio, 1992: 25). He also stated that a fundamental relativism was a necessity of our age, and tried to expand dialogue with people from broader backgrounds. His stress on secular dialogue and his sympathy with the theologians who have similar social backgrounds are notably distinguishable from Tutu's words.

We see that Tutu and Villa-Vicencio differed in their respective understandings of society, in that the former took the South African historical condition essentially as being colonized and the latter, under conflict.

II. Discourses in the Transitional Era (1990's)

1. *Restorative Justice and "Talks about Talks": Villa-Vicencio*

There have been mainly two flows of Christian engagement into political acts. One was the discourse which sought the possibility of reconciliation and forgiveness as was demonstrated by Tutu, and the other which put justice first and asserted the need for social analysis and radical change of the government, formerly advocated by the Kairos group. The contrast can almost be seen as reflected in the membership diversity of the TRC staff. In the case of Villa-Vicencio, his consistent pursuit for justice leads to his understanding of reconciliation as a metaphor to create a space for negotiations, or to the new interpretation of reconciliation as restorative justice, not necessarily agreeing with the ethical value of reconciliation and forgiveness. And his self-positioning in the social arena moved from the declaration, that the "church must avoid becoming a 'Third Force'" (Kairos Theologians, 1986) to one which sought to create "middle ground": "It is here (middle ground) that the will and the courage to embrace the kind of change that facilitates reconciliation can happen. It involves a public space within which people can seek for common ground despite their historic and actual differences.... It involves the creation of new mental maps...." (Villa-Vicencio, 2002a: 7). Through the IJR projects, this idea of "middle ground" has been embodied as the common ground between perpetrators and victims after TRC period (the perpetrator study), between government and people (government reparation), between South African society and other African Society in post-conflict situations (comparative transitional programme). Villa-Vicencio called my attention to his recent discourse (mostly since 1994) that he has seldom depended on any Christian logic to legitimize the social practices which he engaged in so far.⁽¹⁵⁾ Villa-Vicencio's understanding and application of the term, reconciliation in the present social condition are summarized in the following three notions: (a) reconciliation as a metaphor,

(b) restorative justice, (c) talks about talks.

He defined reconciliation in some ways expressing it as a metaphor, a few of which may be incompatible with Tutu's usage of the term. For Villa-Vicencio, reconciliation does not necessarily involve forgiveness. Although reconciliation involves understanding, understanding does not necessarily lead to reconciliation. Reconciliation is perhaps an abiding divergence to create time and space to find new ways of dealing with past grievances in the sense of breaking with, or interrupting, the logic of revenge (Villa-Vicencio, 2002b). A series of these understandings are subsumed into the wider framework of restorative justice. He regarded the TRC essentially as an instrument of restorative justice, indicating its nature as not being retributive (Villa-Vicencio, 2000a). His main explanation calling for this notion is the prevention of the reoccurrence of human rights abuses.⁽¹⁶⁾ But restorative justice contains another connotation which resonates with the previous recognition of "abiding divergence" which is linked to his (abiding) "talks about talks." And then we are able to see the projects by the IJR as instruments of "talks about talks."

2. *Ubuntu and Forgiveness with a Peculiar Interpretation: Tutu*

Tutu was the archbishop of Cape Town before being appointed TRC chairperson, and he brought naturally his background into the TRC process. He always wore the purple robes and a large cross around his neck. Hearings which he presided over were "punctuated with moments of silent prayer and reflection" (RICSA, 1999: 15). When he met somebody, he proposed to pray first almost as a greeting. These episodes show his public persona as a Christian was his style and intention. Furthermore one notable characteristic of Tutu's vindication for the TRC can be recognized in his usage of the term, "ubuntu." He had used the term in the 1980's, but came to refer to it often after membership in the TRC. The term is always explained with a warning as something difficult to translate into English mainly because of the fundamental individualism of the Western value system. The notion of ubuntu is that a person is a person through other persons. Tutu said, "Ubuntu refers to the person who is welcoming, who is hospitable, who is warm and generous, who is affirming of others...." (Battle, 1997: 35). His usage of this term has affinity to his dedication to Africanize the church. At the same time, by the very reason of this Africanization, one Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) member expressed his reluctance to the usage of ubuntu, "Black victims are always been called upon to show ubuntu. This has been the case more especially when a perpetrator is white. However the converse does not apply" (*City Press*, May 19, 1996). But to Tutu, ubuntu seems to be a presupposition of his values on healing and forgiveness. People may hardly achieve either healing or forgiveness without ubuntu whether they choose to give statements to the TRC. Both healing and forgiveness are well contrasted with restorative justice in their transcendental overtones even if he has used 'forgiveness' with a relatively rational definition. Tutu explained his notion of forgiveness as follows: "forgiveness does not mean condoning what has been done. It involves trying to understand the perpetrators

and so have empathy, to try to stand in their shoes, and to appreciate the sort of pressures and influences that might have brought them to do what they did.” And, “Forgiveness is not being sentimental.... Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin, but it is a loss which liberates the victim” (Tutu, 1999: 219). Reading his comments carefully, it becomes clear that he used the term in a practical rather than in a transcendental or emotional sense.

I call attention to some psychoanalytical implications. For the Freudian School and especially successors of Jacques Lacan, psychoanalysis is based on the logical premises that clients can achieve recovery only through story-telling and that the psychoanalyzed might come to terms with their past memory... that may mean to forgive one’s past..., not necessarily relocating it positively (Žižek, 2000: 98)⁽¹⁷⁾. Such a reference suggest that Tutu’s notion of forgiveness may not necessarily be deemed as genuinely religious. That his interpretation of the term connotes the psychoanalytical paradox in its treatment of trauma may also be understood as a fragment of his theological transformation. Tutu himself has never referred to these psychoanalytical implications, and moreover once criticized “individualistic schemes of psychoanalysis.” But it is still sure that a methodological tangency between psychoanalysis and Tutu’s Christianity exists regarding the expected way to achieve healing and forgiving. Or we realize his call for healing reaches out not only to tangible victims but also to some airy entities, including “land,” “nation,” and “past.” (Tutu, 1999) These kinds of discourses which do not really have those objects shall be interpreted as sharing some common ground with religious prophecy. “True reconciliation... is a risky undertaking, but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end there will be real healing from having dealt with the real situation” (Tutu, 1999: 218).

Here there is a contrast between “restorative justice” which has legal implication and “healing and forgiving” which recalls religious (and possibly psychoanalytical) sense. Given the TRC time span, Tutu underlined the need to “shut the door on the past” (Villa-Vicencio & Ngesi, 2003: 291) and to “close the chapter of the country’s history” (Villa-Vicencio, 1996 : 36-37). This remark may seem a little strange considering the fact that in the early days of the TRC hearings, he already stated his will to establish TRC’s successor after its given 18 month work period⁽¹⁸⁾, and he now patronizes the IJR. But such a question can be still possibly dealt with as follows: Tutu placed the IJR as institutionally succeeding but substantially different from the TRC. For Villa-Vicencio, the IJR and the TRC were both subsumed within the framework of restorative justice.

COMPLEMENTARY FUNCTION OF SYNCRETISM AND SECULARIZATION IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETY

In the previous two sections, I sought to draw out the tangency among differences in two Christian motivated political discourses. Both of them are deeply composed by Christian values, and Tutu and Villa-Vicencio’s social activities

have been oriented directly or indirectly within their political consistencies since the 1980's. But what are more important and I call the tangency were their strong beliefs in talks, and the form of their discourses which have been transformed and diverged to some extent from the authentic Christian discourses. I have referred to the latter as cultural syncretism and political secularization. And we can also recognize the tangency as they share an idea that human relationships which have still kept memories of violence could be somehow transformed. The notion of ubuntu or restorative justice shall be referred here⁽¹⁹⁾. When Tutu's discourses are evaluated formally, they can be called cultural syncretism, and he promoted it actively. On the other hand, Villa-Vicencio's affinity to the secularization of Christian values which requires fundamental relativism in his words seems to contain his notion of the inevitability in the South African social transition⁽²⁰⁾.

Tutu has stressed the need for ubuntu and the closure of the "historical chapter of the past." His call has been criticized at the same time just because of its African orientation. But if we think about his syncretism again in the context of post-colonialism, he seems to have obviously promoted to his fellow Africans to share spiritual decolonization and recover their identities through the asserted principles of ubuntu and forgiveness. His call for the victims' forgiveness seems to match his understanding on ubuntu: "If the victim could forgive only when the culprit confessed, then the victim would be locked into the culprit's whim, locked into victimhood, whatever her own attitude or intention. That would be palpably unjust" (Tutu, 1999: 220).

Villa-Vicencio's preference for the concept of restorative justice reflects the social orientation in the context of transitional status. The concept can be practically accepted in social reality, especially in governmental policy on reparation. The fiscal problematics are highlighted in the final TRC report published in 2003. Villa-Vicencio's discourse on restorative justice guaranteed the space for abiding debate on re-distribution of social resources as well as vigilance against possible re-occurrence of political violence.

The reconciliation process is thus thought of as having at least two emphatic dimensions, subjective (forgiveness and repentance) and objective (reparation). The idea that the human relationship that had experienced whatever cruelty could be changeable subsumes those two dimensions. And if the reconciliation process deals only with either one, some people who cannot agree with that orientation remain just outside of negotiation opportunities. Those who agree with both subjective and objective reconciliation may be few, but it is just as likely that those who agree with neither orientation may also be few. This is understandable that the two dimensions elicited moderate reactions from diverse political positions because of the idealistic but vague idea, that is, the human relationship that had experienced whatever cruelty could be changeable (culturally or secularly). This idea does not allow any political/social stance to assimilate the content exclusively. In other words, the co-existence of two discourses by Tutu and Villa-Vicencio might let the divided people negotiate over conflicting plurality in a transitional society eliciting tolerable resilience (but clash),

and it will prevent integrating the dissent in a hasty and sometimes unilateral way⁽²¹⁾. Boraine has called attention to the importance of securing enough time for healing the past (Boraine, 2000: 9). Erik Doxtader indicated that ex-president Nelson Mandela took notice of a functional role of the ideal, reconciliation itself:

“In secret and informal meetings, the idea of reconciliation was used to define the stalemate and plot alternatives. Sent from prison, Mandela’s letters to Botha and De Klerk used reconciliation to invent a situation in which violence was a shared reason to talk” (Doxtader, 2001: 22-23).

When we consider their viewpoints, the above-mentioned interpretation shows one of the communication models for securing time and creating space for talk. People’s trauma and the standard for reparation cannot be resolved entirely in a condition where the ordinary due process does not function. However negotiating those matters could be retrospectively seen as a sort of social norm that prevents people from direct retaliation or exclusive separation.

NOTES

- (1) URL [<http://www.gov.za/reports/2003/trc/index.html>] (Accessed on July 12, 2004)
- (2) All the authors I listed are non-South Africans.
- (3) Kaizer Nyatumba said: “That way, those who serve in the envisaged Institute for Memory, the Past and Reconciliation will be proud custodians of our past, largely one-sided through it may be, and they will be kept employed a little while no longer.” (*The Mercury*, March 18, 1998)
- (4) URL [<http://www.ictj.org/>] (Accessed on July 12, 2004)
- (5) Charles Villa-Vicencio, interview by the author, February 18, 2003, Cape Town.
- (6) URL [<http://www.ijr.org.za>] (Accessed on July 12, 2004)
- (7) Its accomplishment are presented in Du Toit (2003).
- (8) Its achievements is presented in Villa-Vicencio & Savage (2001) and Doxtader & Villa-Vicencio (2003).
- (9) IJR income depends on the following organizations: 1. Danish International Development Assistance (Danida), 2. North American Aerospace Defense Command (Norad), 3. Atlantic Philanthropies, 4. DanChurchAid, 5. the Finnish Embassy, and others (IJR Annual Report 2001, p.22).
- (10) See 2001 IJR survey [<http://www.ijr.org.za/papers/report.html>] (Accessed on July 12, 2004).
- (11) *Business Day*, May 2, 1996.
- (12) His main published works are:
 - 1983 *Apartheid is a Heresy* (eds. with De Gruchy): an overt declaration against the apartheid regime.
 - (1985 *Kairos Document*): he joined the Kairos group to compose the script.
 - 1992 *A Theology of Reconstruction*: comprehensive arrangement on his position and orientation.
 - 1994 *Doing Theology in Context* (eds. with De Gruchy): in this book, he introduced various Christian positions in South Africa as an editor and also contributed a paper, “Liberation Theology.”
 - 1995 “An Afrikaner of the Afrikaners,” “Telling one another stories: Towards a Theol-

ogy of reconciliation” (in *Many Cultures, One Nation*): re-evaluated an Afrikaner theologian and the notion on reconciliation in theological thinking.

1996 *The Spirit of Freedom* :interview with people from various social arenas in 1992-93.

1999 “The Reek of Cruelty and the Quest for Healing---where retributive and restorative justice meet”: shows his concern for the relationship between law and religion, international justice and religious implication.

2000a “Constructing a Report: Writing up the Truth” (with W. Verwoerdin *Truth v. Justice*): is a short commentary on *TRC Report*.

2000b “Restorative justice: dealing with the past differently” (in *Looking Back Reaching Forward*): gives a new direction to discussion of justice on TRC.

2000c “Why Perpetrators should not always be prosecuted: where the international criminal court and Truth Commissions meet”: develops his idea on restorative justice.

2001 “introduction” for *Rwanda and South Africa in Dialogue: Addressing the Legacies of Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity* on the interaction with other African society.

2002 “Reconciliation as Metaphor” (in *Theology in Dialogue*): is a clear mention on TRC with metaphor.

2003 *Through Fire with Water* (eds. with Erik Doxtader): monitors the backgrounds, reasons, perspectives of other post-conflict societies in Africa.

- (13) Liberation theology emerged in Latin American countries in the 1970s to tackle with social problems characterized by injustice, oppression and conflict. Liberation theologians thought neutrality was impossible in that situation and the reflection of the poor and marginalized would inevitably lead to reforming theology itself. The doctrine of salvation was directly related by those theologians to changing social injustices (Gutiérrez, 1973; Villa-Vicencio, 1994).
- (14) Bonhoeffer was one of few Protestant theologians who resisted Nazi regime and was executed in a concentration camp in 1945.
- (15) Charles Villa-Vicencio, interview by the author, February 18, 2003, Cape Town.
- (16) The concept of restorative justice has been widely used as one alternative to ordinary due process but does not have a rigorous definition. However we can confirm the originality of the concept as “restoration of the victim-offender relationship through face-to-face meeting,” (Johnstone, 2002) and “restoration of a victim’s dignity by story-telling” (Johnstone, 2002). These orientation were both remained outside of modern judicial authority.
- (17) “Consequently, the ultimate goal of psychoanalysis is not the conversationally pacification/gentrification of the trauma, but the acceptance of the very fact that our lives involve a traumatic kernel beyond redemption, that there is a dimension of our being which forever resists redemption-deliverance” (Žižek, 2000: 98).
- (18) Comment made on 18 April 1996 (*Sunday Times*, April 19, 1996).
- (19) I am not able to engage in a detailed argument for instance, that wonders characterizing Tutu’s words as ‘cultural’ without contemplating enough its historical background and his tactical maneuvers.
- (20) But he told me his negative evaluation of many clergymen since 1994 because of their backlash into their customary affairs and relative indifference towards social improvement. He explains that the next social guide after resistance against the former regime has not necessarily been shared among church society. This shows that his stance is not actually been shared among South African clergymen.
- (21) This point differentiates my argument from the invisible assimilationism referred to in “American Civil Religion” (Bellah, 1975).

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