

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND THE CHURCH: THE
CHURCH'S ROLE AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE
POLITICAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the problem of significance conflict resolution as a meaningful ministry of the Church in ecclesial, social and political conflict. Recognising the fact that conflict has been an experience of humankind since the beginning of time the research focuses on the Church's role in socio-political conflict during the years of the National Party rule in South Africa.

A number of theological and practical questions arise from the problem of conflict and its resolution in relation to the Church. The question is raised: does conflict resolution as a concept and strategy have a credible theological content. In order to explore this problem the dissertation first develops a theology of conflict. The theology of conflict forms the basis for a theology of conflict resolution. The thesis is that conflict, inherent in all human experience, is not good or evil. Rather it has the potential for destruction and transformation. It is the transformatory possibility that needs to be promoted.

The thesis examines conflict resolution strategies of leading theorists and practitioners and tests them as viable approaches to be adopted by the Church. However it finds that conflict resolution will be accepted as a role of the Church if it can be formulated in convincing theological principles.

An analysis of reconciliation and conflict resolution focuses on the way reconciliation is perceived in the political context. It then probes the theological relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution. Reconciliation is more than conflict resolution. The scope of reconciliation includes (a) the initiative of God, (b) addressing the predicament of alienation, brokenness and distress (c) through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Mediator (d) who reconciles the universe to God.

However, conflict resolution has an indispensable role in the reconciliation process. Through the ministry of conflict resolution the Church facilitates confrontation between individuals or groups and contributes towards transformation in relationships where there is conflict.

The thesis then probes the possibilities for conflict resolution to be an integral part of of on-going pastoral ministry in the belief that pro-active conflict resolution is a source of social and ecclesial transformation.

KEY WORDS:

Church; Conflict Resolution; Social Change; Political Conflict; Reconciliation; Mediation; Role of the Church; Theological Investigation; Negotiating an agreement; Christian Community.

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INTRODUCTION

The widespread conflict between different political groups in South Africa, particularly during the 1980s' provides, broadly, the context for this research. At the same time the Church finds itself in the midst of the crisis of conflict. During the period of South Africa's apartheid policy the churches were as divided as were their members.

Although the first democratic general elections saw the inauguration of a new government and since then the birth of a new nation conflict has not been eliminated. Conflict is not simply a political phenomenon. It occurs in all human relations. Political conflict magnifies inter-personal, social and ecclesial conflicts.

On the one level conflict resolution is aimed at solving problems particularly where conflict is involved. However, it needs to do more than that - it needs a process that will enable individuals and groups to develop deeper understandings of one another and of one another's aspirations.

THE PROBLEM

This dissertation questions whether conflict resolution can be taken seriously as a ministry of the Church in ecclesial, social and political conflict. This question raises the problem of the role of the Church in social and political conflict. Recognising that conflict has been an experience of humankind since the beginning of time this research focuses on the Church's role in soci-political conflict during the years of the National Party rule in South Africa.

A number of theological and practical questions arise from the problem presented above. The most crucial question is that of the relationship between conflict

resolution and reconciliation. This debate raises the question whether conflict resolution as a concept lacks theological content. In order to probe this issue the relationship between conflict resolution and reconciliation will be explored in Part 4 of the thesis.

But before the question of conflict resolution can be examined there are issues concerning conflict as an experience of humankind. The nature of conflict and theological perspectives pertaining to conflict need to be clarified. Critical to an understanding of conflict is whether it should be viewed positively or negatively. Conflict is generally perceived as a negative experience that leads to the break down in human relations. But conflict can also be regarded as a positive experience if it is processed creatively. However, if conflict is regarded as positive-sum how is it to be understood theologically? For instance is conflict a sin? And how is it to be viewed in relation to the Church? These questions will have a bearing on the basic problem regarding the role of the Church in conflict and the Church's use of conflict resolution or mediation strategies.

THE GOAL

The goal of the research is to investigate the role of the Church in socio-ecclesial and political conflict and to examine conflict resolution strategies that can be recommended to the Church. It is assumed that the Church's role in a society such as South Africa will involve the practice of conflict resolution. Therefore the theology of conflict resolution and its practise by the Church as mediator and agent of social and political change forms the primary purpose of the research. The objective is not to produce a particular model of conflict resolution that may be used by the Church. Instead certain approaches of notable theorists and practitioners are examined and analysed and theological principles for conflict resolution proposed.

3. THE METHOD

The dissertation examines the problem of the role of the Church in political conflict within the discipline of practical theology. The research therefore will adopt a process of 'doing theology' by creating a dialogue between theological theory and practice. The research uses an approach to practical theology which permits a continual interplay between theology and the practice or experience of conflict and conflict resolution. It does not follow the empirical scientific method supported by practical theologians such as Hennie Pieterse, L M Heyns and Jaco Dreyer (Pieterse and Heyns:1990; JTSA:1995). Rather this research has followed the dialogical approach of Gerald Hawkes (JTSA: 1984) and others such as Thomas Ogeltree (Browning:1983) and A V Campbell (Scottish Journal of Theology: 1972). This method employs a process of theory-building which involves the exercise of creative imagination and which intuits a hypothesis. The hypothesis is then tested by the practice and the analysis of the practice. The resultant analysis of the practice also informs the theology. As Hawkes argues, 'the hypothesis, or theory, always remains open to revision' (Hawkes 1984: 47). In this dissertation the theory and experience of conflict and the practice of conflict resolution interacts with theology. The theory that emerges from this engagement must also be tested and revised.

In order to research the Church's perception and/or its track record in conflict resolution five case studies are processed. These case studies are based on five major conflicts during National Party rule in South Africa. The description and analysis of the case studies provide a practical and theoretical basis for the research into the role of the church in socio-ecclesial and political conflict.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS

The dissertation is divided into four parts. Each part builds on the previous one and develops the thesis. Part one investigates the nature of conflict. The first chapter raises some of the elemental issues about the nature of conflict in a cross-disciplinary manner. The other three chapters in this section probes the theological perspectives

of conflict. Here some of the perplexing theological questions are explored. Questions concerning conflict and sin, good and evil, love and conflict are scrutinised. In the third chapter the critical relationship of Jesus Christ and conflict are explored. In this chapter the Cross of Christ as the crucial theological axiom is focused upon, providing spiritual meaning for conflict. Chapter four addresses the issue of conflict in the Church. It asks the question whether conflict in the Church is necessary or not.

Part two includes qualitative research in the form of interviews with a number of Church leaders concerning political conflict during the period of National Party rule in South Africa. This section investigates five major conflicts with the purpose of gaining a perspective on the way Church leaders have employed conflict resolution strategies in the form of case studies. Each of the case studies includes analysis of the strategies used.

Part three is a literature research of the work of three conflict resolution theorist/practitioners, John Burton, Roger Fisher and William Ury (joint research) and Dudley Weeks, all of whom are internationally recognised and who visited South Africa during the political struggle prior to the April 1994 elections. Each of the conflict resolution specialists were also interviewed about their approach. Their theories and conflict resolution processes are critically examined.

Finally, Part four researches the pertinent theological questions dealing with the problem of conflict resolution and the Church. Of significance is the relationship of Christ and mediation, the Church and mediation and the nature of the local congregation as mediator of conflict by its nature and form. The relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution forms an important part of this section.

PART 1
TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CONFLICT

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

1.1. DEFINING THE SCOPE OF CONFLICT

A study of the phenomenon of conflict covers a wide range of human experience. There does not seem to be any narrowly defined path leading to an understanding of conflict. Rather the path leads the researcher into a maze of interconnected fields of knowledge and experience. This means that there are a number of avenues that could be pursued in order to penetrate the field. The route chosen needs to be appropriate for a given purpose. John Burton, a theorist in the study of conflict makes this point:

Conflict, its resolution and prevention, is inevitably a study which knows no boundaries of thought. It involves the whole person, the nation or identity group of the person, the political system, and the physical environment. It is a study with universal application. It cuts across cultures. It cannot be broken up into 'aspects' of behaviour. Conflict resolution is a study that transcends separate compartments of knowledge, known as disciplines, and seeks to take a holistic view of human conflictual behaviour, without being politically unrealistic or in any sense superficial (Burton 1990:20).

The broad scope of the field makes it difficult, almost impossible, to devise a precise definition of the meaning of conflict. At one level conflict denotes overt, coercive, including violent, interactions in which two, or more contending actors seek to impose their will on one another. On the other hand, conflict does not necessarily lead to open violence but may indicate more subtle processes, behaviours and structures.

There does not appear to be any general agreement about what should properly be termed a conflict. Definitions tend either to be so specific that they limit the scope and meaning of conflict, or framed in a broad manner to the point of including all

kinds of irritations and discord that generally would not deserve to be called conflicts. What is or is not a conflict thus may in fact depend on whether or not the parties involved define a situation as a conflict.

One attempt at an explicit definition is that used by E. Van de Vliert: 'Two individuals, an individual and a group, or two groups have a conflict if at least one of the two parties feels that the other party is thwarting or irritating it' (Van de Vliet 1980: 133; Mastenbroek 1980). Mark Anstey lists some definitions and then suggests the following: 'Conflict exists in a relationship when parties *believe* that their aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously, or *perceive* a divergence in their values, needs or interests (latent conflict) and purposefully employ their power in an effort to defeat, neutralise or eliminate each other to protect or further their interests in the interaction (manifest conflict)' (Anstey 1991:2-4)

Barbara Hill recognises that conflict is sometimes more subtle than overt and finds it difficult to understand precisely when a situation can be considered to be conflictual. This is demonstrated in the classic example of the 'happy slave' quoted from Burton:

The agricultural worker within a feudal system may have a happy relationship with his feudal lord. From a structural point of view the relationship is one of conflict and in certain circumstances this conflict may come to the surface and lead to violence (Hill 1982: 112; Burton 1972: 71).

Advocating a broad approach, particularly for the problem-solving workshop technique for conflict resolution, Hill refers to the analysis of Johan Galtung in 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research' (Galtung: 1969) which makes it clear that one would not want to limit the concept of conflict to purely overt, physical violence (Hill 1982: 113).

In order to limit the definition of conflict J.W. Burton distinguishes conflicts which are characteristic of all healthy and creative relationships and those that are deeply rooted in human needs. The latter would, believes, require major restructuring of social or political organisations (Burton 1990: 1)).

Dudley Weeks, acknowledging the difficulties in attempting a comprehensive, handy definition of conflict, nevertheless suggests a cogent explanation: 'Conflict is a relationship between parties who disagree over matters they value and who perceive that their power to attain that which they value is threatened by the other party's values, goals, perceptions, behaviour and/or degree of power' (Weeks 1984: 4). This understanding of conflict is also a broad one but it has the additional value of drawing together in relationship four complex entities: differences, perceptions, feelings of threat, and power.

It is proposed then that an emerging theory of conflict will of necessity be a broad one. Another advantage of Weeks' explanation is that conflict has to do with the *relationship* between two or more parties.

In order, therefore, to elicit a theory of conflict some of the prevailing debates and issues concerning conflict will be examined. From this analysis it should be possible to draw together significant assertions for a viable understanding of conflict.

1.2. CONFLICT: ABNORMAL OR NORMAL ?

There is a recurring theme in conflict literature that underscores the negative aspect of conflict in society. This view argues that conflict is generally undesirable. J. Rex explains that 'this type of theory arose in the mid-1950s. Sociological theory of that time, particularly under the influence of Parsons, had placed so much emphasis on the problems of order that it appeared to suggest that all conflict or even dissent was dangerous if not treasonable' (Rex 1981: 72). The task of intervention was to eliminate it from society. Conflict therefore was a zero-sum game in which there

were winners and losers. Such arguments are based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of conflict in society.

Rex identifies three types of argument that are used to re-enforce the alternative value of not suppressing conflict but allowing it to surface and then deal creatively with the issues and more pertinently, the relationship of those involved. First, conflict could strengthen societal values and bring them to life; secondly, conflicts were not necessarily disruptive if the positions or interests held by different parties cross-cut one another and did not threaten the political order; and thirdly conflict provided a safety valve.

The first contention is significant. It is clear that if present values or norms of a society no longer correspond to the balance of power they are unworkable and if attempts are made to enforce them they will provoke conflict of a destructive kind. An example is the fact that a freely negotiated wages system will have greater legitimacy than one which is imposed in an authoritarian manner. One has to be aware, however, of the risks involved in an open system as Rex notes, 'it needs to be recognised that the modification of a part of the system might involve radical transformation of the system as a whole' (Rex 1981: 73). At the risk of overstating the case it is also worth noting as Hill does that many theorists have argued that it is not desirable to seek an *absence* of conflict, as this would imply perpetuation of the status quo and, thus, possible stagnation (Hill 1982: 110). However, it must then be emphasised that so much depends on the skilful handling of conflict negotiation and/or intervention. Certainly the destructiveness of conflict can become quite catastrophic.

If it can be accepted that conflict is a normal human experience to be encouraged rather than eliminated then it is useful to make the distinction that M. Deutsch makes between *destructive* and *productive* conflict. Destructive conflict refers to processes which escalate to such an extent that groups or individuals employ their efforts in an

endeavour to destroy one another. Productive conflict on the other hand is the consequence of a motivation for problem solving and innovative ways of dealing with the situation (Deutsch 1973; Anstey 1991).

H.W. van der Merwe makes a similar point when he emphasises the difference between conflict and violence. He believes that in order to change a society for the better, it is not simply a matter of eliminating conflict, but violence. Conflict, he suggests, denotes a conflict of interest, a difference of opinion, and is in itself not bad; but the tendency to equate conflict with violent manifestations, reinforces violence as an acceptable means of conflict management and resolution (Van der Merwe 1989).

All the above points to the fact that it is not conflict *per se* that is questioned, but the manner in which it is processed. Katz and Lawyer make this poignantly clear:

Conflict is an all pervasive element in our society. Although conflicts may end up in destruction and even death, conflicts may also result in increased effectiveness, enhanced relationships, and further goal attainment. Indeed, in human terms conflict is one of the 'engines of evolution' that allows us to learn, progress, and grow. Therefore, our goal as skilled communicators is not to attempt to do away with conflict, but to skilfully manage conflict to further its constructive capabilities (Katz 1983:141).

1.3. SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

Another consideration to be taken account of in a theory of conflict is the subjective-objective debate. A survey of the more recent theories of communal conflict shows that most of them emphasise the inherent subjective element. Conflicts are about values which are dependent on perceptions brought about when one party's understanding of a situation is incompatible with the discernment of

another party involved. Obversely their perceptions can also transform the situation into a mutually beneficial outcome.

So one aspect of the subjective element is the inner perceptions that individuals or groups have of one another or of the situation in which there is conflict. These perceptions include attitudes towards individuals or groups as persons or their behaviour in a situation. In many cases the perceptions one has of the situation or the persons involved will be based on certain values and needs which are often in tension. Here values are those principles, beliefs, understandings or prejudices of the way things are or ought to be, which are of importance to the individual or group.

J. Burton goes further than most when he describes the subjective element in conflict. He speaks of 'deep-rooted conflicts,' which are not based on interests that are negotiable, but on underlying needs that cannot be compromised. These ontological human needs which have emerged through the work of A. Maslow and others include such basic drives as identity, security and human development (Burton 1987: 16). Some of the traditional methods of conflict management, he contends, which deal only with surface issues, simply suppress underlying needs and help lay the seeds for more intense conflict in the future.

In his analysis of intergroup conflict R.J. Fisher draws attention to the social-psychological approach from the phenomenological stance which sees conflict as involving considerable subjectivity. He defines conflict as 'a social situation involving perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two or more parties, attempts by the parties to control each other, and antagonistic feelings by the parties toward each other,' and goes on to argue that :

The subjective side of conflict thus enters in through the processes of perception, cognition, communication, motivation, valuing, and emotion. Subjectivity also enters into the process of decision making that the parties engage in with respect to the conflict (Fisher 1990: 6).

Quite clearly Burton (and others such as R.J. Fisher and Dudley Weeks) are critical of classical thinking of theorists like John Parsons who saw conflict objectively and concerned with dynamics of the situation which are external to the inner needs of the conflict participants. This meant that the individual had to be socialised and coerced into accepting certain social norms and standards. In this frame of mind conflict is controlled, suppressed or even eliminated.

However this does not mean that conflicts do not have objective reality and purpose. One has only to consider the violent conflict in South Africa, in Natal and the areas surrounding Johannesburg. While a good deal of it is an eruption of emotion, and concern for identity and political recognition and other such subjective needs, there are also the problems of poverty, lack of land and housing, and political alienation. These concerns or conflicts caused by systems and structures, cannot be neglected while attention is given to subjective needs. They are vital and need to be negotiated in concert with the basic needs of the individuals and groups.

According to the 'objective' approach conflict is said to exist when parties find themselves in a situation which engenders mutually incompatible goals. An example of this situation would be a labour-management conflict. As J. Bercovitch points out

'neither conflict behaviour nor hostile attitudes need be present (the actors may, after all, suffer from 'false consciousness'). The existence of a *presumed* goal incompatibility is, according to this approach, a sufficient reason for defining a social situation as a conflict situation.' (Bercovitch 1984:5).

Bercovitch follows H. Schmid's argument that conflict is built into a structure and therefore can only be resolved by eliminating the contradictions within that structure (Bercovitch 1968: 16; Schmid 1968: 217-232).

This debate does not appear to be conclusive as both approaches make valid contributions to an understanding of conflict. Whereas subjective approaches emphasise motivational and attitudinal factors, objective approaches stress structural and preferential considerations. The problem, however, is more compelling when we consider strategies or approaches to the resolution of conflicts. Preferences for the objective approach which is more goal oriented could lean towards more structural outcomes while if the conflict is defined subjectively, the method of resolving it will include changes in the subjective orientations (e.g. dealing with misperceptions, and basic human needs) of the parties.

This problem will be examined in more depth when the process of conflict resolution is discussed. Suffice it to mention here that Dudley Weeks' approach has important advantages. His contention is that while underlying psychological needs are important in any conflict it is more relevant to discover the relationship needs of parties involved in a conflict. This process has the benefit of cutting across both subjective and objective approaches without entirely ignoring either of them.

Perhaps the issue at this stage can be clarified by C.R. Mitchell who also attempts to bring into creative tension the subjective element in conflict while recognising the importance of the objective goals of conflict parties:

While a conflict may be objective at a particular *point* in time, changes in the parties' objectives, preferences, evaluations, and calculations that occur over a *period* of time render it a changeable and hence an intensely subjective phenomenon. Conflict may be described as subjective, then, in the sense that changes occur within the parties themselves (and in their orientations to the dispute forming part of their environment), rather than the 'objective' situation external to them from which the originally mutually incompatible goals arose (Mitchell 1973: 128).

The view that conflicts are primarily subjective is viable if it is agreed that values are not absolute but may be changed or reinterpreted in the course of the conflict interactions. Nor can the objectives of the parties or the concern: 'what the conflict is about' be ignored.

1.4. SOCIAL INTERACTION

The subjective-objective discussion will be further scrutinised later but from the vantage point of conflict resolution. At this point it is necessary to underline an aspect of conflict that sometimes is missed: the necessity of the involvement of two or more parties for there to be inter-personal or inter-group conflict.

Mitchell quite clearly sees conflict from the perspective of interaction between the parties involved as well as within the parties themselves. Although one party may have differences of attitudes from those of another party, unless there is some interaction or relationship between them there can be no conflict. A farmer in Cuba would not have any conflict with the director of a road building company in Australia unless they were in some way connected to each other. Conflict therefore is interactional and involves at least two parties. Bercovitch makes the point that conflicts evolve out of the interacting between the relevant parties. Interactions resulting in conflict, can escalate, be perpetuated and can also stimulate a search for new methods and solutions which are mutually acceptable (Bercovitch 1984: 21).

So far conflict parties have been treated as abstract entities. In their concrete forms there are different levels of interaction each with its own dimension of conflict: interpersonal, intergroup, inter-organisational (or inter-group) and international. Although the nature of conflict is generic in that it has certain basic ingredients wherever it takes place, there are different forms of conflict pertinent to the level of interaction.

The notion of interaction in conflict theory presumes that there is a relationship between the parties which can be described as *interdependent*. The interdependence may be tenuous at most, or considered to be non-existent by one or all of the parties, nevertheless, some relationship, hostile or otherwise needs to be present for interaction to take place. Interdependence implies that the individuals or groups need each other's involvement in order to resolve a conflict between them. If there was not interdependence between conflicting parties they could as easily walk away from each other or at least choose to have a relatively detached, indifferent outlook. Of course the interdependent relationship of parties does provide an opportunity for each to influence the other.

Interdependent relationships are complex. As R.J. Lewicki and J.A. Litterer find in their research 'the interconnectedness (interdependence) of people's goals is the basis of much social interaction' (Lewicki and Litterer 1985: 24). They argue further that by determining something about the way that parties' goals are interdependent, or interconnected, some estimates of the type of behaviour that is most likely to emerge can be made. For instance, if the interconnectedness is such that only one of the parties, or individual, is able to attain a sought after goal, such as a race in an athletic meeting, then there is a competitive relationship which Deutsch defined as *contrient interdependence*. In this case there is a negative inter-relatedness between their goal attainments. On the other hand when one party's goal attainment is compatible with or facilitates the achievement of the goals of others there is what Deutsch called *promotive interdependence*. Deutsch's research has shown that this promotive interdependence is characterised by trusting relationships among the parties when there is the possibility of the one influencing the other (Lewicki and Litterer 1985: 24).

1.5. LEVELS OF INTERACTION

1.5.1. *Interpersonal* conflict is the simplest form of dispute as it directly involves just two persons. Here there is an interplay of individual characteristics. So much depends on the personality of the two persons. A good example of this level is marriage conflicts. They are primary, unmediated interactions, with a high degree of involvement, mutual attachment, and emotional interdependence. They occur within a structure in which each person gives to, and receives from, the other values and resources'. (Bercovitch 1984: 39) The point here is that in interpersonal conflict each individual acts on his or her own behalf. While causes of interpersonal conflict may have similarities to intergroup conflict the dynamics may take a different form. Emotional and affective elements, for instance, may assume a higher profile due to the intense levels of impassioned frustration within interpersonal interactions.

1.5.2. *Intergroup* conflict is far more complex than interpersonal interactions and when it is destructive it is the most costly enigma facing humankind. Intergroup conflict arises in a number of forms. Fisher distinguishes conflict at the individual level from that at the collective level which may be either intrasystem or intersystem. In the same way on a broader scale collective conflict may be intranational or international (Fisher 1990: 3; Galtung 1965: 348-396).

Four predominant areas for conflict research pertaining to groups are identified by Beres and Schmidt cited by Fisher: social conflict involving structures of dominance and inequity between class or interest groups within an established adversarial system, organisational conflict involving small groups (units, departments, etc) and international conflict between nations (Fisher 1990: 4). Dahrendorf delineates conflict between various levels of social units including 'groups' (e.g. males and females), 'sectors' (e.g. the army and the navy), and 'societies' (e.g. Protestants and Catholics). Dahrendorf's scheme also distinguishes among conflicts between equals and unequals and between the whole versus a part (e.g. the state versus the criminal gang) (Fisher 1990: 4).

In his analysis Fisher builds on these schemes and distinguishes forms of intergroup conflict on the basis of levels in the overarching system. Intergroup conflict can therefore be situated at the organisational, communal, societal, and international levels. This approach has the advantage of dealing with broad categories which can then be more specifically defined for further clarification. Fisher explains for instance that intergroup conflict in organisations occurs between various structural groupings such as departments, between levels such as executive and middle management, and between labour and owner/managers as in industrial conflict.

In communal situations, intergroup conflict often occurs between ethnic, racial, religious, and gender groups and is usually observable through the existence of prejudice and discriminations as well as the outburst of violence. At the societal level these conflicts may be expressed in the form of social issues such as racism and poverty and in conflict between classes, political groups, or other broad sectors of society, such as the military-industrial complex, the environmental lobby, and various other social movements. At the international level there is conflict between nations and blocs that is often intertwined with intergroup cleavages at the societal and communal levels.

A question could be raised as to whether international conflict belongs in the intergroup category. Although as Fisher asserts it does have intergroup dimensions (Burton speaks of global conflict which has domestic sources)(Burton 1984), it is also discussed as a separate category. However, it is this intermixing of levels and issues that produces the most enigmatic and complex forms of intergroup cleavage or protracted social conflict (Fisher 1990:4).

1.5.3. *International Conflict:*

The development of a theory of conflict is further expanded by the inclusion of international relations as a type of conflict. This is due to the complexity of national

interests and the problems of violence and war. Yet, as R.J. Fisher indicates, the field of international relations has shown an abiding interest in intergroup conflict among states and/or factions (Fisher 1990: 143). This means that some significant understandings of conflict in intergroup situations can also be implied in international conflict. For instance, as in intergroup dispute, international conflict presupposes a degree of interdependence. In this case it is the interdependence between nations. The higher the degree of interdependence between nations the greater the likelihood of conflict.

Bercovitch, in his research, makes a similar point: 'the term conflict does not have different associations according to the level of analysis; behaviour, though, does' (Bercovitch 1984: 89). Although states share many of their attributes with groups, they also have a number of specific characteristics. Bercovitch suggests some of the attributes of states as: a higher degree of control over its members; there is no authority outside a state to interfere with its members; it is invested with nominal equality in international relations; states have a higher degree of autonomy and freedom, and a higher awareness of their own values and structure than actors in other levels of interaction. They are also units with the most exclusive, and acceptable, claim to resource-mobilisation (Bercovitch 1989: 90).

In his examination of the sources of international conflict R.J. Fisher refers to the pioneering work of D. Katz (1965) who identifies three types of conflict: (a) economic, which is due to competing motives for scarce resources, (b) power, in which each party wishes to maximise its influence, and (c) value, which involves incompatibilities in ideology, religion, or way of life. Katz links these three types to nationalism, defined as the ideology of the nation state, as it effects interaction among states. This is particularly relevant when nationalism attempts to maximise its own character in such a way as to bring it into competition with others for scarce resources such as markets or territory, thus creating the possibility of international conflict (Fisher 1990: 147; Katz 1965).

This typology and analysis is substantiated by the work of C.G. Smith in his review of the contributions of the behavioural sciences to the study of international conflict. Three basic causes of conflict identified by him are similar to that of Katz: (a) economic, (b) political, and (c) social-psychological (Bercovitch 1984:91; Smith 1979:86-109). In this study economic causes of international conflict arise from the unequal distribution of scarce resources and the corresponding perception of dissatisfaction among a number of states. Such perceptions are often translated into conflict situations and, in some cases into collective violence. Political causes refer to the competitive interplay of states, external objectives, and the relationship between power and interdependence. The social-psychological causes focus attention on the human element and the psychological characteristics of decision makers and elites.

The analyses of political scientists Edward Azar (1983) and John Burton (1979, 1984) are developments of Katz and Smith. Their approach to the understanding of international conflict is basically social-psychological because it links the needs of the individual through the identity group to the existence of international conflict. There is, however, a significant difference between Azar and Burton on the one hand and Katz and Smith on the other. For the former the source of protracted and apparently unresolvable conflict is not to be found in the traditional areas of economics or power, but rather in the denial of basic human needs which are ontological and necessary to the development of all people. According to Azar these basic needs include 'security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity and effective participation in determining development requirements' (Fisher 1990: 147).

However, features of protracted social conflicts also include economic and technological deprivation as well as unintegrated social and political systems. Thus, structural inequality and social conflict are intrinsically linked through a set of complex relationships. Burton explains the link 'as a shift from the emphasis on the

preservation of structures to an emphasis on the pursuit of human needs as the goal of political endeavour' (Burton 1984: 123).

Along the same lines as Azar, Burton argues that international conflict can in many instances have domestic origins. He gives examples such as the struggle of Germany after the first world war which showed how massive unemployment could lead to aggressive foreign policies. 'External conflict is so often a projection of inner problems. Whether it be individuals, small groups or nations' (Burton 1984: 8). In a search for the universal and fundamental needs that underlie protracted or deep-rooted conflict Burton, has turned to the more contemporary work of needs theorists such as Maslow, Thoms, Fromm, Bay and others. He argues that if one can identify a set of human needs that must be satisfied for societies to reach their goals, then concepts like justice and democracy can be defined in terms of basic needs fulfilment. The assumption is that the power of individuals and groups to resist coercion and work toward satisfying basic needs is greater than the structural power of those in authority. Burton infers therefore that it should be possible within the context of needs theory to define situations in which force and coercion cannot be effective.

There are, however, difficulties with this approach. First, as R.J. Fisher observes, there is the problem of deciding on a common list of basic needs and showing empirically that these in fact elucidate a considerable amount of human behaviour, particularly in intergroup conflict. Another difficulty is that a needs model, building on the influence of Maslow, who was looking for the positive side of human motivation in contrast to the negative side advocated by the Freudians, generally makes positive assumptions about the basic motives of human behaviour. But when it comes to translating needs theory for conflict the possibility cannot be ignored that there exist human needs which will have a negative impact on the intergroup conflict (Fisher 1990: 148-149).

A similar problem to that mentioned above of the needs model of Burton is that some of the basic human needs, which are initially seen as positive, may in fact cause the escalation of intergroup conflict when their expression is overstated. For example, the need for identity, which is included in many lists of basic needs, often gains expression through the social identity of the ethnic group, which at the same time may incite ethnocentrism in a pejorative sense. Thus, group identity is combined with a sense of in-group solidarity, the dark side of which is hostility toward out-groups. It is therefore clear that a great deal more clarification of needs theory in relation to conflict escalation and resolution is required.

However, enough reasoned analysis exists to include needs as an antecedent of international conflict along with the more traditionally recognised sources of economics, values, and power. In particular, the needs for security, identity, recognition, and participation would seem to be supported by a great deal of theorising and research in the social psychology of intergroup relations. The basic need for freedom as identified by Bay (1958) and by Galtung (1980) may be an important addition. It is also essential to keep in mind, as Galtung maintains, that even though the meeting of basic needs is necessary to functioning as a human being in a social context, the problem of needs and their satisfaction is a profoundly political question. In this sense, consideration of basic needs and their priorities will be at the heart of conflict and development in international relations for a long time to come (Fisher 1990: 148-149).

1.6. CONFLICT AND CHANGE

Conflict is always about change. It is about change in social structures, institutions, and in human relations at many levels. Those who promote one form of change enter into conflict with those whose interest is to promote another or both are resisted by those opposed to all change.

In regard to conflict and change there are therefore, always likely to be two sets of issues in any conflict: what changes shall occur at whose expense. Thus conflict is about learning and adapting to change. Conflict, therefore, involves both a cause and a consequence of change. It has innumerable and diverse causes and effects in society, and is not a unitary phenomenon. Conflict is descriptive of a symptom which accompanies the birth of much that is new in society and frequently attends the demise of whatever is outworn. As a consequence it also sometimes signals the presence of ills in the body politic. It has therefore both destructive and constructive aspects. All this means that conflict can be both warning and a promise. It heralds progress and growth as well as death and decay.

We are thus led to view conflict as a decision process which selects between alternative futures. There can be no question therefore of the suppression of conflict - alternative futures are forever before us -- but violence can often be replaced by other decision processes which are either less costly and more rational, or more persuasive and less power-laden (Banks 98).¹

This description of conflict is very broad for reasons explained earlier. It has been focused on some of the contemporary debates involving theorists of conflict and its resolution. Obviously other concerns which would also contribute to a theory of conflict have not been considered here. There is simply not the space to include all. The notion of *power* is one such concern which has not yet been examined although it does have a most important bearing on an understanding of conflict. It will, however, be considered when conflict resolution processes or strategies are scrutinised.

1.7. CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the broad definition of conflict discussed in this chapter there are five specific assumptions about the nature of conflict:

¹ See Banks M *The Logic of Conflict: Its Origin, Development and Resolution* (Anthony de Reuck 19...) p 98ff.

1. Conflict is a natural, normal experience in any society. This means that conflict can be a constructive and growthful experience.
2. Conflict involves parties who have interdependent relationships with one another. The interactions between parties - at different levels - create conditions for the possibility of conflict.
3. In destructive forms of conflict individuals and groups tend to pursue their own self-interest and therefore seek to enhance their relative advantage.
4. In human relations the purpose is not to eliminate conflict but to manage it. The objective should be to creatively deal with conflict so that all parties concerned experience growth.
5. Conflict is about change and adapting to change. It has both destructive and constructive aspects. Viewed as a decision making process conflict suggests that humans possess the capability of learning and modifying behaviour based on the results of their experiences.

This analysis of conflict opens the way for an investigation into theological perspectives of conflict that will form a basis for a study on the role of the Church in conflict resolution processes. Theological perspectives raise questions about the meaning of conflict and its place for humankind's quest for wholeness in relationship with God and with others.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CONFLICT

The analysis of the nature of conflict above serves as a point of departure for an investigation of the theology of conflict which is necessary to form a basis for the role of the Church in conflict resolution. This means that some of the assumptions about the nature of conflict need to be placed in dialogue with Christian theology so that a clearer understanding of the Church's role will emerge.

The question of conflict appears to be ambiguous. A multi-disciplinary analysis of conflict such as the one above (chapter one) suggests that conflict is a natural and normal experience in any society. It is caused by differences of values, interests, perceptions and needs. Yet at the same time conflict can be described as injustice or a disorder in the relationships of persons or communities arising from the self-interest of one or both of the parties in conflict. It is therefore the alienation of people from one another, of people from creation and an alienation within the individual. All of this alienation is summed up in humankind's alienation from God. On the other hand, many conflict resolution analysts argue that conflict is necessary for the growth, development and fulfilment of people. Is conflict therefore in some strange way a necessary evil?

One way to deal with the apparent ambiguity is to argue as Klaus Nürenberger does when he states that on the one hand conflict is due to such behaviours as aggression, domination of one group upon another, the use of violence or force, and so on. Then alongside these negative behaviours there are counter-concepts such as harmony, peace and reconciliation to describe relationships where in spite of these differences people are able to compliment one another (Nürenberger, Tooke, Domeris 1989:11). Nürenberger further states that 'the root of conflict is *the instinct of all living organisms to survive* both as a species and as individuals, and to develop their full potential'. He maintains further that '*most cultures consider conflict to be an evil*' (Nürenberger, Tooke, Domeris 1989:11-14). The problem with Nürenberger's

approach is that it does not go far enough. Nürenberger's discussion, as helpful as it is, deals with some of the causes and results of conflict but does not probe the relationship between conflict and sin. It is to this task that attention must be given.

2.1. CONFLICT AND SIN

Nürenberger's definition of conflict is an interesting one: 'the root of conflict is *the instinct of all living organisms to survive both as a species and as individuals, and to develop their full potential*' (Nürenberger, Tooke, Domeris 1989:13). This view points to conflict as being neither positive nor negative, neither 'good' nor 'bad', but neutral.

People live in separation from God and from themselves and are therefore often in destructive relationships with one another. It would seem thus that there is some link between conflict and sin. Attention therefore needs to be given to an understanding of this relationship before further problems relating to conflict may be dealt with.

The traditional story of Genesis places the responsibility for sin on the first persons, Adam and Eve who by their own free choice acted selfishly and alienated themselves from God and from each other. This Fall corrupted human nature to the extent that all succeeding generations of humankind are depraved so that as Paul says all are under the power of sin (Romans 3:10). The depth of depravity is questionable as John Maquarrie rightly maintains that if it was total then we would no longer be human (Macquarrie 1966:238).

Macquarrie's approach is helpful here. He believes that the traditional account does not take into consideration the distinction between sin and finitude. His question is: '... can the apparently inevitable evil which the risk of creation brings for man as for every creaturely being (where 'evil' means descent into negativity, as outlined in the last section) be properly called sin?' (Macquarrie 1966:242). Macquarrie's point is

that the risk of creation has placed humankind in a condition in which sin is possible. The fact that we are not God places limitations upon us and makes sin inevitable. There is nothing we can do to overcome this limitation. We cannot help being human. Under these conditions Macquarrie asserts we cannot be blamed for being human. In this condition there is the tendency in all of us to set up ourselves as the centre of everything and so fall into self-idolatry (Macquarrie 1966:242).

Yet it is this same condition that makes sin possible which also makes it possible for humankind to build communities of love. Clearly we need to add that this is possible through the grace of God. We recognise therefore our polar existence since we are both ego-centred as well as self-transcending creatures (Macquarrie 1966:242).

Turning now to the experience of conflict. The relevant question that needs to be addressed is the one suggested by pastoral counsellors, Robert C. Richard and Del Olsen when they say: 'Christians must ask themselves if conflict per se is a result of man's sinful condition, or if it is a consequence of the basic limitations of being human' (Lewis 1981:39). Their own position is clear as they maintain that as the major source of conflict is our different histories, values and lifestyles, these differences cannot be considered 'sinful' since they are a result of a sociological process which is different for everyone. Conflicts arising out of these differences, therefore, are a result of the limitations of the human situation.

Using Macquarrie's framework but now examining the experience of conflict it is first noted that conflict is a condition of alienation and a therefore a consequence of sin. But conflict is experienced under the condition of finiteness, or humanness, which makes it possible either to create disorder, imbalance, injustice and alienation or through creative tension with fellow human beings to harness conflict and promote growth. To what extent then is conflict sin? Richard and Olsen maintain that it is to the extent that our perceptions have been distorted and our needs thwarted by selfishness and egocentricity. This means that conflict per se does not

have to be considered sinful and thus 'bad'. At this point we can refer back to Nürenberger's definition of conflict (see above): 'the root of conflict is *the instinct of all living organisms to survive* both as a species and as individuals, and to develop their full potential'. This is a useful definition because it points to conflict as being neither positive nor negative, neither 'good' nor 'bad', but neutral. At the same time this approach supports Macquarrie's views and provides us with the framework to deal with conflict.

But we still have a dilemma. On the one hand we want to legitimise conflict by placing it in the orbit of our humanness and say that conflict is sinful only when persons are selfish or egocentric in their behaviour, which is evidently a result of the Fall. On the other hand, the problem with this position is that it does not take sin seriously enough. It must also be recognised that conflict is pervasive in the human community and does not appear only on certain occasions when individual or community differences arise. Simply to say that conflict can be explained sociologically is to disregard the human moral condition. The problem is more complex than just human behaviour which is disordered, imbalanced or misperceived. The deification of our own views through human pride (Niebuhr 1941:206-207) deepens our estrangement from God and others and must be dealt with.

Nevertheless conflict should not be equated with sin, but inevitably under the conditions of finite existence, our sinful nature makes conflict potentially destructive and debilitating. In other words conflict is an experience of humankind through which there arises the potential for growth as well as the possibility for destruction.

2.2. KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's analysis of the world of conflicts in his 'Ethics' provides a possible clue to the way in which we can discern the potential for a conflict situation to become intense and damaging, or on the other hand, become positive and productive. The result of humankind's falling away from union with God is the possibility of knowing good and evil. Before the Fall humankind knew only God, now through separation from God humankind has knowledge of good and evil (Bonhoeffer 1955: 17-42).

The knowledge of good and evil leads to the perception of conflict as a battle between two opposing forces which may be labelled good or evil. So conflicting parties take up positions in a situation which are determined as either absolutely 'good', while labelling the other as absolutely 'bad'. It not difficult to see that demands and expectations which are made in such absolute terms as 'good' and 'bad' (or evil) contribute towards destructive conflict.

Dudley Weeks refers to this problem based on his experience of facilitating conflicts throughout the world:

The fourth perception in need of transformation is that conflict usually involves a struggle between absolutes, such as right and wrong and good and evil. Some conflicts do indeed concern differences over deeply felt values. But far too often, people allow themselves to attach good-versus-evil and right-versus-wrong, labels to a conflict so that they can convince themselves that their position is beyond question (Weeks 1992:9).

An alternative and more constructive approach to conflict is for parties to reformulate their positions in relative terms. This approach implies that in a conflict situation each position may be considered relatively good and relatively bad at the same time. In other words parties in conflict recognise that each one participates in

both 'good' and 'evil' and has the potential for the good and the bad, or at least that there are options which can be explored. Accepted in this manner there are greater possibilities for more fruitful ways of dealing with conflict. Again Weeks supports this view:

Rather than jumping to the conclusion that a conflict involves *absolute* differences, we need to explore the possibility that a particular conflict may be over subjective preferences rather than values (and at that, only in certain aspects of the relationship), and realise that there are other aspects of the relationship that we can build on positively (Weeks 1992:9).

2.2.1. Relativising Positions In Conflict

Confrontations where hard line attitudes cause rigid polarisation between parties impose severe limitations on the way conflict may be negotiated. The problem is exacerbated when the absolutising of positions in conflict situations also encourages negative conflict negotiation approaches in community conflict. Some examples are competitive bargaining, power struggles and the use of force. Conflicting parties contest their positions by believing that they have the 'good' on their side, until one of them submits to the other resulting, in many cases, in a negative outcome.

The attempt to motivate parties to consider relativising their positions, is not without its problems. Parties in conflict often believe that they have the 'right' or 'good' on their side and so do not care to relativise their position. Parties are also prone to take up selfish or egocentric positions (in terms of the discussion of sin above) as absolute and therefore 'right'.

2.2.2. The Search For An Ethical Principle

It is in the area of social ethics that the polarity of the concepts of absolute and relative becomes more evident. Although 'truth', as an ethical principle, is not always the major concern in a conflict (there are conflicts which are more about emotional

and psychological issues than ethics), it is certainly of significant importance in a theological discussion. The ethical principle involved in a conflict goes beyond a decision made arbitrarily between good and evil. The axiom applied has to bring about liberation in a conflict situation in a manner that helps parties arrive at a creative decision and at the same time uphold the ethical principle. Paul Tillich, for instance, maintains that a guiding principle has to distinguish genuine decisions from the compulsions of wilfulness. He elaborates:

If there are [such guiding principles], they must be absolute on one side, relative on the other. An absolute principle for moral decisions has to be both. If it were not absolute it could not save us from drowning in the chaos of relativism. If it were not relative it could not enter into our relative situation, the ethical contents (Tillich 1967:105).

Translating Tillich's argument in terms of conflict reveals that there may be a general truth principle which is absolute but applied to the concrete event it is relativised. In other words the truth represented may be interpreted or perceived in different ways in a given situation. This is what many conflicts are indeed all about.

2.3. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE AND CONFLICT

In terms of Christian theology the guiding ethical principle amidst conflict is the absoluteness of love as *agape*. Love of God, neighbour and self sums up all of the law and therefore all ethical principles (Matthew. 22:15-22; Mark 12:25-34; Luke 20:20-26; Matthew 5:43-48).

In conflict situations, therefore, loving the other and willing good for the other (not only the good for oneself) is what being a good neighbour is about where the neighbour is the party with whom one is in conflict. It should not be assumed that Christian love means that there will not be conflict. In fact risking oneself in love for others can increase the potential for conflict simply because of human vulnerability

and the intensity of relationships involved. As Douglass Lewis observes 'the deeper the relationship, the more significant the conflict' (Lewis 1981:31).

But love is the guiding ethical principle it has to include justice within it if it is not to be confused with sentimentality or piety. For instance loving one's enemy is not sentimentality; the enemy remains an enemy (Tillich 1967:108). Love and justice need to be held together. While love united with justice exists as a general principle or moral law it is only in the given situation that the principle can be experienced or known concretely. Even if in a situation the other person demonstrates unacceptable behaviour he or she is nonetheless accepted. Acceptance of the person does not exclude confronting the persons or group and their behaviour. Confronting in order to transcend the alienation or conflict is a loving act.

So love as *agape* both contains and transcends justice and therefore also holds together both the absolute and the relative principle as it accommodates itself in the concrete situation. In the final analysis love does not rule out the possibility of conflict but accepts dissension creatively harnessing the conflict and opening the way towards resolution. Love, it must be emphasised does not eliminate conflict. Through love the conflict parties accept and affirm one another in their differences, goals and intentions so that their confronting, in spite of possible anger, is positive and enables them to make new decisions for mutual benefit.

2.4. PSYCHO-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Up to this point it has been maintained that conflict is a relational notion involving two or more persons or groups. It is necessary, however, to research the significance of intra-personal conflicts and their influence on interpersonal conflict. The contention is that when people fail to deal appropriately with their experience of inner discord and lack of harmony their relationships with others are affected and this has the portention of turning into destructive conflicts. In many conflicts the

internal conflict has not been recognised. Consequently persons seek to satisfy their inner conflict by dealing with it through their external relationships (Weeks 1992:58).

This problem has been referred to above in chapter one. It was indicated that social conflict may be caused by basic inner or subjective needs such as identity, recognition and development not being met. The theory of one of the proponents of this view, namely John Burton, will be examined in part three of this thesis when theories of conflict resolution are scrutinised.

Conflict resolution specialist Dudley Weeks also attributes some interpersonal conflicts to the inner-conflicts experienced by persons. He identifies some reasons for interpersonal conflicts as:

(1) when people are not sure what their values are, or of who or what they want to be; (2) when people are not sure what type of relationship they want with another person; and (3) when people have diverse internal voices urging them to respond in various ways, and deciding which voice to follow becomes a conflict-producing dilemma (Weeks 1992:58).

Karen Horney raises the possibility of a basic conflict within the human personality underlying particular conflicts. She states:

The more knowledge we gain of a person the better able we are to recognise the conflicting elements that account for the symptoms, inconsistencies, and surface conflicts - and, we must add, the more confusing becomes the picture, through the number and variety of contradictions. So we are led to ask: Can there be a basic conflict underlying all these particular conflicts and originally responsible for all of them? Can one picture the structure of conflict in terms, say, of an incompatible marriage, where an endless variety of apparently unrelated disagreements and rows over friends, children, finances, mealtimes, servants, all point to some fundamental disharmony in the relationship itself? (Horney 1945: 16-17)

Constructive theories of inner conflicts which are the result of neurotic cravings and contradictions have been developed by notable psychologists and theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Karen Horney, Carl Jung, and others. Since the intra-personal perspective is relevant to the question of conflict an examination of theorists in the psychological field offers a fruitful exploration. It will not be possible within the confines of this dissertation to investigate the full range of conflict models that are supported by the various theorists. It will be sufficient, therefore, to refer to some of the significant developments in the work of two leading theorists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. This will provide us with an indication of the relationship between interpersonal and inner personal conflict.

The aim here is to examine the notion that many inter-personal or inter group conflicts may be influenced by the inner conflicts of individuals. In his discussion of personality theories Salvatore Maddi shows that certain theorists assume conflict at the core of the personality in the quest for fulfilment (Maddi 1989). It is postulated, for example, 'that the person is continuously and inevitably caught in the clash between two great forces that are defined in content to be continually acting, necessarily opposed, and unchangeable. According to this model, life must be a compromise, which at best involves a dynamic balance of the two forces and at worst a foredoomed attempt to deny the existence of one of them' (Maddi 1989:41).

There are two versions of the conflict model. In the *psychosocial version*, the source of one force is within the individual and the source of the other in groups or societies. In the *intrapsychic version*, both forces arise from within the person regardless of his or her status as an individual or social entity.

Sigmund Freud's theory is an example of the psychosocial version. In Freud's theory at the core of the personality are instincts which impinge upon the person from within the organism. An instinct is a force or drive which has a blind urge for

satisfaction. Another term for the instinctive stimulus is a 'need'. The satisfaction of the need or instinct is attained by an appropriate 'alteration of the inner source of stimulation...' (Freud 1937:81). Instinctively there is a drive for the satisfaction of the need. At the same time the person continually lives with the tension of deprivation so that the instinct will always exert an influence on a person's life.

A crucial point in Freud's position that concerns us here is the argument that the wishes and emotions of the id (the basic instincts within the person) are deeply self-centred, even selfish in nature. 'They express the person's basic, unadulterated, biological nature. They have no social refinements. The id wants what it wants when it wants it, without regard for what other people may need, prefer, or insist on' (Maddi 1989:50). From this perspective the human being is basically selfish and this inherent selfishness makes conflict inevitable.

We must, however, be clear on the nature of id and ego. The id is the mental representation, in the form of wishes and feelings, of selfish instincts. By themselves instincts are relatively ineffective in the world. Instincts do not include knowledge of the instrumentalities governing the actions that ensure gratification, nor do they include knowledge of the necessity of avoiding open conflict with other people.

The ego, on the other hand, is constituted largely of knowledge of effective ways to satisfy instincts and of techniques to deal with the expectations of society. As Maddi expresses it: 'The ego ensures a maximum of instinct gratification and a minimum trouble through the processes of perception, memory, and judgement and their relation to the voluntary nervous system, guided throughout by the knowledge mentioned above' (Maddi 1989:57).

Henry Murray's approach, though similar to that of Freud in some ways, is more optimistic where differences occur. In Murray's model the id does contain selfish instincts but it also includes other motivational tendencies, such as the needs for love

and achievement that are clearly more consistent with social living. Maddi concludes that for Murray 'these basic motivations and tendencies are inherent to the organism rather than secondary motivations derived from the selfish instincts through learning and the operation of defenses, as they would be [be] for Freud' (Maddi 1989:61). This model suggests that there is promise for more constructive inner resources to deal with conflict.

There appears to be general agreement that Carl Jung's position exemplifies the conflict model. His theory conceptualises life as the polarisation of opposite elements. Everything that exists thrives on conflict and opposition. The issue that might be open to question is whether his view is essentially psychosocial or intrapsychic.

In Freud the individual's contribution is the fact that psychosocial conflict is considered to be a biological selfishness. In contrast, the biological factor is only incidental to Jung's view of conflict. It is vital to recognise that for Jung the shadow is an archetype, not a biological imperative. This essence of animalism is part of the collective unconscious, which is a mental phenomenon that expresses essential forms of functioning based on past experiences of humankind. Thoughts and impulses that are sufficiently selfish to clash with the common good are, therefore, more recollections of past mental experience than biological imperatives. As Maddi explains it: 'Even if it be said that in the beginning -- the first time in history that an individual clashed with others -- a biological imperative was operating (and it is not certain that Jung would agree), this would not change the fact that all modern persons inherit a mental (not biological) predisposition to think and act selfishly because their predecessors have done so ' (Maddi 1989:89).

The significance of Jung's conflict model is his positive approach to conflict. The potential conflict between the collective unconscious and conscious can become the source of personal enhancement. To remain open to experiences and issues that

originate from the collective unconscious is to stand on the shoulders of all who have gone before. And furthermore to allow the personal unconscious to become conscious again is to recapture the richness of one's particular past. So in contrast to psychosocial conflict positions, the intrapsychic position of Jung sees conflict as valuable and not to be defended against just because it is inevitable (Maddi 1989:91).

Indeed, the ideal, according to Jung, is for persons to actively concern themselves with unconscious as well as conscious experiences and to try to create a dynamic balance or complementary relations between the two. In the complementary relationship the problems of tension, pain, and difficulty involved are not to be avoided, for they are the very essence of life itself. Jung (1953b) postulated an archetype called the *self* in formalising this ideal (Maddi 1989:91).

Clearly, in pursuing selfhood one does not eliminate conflict, the conscious and the unconscious remain opposed. They are, however, two conflicting poles of personality set in juxtaposition and communication with each other. So in contrast to other personological models, Jung defines the self as a conglomerate of conscious and unconscious experience (Maddi 1989:92).

Taking the argument in the opposite direction, in as much as inner conflict contributes to social conflict, there is the risk that repressed conflict can make matters worse for the individual. Fordham refers to Jung's assertion of this problem when he states that: '... the danger of repressing the shadow is that in the unconscious it seems to acquire strength and grow in vigour, so that when the moment comes (as usually happens) when it must appear, it is more dangerous and more likely to overwhelm the rest of the personality, which otherwise could have acted as a wholesome check' (Fordham 1966:51).

On the other hand, if these aspects of human nature are courageously faced, there is some comfort to be derived from the fact that once they are faced and known, there is at least some possibility of changing them, whereas in the unconscious it is difficult to create change. This means that there is moral conflict *within ourselves* to a far greater extent than we are able to imagine. Further, it is a conflict in which there is no fulfilment if there is a victory in which one part of our nature entirely crushes the other.

In this regard Jung suggests that we befriend our shadow. This means that there is a need to love the 'enemy within'. The struggle is to see our 'enemy within' as necessary for us to establish our own identity and individuality on the path to fulfilment. Indeed, this is an alternative to being torn apart by inner conflict (Fordham 1966).

Internal conflict then is explained as the ongoing struggle with the contradictions we experience within ourselves. Theologically internal conflict may have its genesis in our original sinful nature as discussed above. An argument might then be made for a linking of a conflict model of personality to the theology of sin. However another, perhaps more fruitful, point of departure for this discussion is H.M. Barth's insight that a theology of internal conflict begins with the search for fulfilment. He suggests, for instance, that though our troubles may well begin with inner conflict a root cause is the endeavour to seek fulfilment in our lives.

The search for fulfilment is bound to lead to social conflict as the question arises: when there are disagreements between parties, who should have the satisfaction of the fulfilment of aspirations? This question leads one to conclude that personal fulfilment can be found only within the context of creative interdependent social relationships (Barth 1980:90ff).

Whereas Barth uses the terms personal fulfilment to describe the inner yearning of humankind, pastoral theologians such as Howard Clinebell speak of spiritual wholeness or spiritual wellness. Referring to an awareness of the spiritual crisis on our planet Clinebell sees this condition in the 'context of the spiritual longings, confusion, and emptiness that people bring to the counselling pastor' (Clinebell 1984:111). Attempting to avoid psycho-spiritual dualism Clinebell sees that spiritual conflicts and emptiness are significant factors in many neurotic problems. For example *basic human needs* such as some of those mentioned above including the need for love and basic trust, and 'those most secularised and most alienated from institutionalised religion' are religious needs and can be satisfied only in relation to God (Clinebell 1984:109-110). Clinebell's understanding of spiritual wellness is summed up in the following way:

Persons are alive psychologically and spiritually, to the degree that they are aware of and in relationship with the many facets of their own inner lives, and with other people, nature, and God. Self-awareness is the path to greater aliveness. By this path one moves beyond *knowing* to *being* and *accepting* one's authentic self (Clinebell 1984:380).

There are biblical roots for this struggle with inner conflict and the search for fulfilment and spiritual wholeness. In Romans 7:14 ff. Paul describes his struggle with the inner conflict of knowing the good he wants to do but seemingly always doing those evil things which he does not want to do. It appears that Paul is searching for the fulfilment of the inner struggle. In John's gospel Jesus is the Good Shepherd who has come so that people 'may have life - life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). This is the offer of a quality of life which is beyond measure (Marsh 1968:400). These two passages could be held together in the context of the inner conflict described above.

In the final analysis, in terms of conflict, it is a creative struggle which leads through death to new life. A struggle in which Jesus can look as Lord upon those who

crucified him and say, 'Father, forgive them ...' (Luke 23:34). And then in that cry of desolation and possibly inner conflict the end, the goal, was attained (John 19:30) and Jesus can say, *Consummatum est!* The cross is then a picture of fulfilment by facing suffering creatively and by daring to meet conflict head-on (Barth 1980:pp. 90ff).

It becomes pertinent to conclude that anyone who is searching for spiritual fulfilment needs to cope with inner conflict. At the same time inner conflict also gives rise to social conflict.

THE CROSS AND CONFLICT

The significance of a theology of conflict is powerfully portrayed by the Cross. It is the event of the crucifixion that ultimately brings to a head the struggle between Jesus and his followers and their opposition, namely, the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities. Although this conflict could be understood to be similar to many other socio-political conflicts the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus make it difficult to interpret it other than from a theological perspective. This discussion is not meant to introduce an argument for the purpose of the Cross, rather its intention is to examine the way in which the conflict between Jesus and the Sanhedrin was dealt with and how conflict could be understood first by the Jews and later the Church.

The conflict will be approached from two possible vantage points: first from the position of Jesus' ministry on the way to the crucifixion; and secondly from the viewpoint of the resurrection. The first part provides a means to study context and nature of the conflict and possibly probe a theological view of conflict. The second approach will offer an opportunity to scrutinise a role for the Church in political conflict.

3.1. THE CONFLICT LEADING UP TO THE CRUCIFIXION

The fact that Jesus was brought to trial before Pilate, the Governor of Rome means that he was charged with a political crime. However to understand the nature of the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders the social context and the story of the conflict needs to be outlined.

3.1.1. The Social Context

The socio-political context of Palestine during the time of Jesus contained the seeds of conflict. This is evident when considering some of the sociological factors at work during the time of Jesus which describe the conditions of the poor and the oppression under which they lived.

There were extremes of wealth and poverty with the poor by far in the majority. Their specific needs and hopes would obviously be on the mind of anyone who came to announce 'good news to the poor.' The poor were not without help in the Jewish society of the day. The Law in the Old Testament was mindful of the conditions of the poor and commanded that the charity be shown to them. Yet there were other signs that the poor were not receiving the attention, compassion and assistance that the Law intended (Pilgrim 1981:44-46). The poor were becoming poorer and more numerous, while the rich were becoming richer. Small farmers had their land expropriated and sold to wealthy landowners (Stegemann 1984:19). Taxes had become a crushing burden. There had been droughts and famine and unemployment was increasing (Schottroff L. and Stegemann W. 1986:40 ff). There was a good deal of social rootlessness mainly due to socio-economic pressure. There was thus a movement towards the towns and cities where many became beggars in spite of laws against begging (Theissen G. 1978:34-35, 47ff). At the same time there was a political crisis due to the tensions between the different structures of government (Roman procurators, Herodian kings and the Jewish Sanhedrin), not to mention the cultural identity crisis of the ruling Jewish elite (Theissen G. 1978:76, 93).

As a result of these tensions there were uprisings and demonstrations by the poor. Nolan points out, for instance, that the historian Josephus described the leaders and prophets of the poor as 'impostors and demagogues [who] under the guise of divine inspiration provoked revolutionary actions and impelled the masses to act like madmen' (Nolan A. 1988:138).

Jesus' teaching of the kingdom of God being available to the poor was good news to them and it probably raised their hopes for the future (for example Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:1 'Blessed are you who are poor, yours is the kingdom of God,' also Luke 6:20; Luke 12:32). But while political and religious aspirations of the people were given encouragement by the ministry and teaching of Jesus it caused grave concern amongst the Jewish establishment who felt threatened by the following that Jesus had attracted.

3.1.2. The Story Of The Conflict

From the perspective of the ministry of Jesus the conflict was waged on the legal and religious level through an interaction between Jesus, the Jews and the Romans. Evidently Jesus was condemned as a 'blasphemer' and a 'demagogic false Messiah' by the Jews (John 8:42-59; Moltmann 1974:128). Jesus, it was believed, set himself up above the authority of Moses and the Law when he preached that God did not require strict observance of the prescriptions of the Law but shows gracious mercy towards sinners. Also his action in the cleansing of the temple, the prophesy of the destruction of the temple, the call to follow him, his transgression of the Sabbath laws and his forgiveness of sins, revealed that he what Jesus believed about God completely contradicted the way God was understood by the tradition of the Law. The teaching of Jesus thus placed Jesus in conflict with the religious leaders who believed that he had gone beyond the limits of the Law.

Furthermore, Jesus contradicted the hopes represented in prophecy and the apocalyptic as understood by the Pharisees. Many of the Jews anticipated the appearance of the Son of Man at the last judgement as the judge of sinners. Jesus, on the other hand, appears to them as a false prophet who instead of condemning sinners and tax-collectors gives them an opportunity to experience reconciliation. For Jesus the coming kingdom was not to be an era of judgement but rather as good news for the poor and as the unconditional free grace of God so that those who are lost and oppressed are welcomed (Moltmann 1974:129).

Nevertheless, the preaching of Jesus aroused not inconsiderable interest amongst the people, particularly the poor and the oppressed (for example indicated by the numbers who came to hear him such as recorded in John 6 where the story is told of the feeding of the five thousand). This must have caused the Jewish leaders some concern as it became a matter not simply of a man who had lost his senses or a rabbi who needed to be censured, but of a movement that was gaining in popularity and which therefore threatened the Jewish establishment (Luke 16:16 NEB; Matthew 8:11; Matthew 11:12; Luke 14: 15-24).

3.1.3. The Nature Of The Conflict

The conflict developed dangerously for Jesus as the scribes and Pharisees tried desperately to trap him in order to bring about his downfall. Some of the encounters recorded in the gospels suggest that the Pharisees were attempting to force Jesus into conflict in the hope that he would place himself in an invidious position with the Law. This is a theme running through the gospels, for example Matthew. 22, Luke 10.25, Matthew. 12.11. In each case Jesus declines to play into their hands. When the Pharisees call upon Jesus to judge a situation he refuses to become their arbiter.

From the perspective of the Jewish leaders it appears that this was a zero-sum conflict situation. It was a clash over religious and political values which evolved into a power struggle between the Jewish authorities and Jesus and his disciples. As one reads the gospels it becomes evident that a number of the Jewish authorities saw Jesus as a trouble maker and wanted him out of the way.

The question is: was Jesus seeing the conflict in the same way, that is, a confrontation that will ultimately become a win-lose situation, or was he approaching it differently? It appears that his approach to conflict varied according to the situation. His action in the cleansing of the temple (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke: 19:45-48; John 2:13-22), for example, was confrontational, quite unlike the occasion when dealing with the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8). In the first situation he forcefully drove the money-changers out, while in the

second situation he emerges from what appears to be a trap and enables both the woman and her accusers to perceive the situation in a different light.

From a sociological perspective the conflict appears to have elements which are similar to many other inter-group confrontations. The emerging issues include such as problems as power, values, and goals. It was also about individual and social change. Many of the Jews were not ready to accept the changes that Jesus was suggesting through his preaching or by his actions. This is not to say that the conflict between Jesus and the Jews was a simple or straight forward one. On the contrary it was fraught with theological and political complexities.

A further question relating to the conflict between Jesus and the Jews is whether Jesus, being who he was, dealt with the conflict differently than his opposition, or for that matter, his disciples. Was Jesus working with a paradigm different to that of his contemporaries because of his unique relationship with the Father? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for instance, believes that Jesus' responses to the Pharisees arose from his unity with God. As he was 'tuned' into the mind of God in a way that the Pharisees were not he interpreted the will of God in a totally different way. That is why the Pharisees fail to make contact with Jesus and why Jesus' responses do not appear to be answers at all (Bonhoeffer 1955:29).

we can conclude from this study of the conflict leading up to the crucifixion: i. that Jesus' mission to bring peace and new life to all and in particular to the poor and oppressed (Luke 4) placed him in conflict with the Jewish leaders; ii) while Jesus preached peace he did not shrink from conflict. He warned followers that there would be conflict, for example Matthew 10:34 *Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world. No, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword*; iii) Jesus was not afraid provoke conflict when it was necessary such as his confrontation of the scribes and Pharisees and the turning over of the tables in the Temple; iv. because of his unique relationship with the Father Jesus saw the conflict from a

completely different perspective, one that could overcome the conflict, for example Matthew 5:44 *But I tell you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...*

3.3. THE CONFLICT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESURRECTION

Reflection on the conflict in the previous section was attained by focusing on the historical and contextual story. Considering the conflict from the vantage point of faith in the resurrection reveals a deeper theological significance of the conflict. Through this process the conflict is understood in the context of eschatological faith.

Looking at it from this eschatological perspective the trial of Jesus does not mean in a narrow sense, a trial before the Sanhedrin or Pilate, but in a broader perspective, the struggle for the truth of God in which Jesus came forward as a witness. So the conflict that is the consequence of the ministry of Jesus, as understood by Christians *after* the resurrection, is a clash of views over how the truth of God, or his righteousness, can be understood. The truth as proclaimed by Jesus overcame the Law while the truth taught by the Pharisees saw the Law as its vehicle. So Jurgen Moltmann is able to state that this 'is a contest between the gospel and the Law, between the righteousness of faith and the righteousness of works, between the justification of the godless and the justification of the righteous' (Moltmann 1974:133).

Reflection on the cross also presents the conflict as the struggle for righteousness in political terms. There little question that Jesus was crucified under Roman law for political reasons (Moltmann 1974:136). It would be difficult to argue otherwise, for instance, that Jesus was misunderstood (Bultmann) or that in fact he was not in any way involved politically. The distinction between religion and politics in that time was non existent. In other words the activities of Jesus' ministry had political

implications. Certainly the Romans would be concerned about possible uprisings which might be stirred up by Jesus. It seems as though the conflict had an inherent necessity which was bound to culminate in his death.

As explained earlier, leading up to the crucifixion the conflict between Jesus and his followers and the authorities represents theologically a clash between different definitions of the truth. But after the resurrection of Jesus the conflict becomes a struggle for the righteousness of God. Jesus is not only the victim but also significantly the witness in the trial. He gives testimony to the righteousness of God and to the liberation of the people of God.

Theologically the resurrection represents God's vindication of both the ministry and vicarious suffering of Jesus in his conflict with the Jewish and Roman authorities. The implication of this justification of Jesus' ministry is the theological support it gives to the Church. The significance of the vindication of Jesus must be underlined: it means that the Church is able to draw on the testimony of Jesus in the struggle for righteousness.

3.4. SUMMARY

From this analysis there are at least two perspectives that will determine the way conflict can be understood theologically. First by seeing the conflict in Jesus' time up to the crucifixion. This perspective assumes that the truth is not clearly discerned. The responsible approach, therefore, will be to grapple with the definitions of the truth that are represented by the parties involved. An analysis of the options should then yield a clearer direction towards the truth and transformation.

The second perspective takes an eschatological position from the standpoint of the future and belief in the resurrection of Jesus and looks back at the trial of Jesus. This time, however, godlessness, sin, and violations of God's righteousness are on trial. Jesus is the chief witness. This is possible because the resurrection of Jesus confirms

that God has demonstrated his blessing of Jesus, his ministry and his preaching of the good news. In this case, contrary to the first perspective described above, there is not a choice between different definitions of the truth, but a stand for *the Truth based on the witness of Jesus*.

In contemporary struggles every conflict needs to be considered in context. An understanding of what the conflict is about will be crucial. Definitions of the truth will be sought, and in many cases the whole truth will not necessarily be contained in either one of the parties' position. This will necessitate a process in which further dimensions are opened up and new understandings of the truth discovered.

There are circumstances, however, when the Church will decide, after reflection and debate, and possibly a great deal of conflict, that based on the witness of Jesus (and biblical testimony in general), a prophetic truth needs to be proclaimed. An example of this stance is the World Alliance of Reformed Churches denunciation of the policy of apartheid in South Africa as a theological heresy in 1982 (De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio 1983:170).

This prophetic action is significant because it encourages Christians to keep re-assessing their life in context and in terms of their understanding of justice and peace. It also means that through the testimony of Jesus and the gospel the Church can take a prophetic stand or act in order to bring to the surface a conflict that has not yet been dealt with. However, making statements of truth is not enough. In the ensuing conflict some process has to be determined in order to pave the way for peace-making.

From this perspective it can be seen that the Church has a dual role. On the one hand the Church has the task of reconciling opposing groups by facilitating an analysis of definitions of truth; while on the other hand the prophetic voice of the Church declares the it's option for those who have been unjustly treated, marginalised, or

become victims of political violence, in terms of the testimony of Jesus. It also becomes clear that the Church also has the role to enable underlying conflicts in a political situation to emerge. The Church does this through its prophetic role by uncovering the sinful acts of humanity in terms of the demands of the Gospel. The church does this in spite of the fact that such actions may cause conflict.

CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

In this section we will consider the way in which the Church as the participation of a people of God committed to the ministry of Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the kingdom of God, is also the site of conflict and struggle. It will be seen that conflict enters the Church through its nature, mission, ministry and institutional structures. In fact it will be shown that conflict is both possible and real in the Church.

Conflict, of course, is not new to the Church. There was conflict in the Church at the very beginning of the New Testament times. There were conflicts between individuals and the leadership as well as among the faithful themselves. In Acts 6 for instance the first conflict in the new movement appeared with the complaints from a group of Greek speaking Christians against those who spoke Aramaic. The Greeks complained that their widows were being overlooked. This problem was solved by the appointment of seven deacons under the leadership of Stephen who would administer the fund for widows. Further than this incident we need only recall the conflicts in the Pauline communities; the situation described in the Letter of James when it speaks of liturgical assemblies and relations between rich and poor; the celebration of the Eucharist at Corinth; and the conflict between Peter, Paul and James.

Since conflict is as prevalent in the Church as it is anywhere else an understanding of conflict in the Church is necessary. For this reason some specific areas of conflict in the Church will be examined.

4.1. THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The fact that the Church is not the kingdom of God is generally accepted. Nonetheless conscious affirmation of the kingdom of God is the first step towards avoiding an ecclesiology that is false. The temptation towards assuming the

identification of the Church and the kingdom of God is a subtle one. As Küng points out identification of Church and kingdom of God is brought about by the fact that the reign of God has both futurist and present dimensions and as it erupts into the present the Church could easily be taken as the kingdom of God in the present (Küng 1968:90). Küng suggests other ways in which the Church may confuse itself with the kingdom of God. He refers to well-intentioned associations such as: 'the Church builds up the kingdom of God, extends it throughout the earth, or works for its realization' (Küng 1968:92). However, the Church cannot claim to have continuity with the kingdom of God as though the kingdom could be a product of the Church. The Church is more true to itself as it journeys in faith *towards* the coming kingdom of God.

It needs to be emphasised that Jesus did not consider the kingdom of God and the Church to be the same. He 'did not preach or establish (in the conventional sense of the term) any Church; he simply proclaimed a kingdom of God that was at hand. The ultimate, definitive reality in the eyes of Jesus was the kingdom, not the Church' (Sobrinho 1984:201). This is not to deny the historical association between Jesus and the Church or that the Church was 'founded' by Jesus. It is simply making it clear that there should be no confusion between the Church and the kingdom of God.

The implication of this generally accepted view of the Church is that if the Church is not identifiable with the kingdom of God then it is open to criticism. Just as the kingdom of God makes all creation relative and puts it in a state of crisis, so also is the Church under the same judgement (Sobrinho 1984:201). John de Gruchy makes a similar observation when he writes of the impact of the kingdom of God, past, present and future: 'As such, the kingdom provides the criterion by which we must evaluate what is happening in history, and the focus for the life and mission of the church' (De Gruchy 1979:198).

This means that conflict is inherent in the nature of the Church. The fact that the Church is not the kingdom of God places it at best in creative tension with the kingdom of God. In other words the Church by its nature falls short of the coming kingdom of God. This difference between what is the Church and what is the kingdom of God therefore contains the possibility of conflict. If the Church should presumptuously, even unconsciously, make a claim to be the kingdom of God it is in conflict with its own nature. Boff makes a similar point when he says: 'The existence of the church testifies to a human freedom that can oppose God. It likewise testifies to the new route that God, in mercy and long-suffering has selected in order to continue proclaiming the kingdom where God will be all in all (1Cor.15:28) in the nth degree of glorification and reverence on the part of every creature' (Boff 1986:59).

The Church does have a relational bond with the kingdom of God but it is this bond which also is its temptation. Though the Church is not itself the kingdom it is entrusted with the task of pointing to and serving the kingdom and making it a reality. At the same time the Church in practice finds itself criticised by the kingdom of God. As De Gruchy says:

The message of the kingdom makes us restless with things as they are. It confronts us with the need to decide for or against God's will here and now. It is the goad for mission in the world. It stimulates hope for the fulfilment of God's purpose for the universe (De Gruchy 1979:199).

The consequence of this critical relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God is that the Church is in a state of conflict with itself. This conflict, however, is not an entirely negative experience for the Church. The judgement of the kingdom of God enables the Church to become a more faithful witness to the mission of God.

4.2. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND CONFLICT

The Church engages in various pastoral activities in order to fulfil its mission, that is, serving the kingdom of God. Some of the pastoral activities pursued by the Church are the liturgy, preaching, service, theological discernment and its institutional forms. In all of these pastoral activities the Church must follow Jesus. If it does not it fails its own nature (Sobrino 1984:203).

As soon as the Church wavers from its primary task in mission to do what Jesus did, that is proclaim the kingdom of God at hand, it falls into conflict. The Church does this, sometimes inadvertently, by preaching itself, or placing its own structures above that of the kingdom.

Of even more significance for an understanding of conflict in the Church is the fact that when it faithfully preaches the kingdom of God in both word and deed the Church causes conflict. This is the tension and conflict that it must create to be true to itself and to Christ. The point here is that so long as the Church simply preaches the kingdom of God even in the most exalted fashion the conflicts will be not be significant. Discussions of academic or hermeneutical nature, or simply about the appropriate pastoral responses to various situations will seldom rouse the people from their comfort zones. But as soon as the Church follows its preaching with actions, or when it passes from 'proclaiming' to 'doing' its mission, as Jesus did, then conflicts will be of a far more serious nature. People feel threatened by the compelling urgency of the call of Christ to make the kingdom of God a reality. The kingdom of God emphasises the need to transform existing injustices in which the poor and marginalised are presented with opportunities for authentic life.

4.3. CONFLICT IN THE WORLD IS REFLECTED IN THE CHURCH

When the Church is true to its nature and calling and conducts its mission in an authentic way as Jesus did then the social and political conflict in the world enters the Church as well. The reason for this fact is that social division in the world becomes a division within the Church. Christians themselves belong to different social and political groups and secondly they work and socialise in different contexts and therefore have different interests and commitments. In South Africa political issues such as informal settlements, strikes, blockades and the reconstruction and development programme, are potentially conflict producing both in the world and also in the Church because Christians defend different interests.

In these socio-political events or issues the Church acts in a prophetic way to make the kingdom of God a reality. This is precisely what is required of mission. There have been many times that when the Church has made pronouncements or taken actions in the name of the Gospel of Christ that conflict enters the Church. This is inevitable as individuals and groups within the Church either have different expectations of the Church's involvement or find that the decision or pronouncements of the Church is far contrary to their own.

The problem is that the Church to be true to its calling must critically judge a situation and take precise concrete action. The very fact that the Church is made up of people of different political persuasions means that conflict will inevitably exist in the life of the Christian community.

An analysis of the conflict in the Church reflects a perception that because the task of the Church is the work towards the unity of the Church conflict is most undesirable. We must strive for the unity of the Church. Jesus called us to do that task (John 14) in spite of conflict within the body. The question is: does striving for unity in the Church take priority over the mission of the Church? It seems quite clear

from the above discussion that the Church must follow Jesus and make the kingdom of God a reality even if it causes internal conflict.

4.4. THE STRUCTURES OF THE CHURCH AND CONFLICT

The institutional form of the Church has a significant and constructive role to play in the Church's efforts to proclaim the kingdom of God. The organisation and administration of the Church exists to give concrete form to the witness of the Church in the world. The Church's doctrines and worship and structures provides the Church with continuity, consistency and effectiveness. On the negative side the Church as institution tends to avoid or suppress conflict 'and distrust the new until its truth has been theologically justified' (Sobrino 1984:212).

There is always a positive tension in the institutional dimension of the Church between the emphasis on the Church as an organisation with its clear goals and objectives and a strong sense of unity, and the Church as a community of believers with its emphasis on communal and faith relationships among members (Dulles 1978:39 ff; Grollenberg L, Kerkhoffs J., Houtepen A., Vollebergh J.J.A., Schillebeeckx E.:41ff).

Once a Church or congregation grows to a certain size it can be handled only by institutional means. It then needs structures for decision making and a disciplined community life. However, the institutionalisation of the Church has always in principle been at the service of the Church, that is towards the effectiveness of its mission.

An organism, however, thrives on the inter-personal communication of its people. For instance Dietrich Bonhoeffer developed this notion of the Church as an interpersonal community in his first major work, *The Communion of Saints*: 'It is not the organised church and the ministry which give forgiveness of sins, but the communion of saints' (Bonhoeffer 1963:125). It provides people with an identity

that describes them as not given to strict rules or exact planning but as community in self-forgetful relationship to one another (Bonhoeffer 1963:136). Theologically this is the people on a pilgrimage, a kind of Exodus Church, a people on the move, very fluid, though not always very stable. Nevertheless the mystical communion with Christ and one another serves to enrich their witness as Church.

The struggle between these two ways of being Church is a healthy one enabling the Church effectively to serve Christ as his body. However when either of these paradigms becomes primary so that one of them suffers then conflict enters the Church. For instance as a formal organisation the Church may gradually become an arena for the interplay of power and interests, and the Church loses sight of its true goals and its mission (Vollebergh 1980). Or a clash of interests sometimes surfaces between the institutional element of the Church and its prophets who are rooted in the Church's community dimension. The prophets tend to expose the sin of the Church and society which often unsettles the institutional dimensions of the organisation (Vollebergh 1980, , Sobrino 1984:213-214).

Although there are always tensions between them both organism and organisation need one another for creative ministry. Organism provides opportunity for relational ministry of persons and organisation gives the Church direction and motivates its missionary activity in the world. Colin Williams refers to the tension when he says:

The two motifs - event [community] and institution - are inseparable from each other. And yet the two are also in severe tension with each other and on occasion (e.g. the time of the exile) they can reach the breaking point. It is the attitude toward the tension that is vital... Institution is at the service of event, and where the form of the institution is standing in the way of the happening of contemporary obedience to God's call to his people to move on with him in history then the priority of event must be recognised. (Galatians 3:5-29)'; (Williams 1968:28).

4.5. THEOLOGY AND ACT

The final consideration in this section is that of conflict in theology itself. Theology is a human word about God which will always be in conflict when it becomes divorced from life, context or action.

Theology is fundamentally the Church's attempt to understand itself and its relation to God, and to reflect on its responsibility towards society and creation. Indeed Christian theology's reflection on the meaning of life extends to its interest in reality as a whole.

However, the function of Christian theology is not simply to build a conceptual or theoretical base for the Church. As Moltmann, following Hegel, puts it, 'The theologian is not concerned merely to supply a different *interpretation* of the world, of history and of human nature, but to *transform* them in expectation of a divine transformation' (Moltmann 1967:84).

Christian theology, in other words, is bound up with the life of the Church. The Church's reflections on the meaning of life are not divorced from its acts. Of course some of its abstract philosophical tenets may not mirror its activism. The opposite is also true: The passive life of the Church has often refused to live up to its more profound theological dogmas. John de Gruchy makes this point in his response to a paper by Gustavo Gutierrez:

It's a false dichotomy which we have to avoid with all the passion we have. One of the things that attracts me about the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is the way in which his academic erudition, his knowledge of the Christian tradition, the Bible, and indeed his understanding of philosophical debate, is continually related to the question 'Who is Jesus Christ for us today', that is, to following Jesus today (Regan & Torrance 1993:88).

4.6. SUMMARY

Conflict in the Church is an inevitable reality. It is necessary if the Church is to be true to its nature for the Church is always judged by its relationship to the kingdom of God. Since the Church is not the kingdom of God it will always be in conflict with the kingdom of God. As the Church seeks to follow Jesus and serve the kingdom of God in its ministry and mission conflict is likely to be generated both within and without its structures. The conflict leads to tensions between Church and world, Church and the kingdom of God, and parts within the Church itself.

Furthermore the divisions outside the Church and in society inter-penetrate the Church as its members who belong to different groups bring their interests and divisions into the Church. The Church's institutional structures themselves may become challenged by the prophets who expose the sins not only of the world but also of the Church. This conflict is healthy as creative confrontation enables the Church to keep its focus firmly on the one to whom the Church belongs and helps the Church grow in purpose and new life.

The exploration of a theology of conflict and in particular the discussion of conflict in the Church opens the way for the opportunity to examine the Church's involvement in contemporary conflict situations. In Part Three below an attempt will be made to test the role of the Church and its actions in particular concrete events in South Africa when political conflict emerged.

PART TWO
SOCIO-ECCLESIAL AND POLITICAL
CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE CASE STUDY METHOD

This section is designed to examine the churches' attempt to respond to socio-political conflicts both within the Church and in the broader socio-political context in South Africa. The contextual focus of the research is a contemporary examination of the Church's role in conflict and social change based on recent events. The investigation, therefore, will be limited to the period of the National Party rule in South Africa from 1948 to the present.

The intention of the research is not to write a history of the period referred but to attempt an analysis of the strategies the Church has adopted to promote peace and justice within the Church and in the nation. As it will be beyond the scope of this thesis to critique all the major conflicts of this period this overview will be restricted to one major ecclesial-political conflict event in each decade of National Party rule in South Africa beginning in 1950 and up to the first democratic general elections in April 1994. Each of the five conflict events is processed in the form of a case study.

A number of church leaders were interviewed. The criteria for the selection of interviewees were: their position of authority in the Church, their knowledge of the church's viewpoint at the time, their personal experience of the event in question and their availability at the time of the interviews. These interviews were not processed quantitatively but qualitatively. There were a several difficulties in the way of seeking to make exact quantifiable propositions or hypotheses and subjecting them to rigorous testing. Apart from providing a constraint on the questions and discussions which would lend themselves to the discovery of creative and insightful investigation, the main difficulty was that, as suggested by Vivienne Jabri in her book, conflict situations are composed of overlapping and inter-leading relationships between actors, governmental and non-governmental, and open to any number of other influences (Jabri 1990:10). The implication being that so many outcomes can

arise out of basically similar conditions that it is difficult decide which connection is correct.

The qualitative research, however, is based upon a theoretical structure that helps the researcher to obtain first hand experience and views which provide invaluable material and co-ordinate them for the analysis, in this case, of the Church's role in conflict.

The interview was, in each case, a free flowing one though structurally keeping it within certain bounds in order to facilitate the discussion and to be generally consistent. For this purpose the following questions were used as a guide in the interview:

1. Name a conflict situation in one or each decade which you consider to be most significant for the country and the Church.
2. What did the Church do / how did it respond in that conflict?
3. When did it happen?
4. Where did it happen?
5. How did the Church deal with the conflict?
6. Who was involved ? (or what church structure?)
7. Why was it done this way?
8. How do you feel it was handled? Could it have been done in another, more creative way?

The method adopted for the analysis of the events or case studies is phenomenological. There are three steps in the approach:

Step 1. The Event

In this first step of the process a specific event which caused the conflict selected in a decade is documented and described without interpretation or analysis.

Step 2. Response of the Churches

The general response of the churches at the time is also documented without interpretation. In this step a description of the churches' actions and the strategies used to deal with the conflict is explored. The story as it happened is unfolded.

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

This step involves an identification of the conflict an understanding of the conflict and clarification of the actors involved. This step includes an interpretation of the event and actions of the churches by the interviewees.

Step 4. Critique of the Conflict Resolution Strategy

Following the analysis of the event and Church response this step involves an appraisal of the strategy or approach to the conflict. In some instances the interviewees critique of the churches' or individuals' strategy in dealing with the respective crisis or conflict is noted.

This schemata provides a systematised approach and moves from experience to analysis and evaluation. Each of the events follows chronologically. This order presents a natural flow of data and suggests that a general overview may be discerned.

The case studies are not expected to provide a specific or detailed account of how the churches are able to deal with political and social conflict. It is expected, however, that trends, or general tendencies, showing strengths and weaknesses in conflict resolution will emerge.

THE BANTU EDUCATION ACT 1953

Step 1. The Event

The Bantu Education Act (Act 47 of 1953) provided for the transfer of Bantu Education from the Provinces to the Department of Native Affairs. Referring to schools not owned by the state it was declared that these institutions needed to inform the Secretary for Native Affairs whether they wished: 1) to retain control of their schools and hostels under their care as private institutions without state aid; or 2) to retain control of them as aided institutions, with the subsidy reduced to 75 per cent of salaries and cost-of-living allowances of approved teachers, provided they followed the syllabus laid down by the state and had all teachers approved by the state; or 3) relinquish control of them to the state with compensation.

This Act directly affected the Church schools throughout South Africa. Should a church or mission wish to retain control of their school on the basis of a reduced subsidy, and if this request was approved, the new subsidy would be paid from 1 April 1955. The Minister might later according to his discretion, decide that the school should be transferred to a Bantu community organisation, and any arrangements made in regard to schools in white areas would be subject to the provisions of the Group Areas Act.

The Department was willing that hostels should remain under church or mission control on a subsidised basis but any arrangements made would be subject to revision especially if the system became difficult to control. Religious instruction in these schools could be provided by the churches at set times on condition that this instruction was given in the mother tongue. Where churches did not do so, the Department syllabus would be taught by class teachers (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1953-54).

The motive behind the Act was tested in Parliament. In his speech motivating the Act the Prime Minister, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd said:

Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to Natives ... Native education is the creation of frustrated people who, ... have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa today in any kind of school in existence is being taught to expect that he will live his adult life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake ... There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour (Thompson 1990: 196).

It was clear that the government intended bringing the education system into the broad policy of apartheid. Moreover, the purpose for Bantu Education was to equip black people for the role the government had planned for them.

Step 2. Response Of The Churches

This Bill provoked the most significant crisis involving Church-state relations in the decade of the fifties. The churches (that is, English speaking) were dismayed by this Bill for without state subsidies it was impossible to finance the church institutions. This was a heavy blow to the churches as their schools, as in other African countries, were an obvious and effective form of evangelisation.

There were immediate responses from the churches. In an address to the Christian Council of South Africa which met in May 1954 Dr. Alexander Kerr conceded that it was the duty of the state to provide education for the country and that it was beyond the resources of the churches to educate all the African children. He felt that the state should, in fact, have encouraged the churches in their educational endeavours rather than reduce the subsidies. Nevertheless he was mainly concerned that the 'spiritual element' in the mission schools be sustained (S.A. Outlook 1954).

The Roman Catholic Bishops expressed grave misgivings at the serious weakening of Christian influence that was likely to arise from this Bill. Religion could not be

taught in general as though it were a purely theoretical matter, but must be imprinted as a way of life (S.A.I.R.R. Survey 1954). If their schools were closed, or handed over to the government, then the Church would lose a great deal of its influence in society. Ultimately the Roman Catholic Bishops wanted to retain their control of their schools and were prepared to raise funds for them.

The Anglican Episcopal Synod which met in November 1954 made the following statement:

Both as to the religious and secular teaching it is our conviction that the Bantu Education Act will retard the true education of the African and the majority of us are of the opinion that the Church should not make itself responsible for taking part in such an educational system. All we are prepared to do is to lease certain of our buildings to the State. The majority of us think that in many cases it would be wrong to refuse to do so. Such a refusal would throw many teachers out of employment and leave many children without opportunity of any kind of instruction. It is incompatible with our duty to the African people to take action which might lead to such results. Here we are faced with a grievous choice of evils. We must choose the lesser. But this does not imply that we approve in any sense of an Act which will retard the progress of African education, and weaken the connection of such education with the teaching of the Christian faith Church News 1954).

The Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa meeting in Queenstown in 1954 was emphatic in its rejection of the Bantu Education Act. The Church condemned the Act stating that it was 'A policy which in effect, aims at conditioning the African people to a predetermined position of subordination in a State and is incompatible with the Christian principles for which the Church stands.' Nevertheless in view of the difficulty of financing its schools with reduced or no subsidies, and in order to provide for the immediate educational needs of the African people, the Church decided to relinquish control of them to the state and continue to exercise Christian influence upon education wherever possible (The Minutes of the Seventy-Second Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa) .

The Rev. Stanley Pitts, Superintendent of the mission school at Healdtown at the time, said in the interview that the government wanted control over the school and the hostel. The Methodist Church then negotiated an agreement with the government in which the school administration, teaching and curriculum management were taken over by the government and the hostels continued to be managed by the Church. Pitts stated that 'Having made the protest there was nothing we could do. Moreover, no one knew what Bantu education meant.'¹

Ambrose Reeves the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg at the time, spoke out more strongly against the Act advocating 'total resistance,' as against the more moderate tones of others (Villa-Vicencio 1988:98). Villa-Vicencio notes the same divide in other churches. Dr. J. B. Webb, president of the Conference of the Methodist Church, for instance, indicated that there were those among Africans who felt that 'a wreck was better than nothing at all' (Clarke 1983:536). Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton argued in a similar way that 'even a rotten system of education is better than that which young children pick up in the streets' (Paton 1973:235; Villa-Vicencio 1988:102).

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

Apart from the Roman Catholic Church who, supported by the Vatican, decided not to hand over their schools to the government and raise the necessary funds, the English speaking churches adopted similar approaches. For the purposes of the analysis of the churches' handling of the Bantu Education Act the focus will be on the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's approach.

In the words of the Bishop Peter Storey of the South Western Transvaal District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and former President of the Methodist Church Conference (1984) during the interview with him: 'The Church did more

¹ Interview with the Rev. S. Pitts in Johannesburg on March 24 1994.

than make resolutions and statements. There were deputations and many discussions at various levels.' But in the end the Church was faced with a limited number of options: withdraw altogether from the schools in protest, remain in charge and face the financial and political consequences of going it alone, or salvage what it could from the situation through negotiation.² Bishop Storey reflected: 'The Methodist Church, as was the case of other churches, found itself in a no-win situation. Even the black constituency was against taking an uncompromising stand.'³

Bishop Norman Hudson of the Natal Coastal District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, capsulated the position of the Methodist Church when he said in the interview: 'The Church had reluctantly to let the schools go.'⁴ This view was also supported by Dr. M. Stanley Mogoba, Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church when he said that the 'Church experienced the painful realisation that it was powerless. It was for instance, financially, structurally and politically powerless at that time.'⁵

Storey painted a vivid picture of the context: 'One has to be aware of the climate during the early fifties. The government had only won one election although it had since increased its power. There was no awareness of how the government was to further entrench its power. The country did not realise then that it was facing an epoch of forty-eight years - there was no sense of the monolithic power to come. The government, in fact, had been most approachable and was behaving with reasonable courtesy in the discussions that took place between them and the deputations of the churches. They seemed to be careful in the initiation of the Act and we on the other hand could not see the master plan. Our responses might have been more ad hoc than understanding of the massive evil that confronted us. There

² Statement made in an interview with Bishop Peter Storey in Johannesburg on March 24 1994.

³ Statement made to me by Bishop Peter Storey during an interview with him in Johannesburg on March 24 1994.

⁴ The interview was held with Bishop Norman Hudson in Durban on January 14 1994

⁵ This statement was made to me by Dr. M. Stanley Mogoba in an interview in Durban on January 19 1994.

was also the cry from the black constituency which became louder with the deepening of the crisis: "rather a second rate education than nothing at all."⁶

The Rev. Stanley Pitts, Superintendent of the mission school at Healdtown at the time, said that the government wanted control over the school and the hostel. The Methodist Church (as did the other English speaking churches) negotiated an agreement with the government in which the school administration, teaching and curriculum management were taken over by the state and the hostels continued to be managed by the Church. Pitts stated that 'Having made the protest there was nothing we could do. Moreover, no one knew what Bantu education meant.'⁷

Pitts elaborated further: 'although we lost our influence on paper, in practice we still exercised influence directly through the hostels. We were also given a seat on the School Council so to some extent at least we could run the show.'⁸

The responses of the churches give an indication that they felt helpless against a determined opponent who had the upper hand. It appears that the churches capitulated against the odds and tried to salvage whatever they could in the negotiations.

Step 4. Critique Of The Conflict Resolution Strategy

It can be assumed then that the churches negotiated from a position of weakness. Certainly the Methodist Church felt itself to be powerless as a negotiating party against the government machine. So in order to achieve the most it could a compromise strategy was used. A compromise deal emerged in which the government took control of the school including the direction of the syllabi and the

⁶ Statement made in the interview with Bishop Storey in Johannesburg on March 24 1994.

⁷ Interview with the Rev. S. Pitts in Johannesburg on March 24 1994.

⁸ *Ibid.* Pitts March 24 1994.

churches maintained some control over the hostels. Nevertheless from the perspective of the Church it lost far more than it gained.

On reflection the question has to be raised: Was the Church as powerless as it was perceived to be? The problems surrounding the notion of power is most significant in negotiations. When asked in an interview for his view, the Rev. Athol Jennings of the Vuleka Trust in Natal, said: 'powerlessness is a perception.'⁹ He was referring to an observation by Randall Falkenberg negotiation analyst:

Power is based upon perception - if you think you've got it, then you've got it. If you think you don't have it, then, even if you've got it, you don't have it !(Falkenberg 1992:9)

Jennings pointed out that Randall Falkenberg, had usefully followed Lederer and Litterer in identifying sources of power. First there is the **personal** power of a person or party. This dimension includes knowledge or information (for example, about the circumstances, about the other party/ies, etc), skills (particularly negotiating skills) and attitudes (e.g. belief in oneself or one's cause, beliefs and feelings about the other party). Each of these resources provides the party with a certain amount of influence. The other dimension is the **organisational** power base. In this dimension resources such as influence (e.g. the ability to persuade), mandate (e.g. ability to receive the support of the people), and a strong case (how strong an argument a party has) (Falkenberg 1992: 7-14). Jennings was making the point that the Church did have some of the above sources of power at its disposal and so could not be totally powerless.

How power is served has an important bearing on conflict resolution strategy. A party could, for instance, attempt to gain as much power as possible in order to win the upper hand in a bargaining process. The problem with this approach is that the more pressure exerted on the opposing force the more the other party will consider

⁹ Statement made in an interview with the Rev. Athol Jennings in Durban on January 20 1994.

power to counter that position. Power may on the other hand be used positively as a way of persuading the other party jointly to seek the way of truth.

A comment from Theo Coggin, Information Officer of the Methodist Church, bears consideration: 'The Church was not so powerless because in the 1950s' the Dutch Reformed Churches were still in the ecumenical movement. Surely the Methodist Church could have sought the support of this church in the struggle at this time?'¹⁰

How the Dutch Reformed Churches would have responded is hypothetical suffice to record a response from the Rev. Nico Smith of the Dutch Reformed Church in Afrika: 'Seeking the support of the Dutch Reformed Church at that time would not have helped at all as it was in full agreement with the direction into which the government was moving.'¹¹

Nevertheless this is an important question. The observation of Trevor Huddleston at the time:

The tragic mistake, as I shall also ways believe, lay in the failure of the churches to act together. I am convinced that had, say, the Methodists, the Roman Catholics, the Presbyterians and the Anglicans united for once on this single issue, had they approached the Prime Minister and stated that, in conscience, they could not cooperate in the implementation of the Act, at lease some major concessions could have been won.

While each church individually protested, argued against and condemned the rape of its schools, none apparently could take the initiative in urging a total refusal to surrender ... (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 101-102; Huddleston 1956: 171).

Another issue that arises from this critique of the churches' strategy is one raised by Rev. Demetrios Palos, General Secretary of the Christian Citizenship Department of the Methodist Church OF Southern Africa: 'The Church in its attempt to deal with

¹⁰ Interview held in Johannesburg on February 4 1994.

¹¹ Interview held in Pretoria on February 25 1994.

apartheid failed to get to the root: that is to do social analysis. They seemed to tackle the symptoms and not the sickness. For instance they did not deal with the Bantu Education Act but its affects, mainly on the Church itself. It would compromise in order to save what it can.¹²

It is difficult to discover how much analysis was done at the time in this particular conflict. However, although the churches were emphatic in its denunciation of the Bantu Education Act it appears not to have been assertive enough, seemingly overwhelmed by the power of the state.

Power should not be used as a lever to manipulate the other party but as way of reaching the positive attributes of opposing group. Dudley Weeks maintains:

Developing positive self power through a clear self-image means that we base our perceptions of ourselves not on what others expect of us or want us to be, but on what we believe to be our own needs, capabilities, priorities, and goals.

Developing positive self power through a clear self-image also means that base our perceptions of ourselves not just on how we are treated by others, but on how we believe we and others should be treated.

Positive power also involves having a clear understanding of our values and a consistency between our values and our behavior (Weeks 1992: 152, 153).

If the churches had asserted themselves more than assumed by those interviewed and also used their combined resources as a united group they would probably have been more equipped to deal with the crisis imposed upon them.

¹² Statement made to me in an interview in Johannesburg on February 4 1994.

THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE 1960

Step 1. The Event

On March 18 1960 Robert Sobukwe, President of the Pan- African Congress (P.A.C.) announced that his organisation had planned a campaign aimed at the abolition of the pass laws, which would commence on March 21. Members were to be called upon to leave their pass books at home and to surrender themselves for arrest at the nearest police station. If the police refused to arrest them, they were to go home, and return to the police station later in the day. After serving their jail sentences, the protesters would again offer themselves for arrest.¹³

It was made quite clear that the P.A.C. was determined to conduct their campaign in the spirit of non-violence. If ordered by the police to disperse, they would do so quietly and in an orderly manner. The commissioner of Police had been informed about the campaign appealing to him to instruct the police not to make impossible demands of the black people who were campaigning. Sobukwe said: 'If the police are interested in maintaining law and order they will have no difficulty at all.' (Horrel 1959-60: 55)

On 21 March demonstrations at a number of police stations in various parts of the country went off without incident. Robert Sobukwe presented himself without his pass book and was arrested. There were some areas where the police refused to arrest demonstrators and persuaded them to return to their homes. In other areas where large crowds gathered emotions ran high and intimidation occurred creating quite a tense atmosphere.

Large numbers of people gathered in the townships near Vereeniging. It was reported, for instance, that 10,000 people gathered at the Evaton police station demanding to be arrested.¹⁴ A crowd of three or four thousand people gathered at

¹³ See Rand Daily Mail report, 19 March 1960.

¹⁴ See Rand Daily Mail report 22 March 1960

the Vanderbijl Park police station where the crowd was angered by about 20 white men carrying firearms.

It was at Sharpeville, however, where the most critical disturbances took place. Between five and seven thousand people marched to the municipal offices at the entrance to the township. Police attempted to stop them, fearing that they intended marching on to Vereeniging. There was a skirmish after tear gas bombs were thrown and a baton charge by the police.

At the police station the crowd increased in size. It is not clear how many people were gathered there. Estimates vary between five and twenty thousand people. The leader, Nyakane Tsolo said they had come without their reference books and wished to be arrested. The police urged them to go home.

Evidence given at a judicial commission said that although the crowd had been boisterous it was not hostile. They had gathered here expecting a senior police officer to make a statement on the pass laws. After reinforcements had arrived Tsolo and two others were arrested. It appears that the tension in the crowd mounted and the crowd surged forward up to the fence. Officers tried to speak to the crowd but were unable to make themselves heard. Then two policemen opened fire without an order to do so. About fifty others also began shooting. The crowd then fled.

On March 22 it was officially announced that 67 people had been killed and 186 wounded. Forty of these were women and eight were children (Horrell 1959-60: 58). Later a C.I.D. officer who had investigated the shooting said in evidence that 69 people had been killed and 178 wounded. According to evidence given by medical practitioners at the enquiry, of the bullet wounds that could be classified, thirty shots had entered the wounded or killed persons from the front and 155 from the back.

This massacre was followed by a State of Emergency which led to the detention and imprisonment of thousands of blacks. Banning orders were slapped on some whilst many were forced into exile. Both the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress were subsequently banned (Chikane 1992: 59).

Step 2. Response Of The Churches

Almost every church issued a statement in response to Sharpeville condemning the policies of apartheid which could lead to such a shocking event. The Archbishop of the Church of the Province, the Most Rev. Dr. Joost de Blank stated that the events of 21 March had confronted the Church in South Africa with the gravest crisis in its history. He is reported to have said that the blacks had on that day turned not only against those whom they considered to be their white oppressors, but also against the Christian Church as being identified with them. In a letter to the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Visser't Hooft, de Blank went so far as to demand 'our complete dissociation from the Dutch Reformed attitude ... Either they must be expelled or we shall be compelled to withdraw.' (De Gruchy 1979: 63) The world body did not accede to the Archbishop's demand for the expulsion of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) but did agree to assist in the arranging of a consultation on Christian race relations and social problems in South Africa.

In response to the criticism levelled at their Church nine leading members of the Dutch Reformed Church signed a statement in which they made it clear that they could justify and approve of separate development provided it was carried out humanely and without impairing human dignity. They called on the government therefore 'to carry out its policy in such a manner that human relationships were not disturbed and that friction was reduced to a minimum.' (Horrell 1959-60: 94-95)

In reply to appeals from the Archbishop the World Council of Churches decided to send one of its associate general secretaries, Dr. Robert Bilheimer to try and heal the rift among member churches and guide them to a united stand on race issues.

In discussions with various groups and churches Bilheimer stressed the need for inter-church dialogue and proposed that such a meeting to discuss the Church's responsibility in this time of crisis. It was this proposal that led to the historic Cottesloe consultation of December 1960.

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

The events at Sharpeville brought many groups in South African society to the crossroads. Charles Villa-Vicencio recognised that the violence at Sharpeville heralded a new period in black politics - protest turned to resistance. This forced the churches to address the black struggle for self determination with a sense of urgency (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 107-108).

Although the churches all issued strong statements of condemnation of the Sharpeville massacre by the police the heavy handed action of the government through bannings and the State of Emergency drove the churches to the consultation at Cottesloe. The consultation became the focus of a major crisis amongst the churches, in particular it brought about a rift between the English speaking churches and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk. Cottesloe will therefore become the focus of attention for an analysis of conflict resolution strategy of the churches.

The English speaking churches blamed the violence on apartheid and rejected all forms of discrimination while the NGK and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) were in favour of separate development though they wanted to qualify it by adding 'providing it was carried out in a just and honourable way'. (Ryan 1990: 54)

The consultation was held in Johannesburg from 7-14 December 1960. Ten delegates each from the following churches were represented: the Bantu Presbyterian Church; the Presbyterian Church; the Church of the Province of South Africa; the Methodist Church; the NGK, Transvaal (including two black ministers from the *Sendingkerk*); the NGK, Cape; and the NHK. Six delegates represented the World Council of Churches, including the General Secretary, W.A. Visser't Hooft. The Rev. Arthur Blaxall, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa was present as an observer. There were also a number of academics and a small group of lay-persons, significantly only one woman, namely Monica Wilson (Walshe 1983: 11). Eighteen of the participants were black. This important ecumenical gathering was presided over by the chairperson of the central committee of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry.

The essential task of this consultation was to clarify Christian responsibilities in the face of mounting unrest. In this task they were to 'deepen their own and society's understanding of justice.' (Walshe 1983 : 12)

The conference began with the presentation of working papers on five themes prepared by the churches. The papers were intended to be launching pads for discussion but they also revealed the differences of the positions mainly between the English churches and the representatives of the NGK and NHK. De Gruchy for instance, notes that it was rumoured that the representatives of the NHK were in frequent contact with their political leaders, including the Prime Minister Dr. H.F. Verwoerd during the consultation (De Gruchy 1979: 66).

The NGK representatives invested a great deal of time and energy in their preparations for the consultation. In general they blamed the violence at Sharpeville on agitators and argued for the principle that each racial group should be given opportunity to follow 'its own separate path to the future ... each must therefore

make its own *trek* (Walshe 1983: 12). They did, however, recognise that blacks had some fundamental rights which were denied them.

The English speaking churches, on the other hand, rejected any suggestion of apartheid and motivated a shared multi-racial future. They blamed the violence on the government's pass laws as well as on a general denial of the rights of black South Africans.

Walshe draws attention to the unease of black members of the English speaking church representation who discerned a tone of paternalism, even racism, coming through the discussions. Concern was expressed by the blacks for instance when the crisis over the pass laws were said to be the result of agitators (Walshe 1983: 12). Ryan suggests that a memorandum on the issue of black political rights which stated was paternalistic. She refers to the following statement of the NGK Transvaal Committee:

The church is also called upon to warn both its members and the community against such rash concessions to communities who are not yet ripe for acceptance of the responsibility of government. Present events in Africa must serve as a serious warning to all persons and groups who so easily advocate conferring full rights and privileges on communities who are not yet ripe for democratic responsibilities (Ryan 1990: 59).

A discussion on the Church and mission began on a theological basis as a somewhat abstract debate but ended in controversy when implications of the arguments were made clear. One position stated that it was the right of the Church to preach the gospel to all people with emphasis on individual salvation and the afterlife. The other approach found support among many of the English speaking representatives and the NGK members. This approach believed that with the rise of Communism and materialism the gospel should be proclaimed wherever 'Christ is denied in personal unbelief, in public action, or in national policy'. In other words Christ was to be made Lord of every realm including national life (Walshe 1983: 13).

The Dutch Reformed Churches, however, interpreted this view of mission to mean 'separate destined paths to the future'. A major confrontation was averted as not only was there a growing mutual respect between the churches but the draft statement at the end of the consultation was accepted by all the churches represented. They were united in 'rejecting unjust discrimination', in a spirit of the 'widely divergent convictions ... on the basic issues of apartheid'. It was stated that one group was clear in its rejection of apartheid as 'contrary to the Christian calling and unworkable in practice', the other group was convinced 'that a policy of differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view.' (Hewson 1961: 17)

Throughout the consultation there was a good deal of opportunity for all delegates to participate fully. The day was started with worship after which the delegates broke into groups for Bible study and discussions of the agenda questions. Discussions were also held in plenary sessions when groups presented report-backs. The consultation was strictly closed to the press and public.

It is possible that this process enabled all to participate freely and openly encouraged an atmosphere of fellowship. The mood was summed up in the World Council of Churches report on the consultation: 'The unity which arose among the members of the Consultation was noteworthy...' (Ryan 1990: 59) It was this growing spirit of unity which brought about the decision to draft a statement from the consultation.

The finally approved statement rejected all forms of racial discrimination, but admitted that convictions on the basic issues of apartheid were divergent. This was illustrated by with the judgement on the one hand that apartheid was unacceptable in principle and contrary to the Christian calling and unworkable in practice, and on the other hand there was also the conviction that a policy of differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view and that this provides the only realistic solution to the problems of race relations and is therefore in the best interests of the

various population groups (Ryan: 1990: 60). The statement further elaborated more specific issues covering the need for equal rights for all people.

By the time the statement was confirmed the Hervormde Kerk delegates who disapproved of what was emerging withdrew from the proceedings and reaffirmed their commitment to the policy of 'separate development'. The NGK delegates on the other hand were aware of the risks they were taking as to some extent they had come to express differences from government policies. As Professor Nico Smith pointed out : Certainly for the NGK and the NHK the statement was revolutionary at that time.¹⁵ The English speaking churches delegates, on the other hand, were aware that they had made a more moderate stand.

The Cottesloe consultation ended in a spirit of unity which was highlighted by a reconciliation between the NGK and the Church of the Province.

Step 4. Critique Of The Conflict Resolution Strategy

The Cottesloe statement generally reflects a negotiation exercise in compromise between the NGK and the English speaking churches, and in the NGK between the more hard-line Afrikaans position and the more progressive political views. Two other groups in the Cottesloe consultation experienced different fortunes. The views of the NHK were repudiated during the consultations and before the statement was approved that delegation withdrew from the proceedings. At the other end of the spectrum were the black delegates of the English speaking churches. Their number at Cottesloe was rather small, being only one-quarter of the delegates. The result was that the aspirations of black people were not taken into account in the statement.

The statement clearly presents the English speaking churches' insistence that all unjust discrimination be rejected yet at the same time it declares that 'widely

¹⁵ Interview with T.F. Cunningham at Pretoria on February 25 1994.

divergent convictions have been expressed in the basic issues of apartheid. They range on the one hand from the judgement that it [apartheid] is unacceptable in principle, contrary to the Christian calling and unworkable in practice, to the conviction on the other hand that a policy of differentiation can be defended from the Christian point of view, that it provides the only realistic solution to the problems of race relations and is therefore in the best interests of the various population groups.' (Regehr 1979: 192) The consultation therefore attempted to include the views of both the English speaking churches as well as the NGK in the statement.

Furthermore while the statement asserts the right of all citizens to participate in the government of their country, it also suggests that only coloureds should be represented in Parliament making no mention of black or Asian representation. As Regehr points out 'the way the statement was framed enabled the NGK delegation to claim they had not agreed to any principles incompatible with "a policy of differentiation".' (Regehr 1979: 192) Ryan concurs with this view and shows that Beyers Naude, at that time a NGK delegate, makes the point: 'the NGK was not giving up support for the government's policy of apartheid.' (Ryan 1990: 60)

Compromise As A Strategy For Handling Conflict

Compromise as a strategy usually occurs when disputing parties begin negotiating by concentrating their energies on winning. When a stalemate is reached or becomes a potential problem a compromise strategy is often introduced.

A compromise may be useful if it helps parties to move from a hard-line position towards more flexibility; or if it is part of an ongoing process so that the agreement reached may remain open for further discussion. However, all too often, when the process of political bargaining produces a compromise, one group or another later realises that it has been manipulated into making unrealistic commitments, or persuaded to accept less than it might otherwise have deserved. Those who feel 'taken' in this way often refuse to honour their commitments. Thus conflicts that

seem to have been settled in this manner remain unresolved (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987: 20).

This is precisely what happened after Cottesloe. Although the NGK delegates to the Cottesloe consultation did not back down from their support of the statement, the National Party and the NGK leaders recognised that the declaration the NGK had supported, even though it maintained support for separate development, would lead the church in a direction that must ultimately challenge the course chosen by the government. The result was that 'both church and state swung into action to discredit Cottesloe and the ecumenical initiatives that had led to it.' (Regehr 1979: 194) In the end the NGK withdrew from the World Council of Churches.

A major problem with the Cottesloe statement is that the parties interpreted the statement differently. The English speaking churches believed that the statement did not in any way support separate development or apartheid. On the other hand, although it was firm in its call for equal rights and the contribution of all peoples in the enrichment of life, the NGK delegation felt that they could motivate the statement on the grounds that it was compatible with apartheid. If the statement gives room for both positions then one or both of the parties would more likely to have regrets later on.

This raises another problem with a compromised agreement. It tends to lend itself to the promise of a 'quick-fix' solution. Parties become desperate not to lose too much but at the same time are concerned that they might walk away without any gains at all. Compromise therefore requires each party to 'give up' something in order to reach a solution. By definition, however, political compromise offers less than what each party had hoped to achieve.

In the case of Cottesloe the compromise was a little different. Instead of 'giving up' something it appears that the parties came up with an *inclusive* statement. The

statement seems to have modified the positions of each party enough to include all points of view in order to preserve the unity of the Church. This is what Susskind and Cruikshank refer to as 'the path of least resistance.' (Susskind and Cruikshank 1987: 20) Whether the consultation could have drawn up a statement that would completely satisfy all parties without compromise is open to question.

Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches concludes that 'A reading of the report of the Consultation today leaves one with no doubt that the Consultation did not go far enough in its statement against apartheid and racism.' (Chikane 1992: 60)¹⁶ He nevertheless concedes that there is some significance in the fact that the representatives of the NGK were part of the statement which concluded that apartheid could not be reconciled with the teaching of scripture.

One question that needs to be raised in retrospect is: was the decision to draw up a common statement for the sake of church unity the most appropriate strategy in this instance? It could be argued that in terms of political theology particularly with reference to South Africa the NGK and the English speaking churches were on two different paths and that this made the strategy of drawing up a common statement very difficult indeed.

There is no doubt that a prophetic word that would give hope to the black oppressed needed to be spoken from the consultation. In the end efforts to accommodate the divergent views of the two groups and at the same time give expression to the aspirations of the black majority was too much to hope for.

¹⁶ Confirmed by Dr. F. Chikane in an interview with T.F. Cunningham at the World Trade Centre on February 24 1994.

THE SOWETO UPRISING 1976

The uprising in Soweto on June 16, 1976, were the most serious experienced in South Africa. Although the issue of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the schools precipitated the riots it is also believed that underlying causes were the poor socio-economic conditions and deep-seated resentment of the black people (Horrell , Hodgson , Blignaut , Moroney 1976: 51).

Step 1. The Event

A summary of some of the events leading up to the June 16 uprising provides an indication of why they occurred. Due to the general dissatisfaction with the educational system it is possibly naive to single out specific occasions as causes. There are, however, some notable incidents which provoked the students.

First we go back to the occasion when the Southern Transvaal Regional Director of Education, Mr. M.C. Ackerman, issued Regional Circular No. 2 of August 29, 1974 which stated that in Standard 5, Forms 1 and 11, General Science and Practical subjects must be taught in English and 'Wiskunde/Rekenkunde en Sosiale Studie' in Afrikaans. Although applications for the exemption of this ruling could be made many were refused.

In February 1976 two members of the Meadowlands Tswana School Board, Mr. Letlape and Mr. Peele, were dismissed. No reasons were given for the dismissals. It was believed, however, that the board's refusal to use Afrikaans as medium of instruction in their schools influenced the Administration (Horrell , Hodgson , Blignaut , Moroney 1976: 53). They were later informed that they would only be reinstated if they withdrew a circular saying that schools under them should be instructed in English.

From this point there were protests from various quarters: parents at Donaldson Higher Primary School (who rejected the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction); junior certificate students at Thomas Mofolo Secondary School (who clashed with their principal over the issue of Afrikaans); the African Teachers' Association; students at Orlando West Junior Secondary School (who demanded to see Mr. M.C. De Beer, the circuit inspector); the Emthonjeni Higher Primary and the Thulasizwe Higher Primary Schools; the Pimville Higher Primary and the Khulangolwazi Higher Primary Schools (after a meeting of parents, school board members and Inkatha Yesiswe members decided that students should be requested to return to schools while the matter received attention). (Horrell , Hodgson , Blignaut , Moroney 1976: 54)

On 30 May Mr. De Beer, circuit inspector for the striking schools was reported to have said that his solution would be to have any child who was away from school for longer than ten days expelled, to close the school or to transfer the teachers. Such hard-line statements did nothing to abate the mounting crisis.

Just how seriously the crisis loomed was expressed by in the Urban Bantu Council on June 14 by Councillor Leonard Mosala when he warned that

the enforcing of Afrikaans in schools could result in another Sharpeville. Speaking of the children, he said, 'They won't take anything we say because they think we have neglected them. We have failed to help them in their struggle for change in schools. They are now angry and prepared to fight and we are afraid the situation may become chaotic at any time.' (Horrell , Hodgson , Blignaut , Moroney 1976: 57)

Pieterse notes that the children were well organised. Students had formed the South African Students' Movement (SASM) which was influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement in which Steve Biko was a prominent leader (Pieterse 1995(a): 17).

The June 16 protest march against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was initiated by students of the Naledi and Thomas Mofolo High Schools. The marchers apparently intended to hold a peaceful mass meeting at the Orlando Stadium in order to voice their grievances. There were about 10000 students when the marchers arrived at the Orlando West High School. The atmosphere was tense when the police fired tear-gas canisters into the crowd. The students responded by throwing stones at the police. Police fired warning shots but then into the crowd of advancing children. At least one child, thirteen year-old Hector Petersen, was killed (Horrell , Hodgson , Blignaut , Moroney 1976: 57).

After this incident rioting spread throughout Soweto. Two men, Dr. M. Edelstein and Mr. N. Esterhuizen were beaten to death. Police re-inforcements were brought into Soweto and army troops were placed on alert as the violence escalated.

By order of the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Mr. M.C. Botha, all schools were closed. Meanwhile demonstrations spread to other townships where students sympathised with Soweto schools. Students at the Universities of the North, the Witwatersrand, Zululand, and Natal (where at the Medical Faculty 87 black students were arrested following a march), joined in the demonstrations.

On June 18 Mr. John Rees of the South African Council of Churches and Dr. Beyers Naude of the Christian Institute were served with orders warning them to dissociate from the 'situation of unrest'. The following day Dr. Selma Browde of the Progressive Reform Party and member of the Johannesburg City Council was served with a similar order.

By the end of June the death toll was 176 with well over a thousand people injured, 908 arrested and numerous buildings including 67 beerhalls and bottle stores and 53 Bantu Administration buildings damaged or destroyed.

Step 2. Response Of The Churches

The South African Council of Churches called on the government to take urgent action:

We are appalled at the authorities' total lack of response and understanding to the aspirations of black people ... The fact that the confrontation involved school children has the frightening implication that black grievances are not only a matter of politics, but have become a matter of intense and widespread agony, felt even by children, which could escalate into a national catastrophe (Ryan 1990: 177).

It was soon after this statement was made, in the days that followed, that a number of children were shot and tear gassed by the police. The official death toll had risen to 176. The unofficial estimate was nearer 300.

The Christian Institute called on the government to suspend immediately the compulsory use of Afrikaans in black schools. Shortly after news of the violence in Soweto had been received by the Christian Institute Dr. Beyers Naude sent a telegram to the moderator of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, pleading with him to intervene:

In the light of the very serious situation which has developed in Soweto this morning and because of the danger of eruptions of large-scale violence, the Christian Institute appeals to you as Moderator and to the Broad Moderature to request the government to immediately terminate the instruction of school subjects through the medium of Afrikaans (Ryan 1990: 177).

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk deplored the loss of life and the moderature of the General Synod made the following statement:

To a great number of innocent people, White and Black, who suffered these losses, the Church expresses its sincere sympathy, and trusts that local church councils and other

bodies charged with the task, will make the necessary support and emergency aid available. Further, the Church calls its members to a worthy plan of action in which the example of the Lord can be followed, and the Christian demand of love of God in one's neighbour can be practised. The younger churches are assured of our Church's sympathy and prayer in these times of tension (De Gruchy 1979: 173).¹⁷

Despite this statement John De Gruchy notes that the NGK failed to 'express an opinion on the underlying causes of Soweto, or on such matters as police action.' (De Gruchy 1979: 174) The President of the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Rev. Abel Hendricks, made the following statement in October 1976:

South Africa stands on the threshold of war and peace. The last three months have seen the outpouring of years of Black frustration, suppression and anger that has burst into manifestations of protests, strikes and peaceful marches, but also violence, death and destruction. The White *status quo* has in turn allowed their fear, confusion and ignorance of Black suffering and aspirations to manifest itself in violence, brutality and the detention of those crying out for liberation ... Time is running out and the Church of God must raise her voice for justice so that there may be peace. If we fail here, we will not only be disobeying the call of the Lord, to cry aloud and lift up our voices like a trumpet in declaring to our people their transgression (Isaiah 58:1). but we will be judged by history to be simply irrelevant... (De Gruchy 1979: 175).

The acting Chairperson of the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference, the Rt. Rev. Bishop John P. Murphy, issued the following statement:

I regard the present unrest and rioting as a symptom only of feelings about wrongs much greater than the small local complaints that occasioned the present crisis. This is not haphazard rioting, but the expression of feeling of people deprived of the most ordinary human rights, and the greater responsibility for any violence or counter violence lies with those who so deprive human beings of their dignity and rights. I make this statement in my capacity as acting Chairman of

¹⁷ See also *Ecunews*, 21/76 (July 7, 1976). Appendix A; cf. 'Soweto Disturbances: Attitude of the D.R. Church,' *DRC Africa News*, vol. 2, no. 3 (March 1977).

the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Southern Africa
(Southern African Bishops' Conference 1967-80: 40).

As the revolt escalated beyond Soweto into other townships in the Witwatersrand and as the death toll reached alarming proportions the South African Council of Churches (SACC) related Church leaders held an emergency meeting on the 18th June. Although there was a sense of helplessness the Church leaders agreed on a day of prayer and the establishment of an emergency fund (the Asingeni Relief Fund) to help victims of the violence.

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

This conflict was of momentous import. It caused more concern among the churches than the violence at Sharpeville. In spite of serious and widespread riots and condemnation by the churches it was clearly evident that the government was intent on relentlessly continuing its efforts to enforce its apartheid policies. While most of the country reeled under the impact of the riots the government did not seem to perceive it as a crisis.

The English speaking churches became more confrontational with the government than they had previously been. The various church bodies issued stronger statements than before calling upon the government re-examine its policies and abolish apartheid. The Church, of course, needed to demonstrate its concern by action. As the growing conflict with the churches intensified a practical response to the June 16 crisis was the establishment of the Asingeni Fund by the South African Council of Churches. This analysis will therefore focus on the critical issue that brought the SACC into conflict with the government that ensued following the creating of this fund.

The meaning of the word 'Asingeni' is significant. It means 'we do not enter', and was an expression of an act of solidarity with the school children who refused to enter

classes (Chikane 1992: 123). The fund was specifically aimed to provide food and clothing for those who had suffered in the riots, and funeral expenses for those who had lost family members. Later it included the provision of legal expenses and bail money for those prosecuted by the system and the General Secretary of the SACC, John Rees, was provided with an allowance for discretionary purposes (Spong and Mayson 1993: 61).

Not surprisingly the fund was highly criticised by the government. This criticism was voiced by the Minister of Justice, Mr. J. Kruger in Parliament in February 1977 when it was suggested that the Asingeni was a secret source of funding to aid 'trouble-makers.'

The South African Council of Churches denied that it was a 'secret fund'. Bernard Spong, director of the Communications Department of the SACC responded to the allegation as follows:

The November 1976 issue of *Kairos*, the SACC magazine, had carried details about sponsors and expenditure of the Asingeni fund. But before it could be distributed the police raided the SACC offices on November 25th. Among the many papers confiscated were all the available copies of that *Kairos*. Further copies were hastily printed, only to be banned completely by the authorities.

Any suggestion of secrecy relating to the fund by the Minister of Justice was one that his own Department had created with its refusal to allow the details to be made known.' (Spong and Mayson 1993: 61)

John Rees said in July 1977 that the books had been balanced for the year ending 19 June. Since the unrest began, more than R1200000 had been raised, about R191000 of it from within South Africa and the bulk of the rest from overseas churches (Gordon, Blignaut, Moroney, and Cooper 1978: 40).

Step 4. Critique Of The Conflict Resolution Strategy

Although Church leaders experienced a sense of helplessness against the brutality of the apartheid system and had been challenged for not supporting their many declarations with concrete actions, they did on this occasion put into practice a ministry programme which demonstrated its solidarity with the victims of the June 16th revolt, namely the Asingeni Fund. Another programme which had been in operation and intensified during the Soweto crisis was the Dependants' Conference which took care of political prisoners, detainees and their dependants.

These programmes were significant because as Frank Chikane recently asserted: 'The June 16th crisis marked a change in the strategy of the churches in their opposition to apartheid. They now began in practice to choose an option for the poor'¹⁸ In his thesis Chikane, referring to the Church's role in the struggle, makes the following statement:

The shift from mere assistance and relief for victims of the violence of apartheid, to an empowerment of the powerless in their struggle against the apartheid system, signified a definite act of taking sides. The crisis of 1976 was so serious that the Churches could not avoid taking this option (Chikane 1992: 123).

Theo Coggin, Information Officer of the Methodist Church in an interview also affirmed June 1976 as the turning point in the Church's role in the struggle against the injustices of apartheid and added that:

Three basic issues changed the SACC related churches' stance against apartheid:

First the SACC debate in 1974 which decided that conscientious objection could be defended on theological grounds. Secondly the 'just war' dispute and thirdly the Asingeni Fund. All showed the Church to be making a fundamental shift towards the side of the poor.¹⁹

¹⁸ Interview with T.F. Cunningham at the World Trade Centre, Kempton Park, on February 24 1994.

¹⁹ Interview with T.F. Cunningham at Johannesburg on 4 February 1994.

Beyers Naude, in an interview, said he did not believe that the churches in general had made a significant shift towards the oppressed after Soweto. Dr. Naude explained it as follows: 'Certain church leaders definitely became more committed to the cause. But it was the SACC and the Christian Institute that led the way in this regard, and it was for this reason that the Christian Institute was banned with 18 other organisations on 18th October 1977.'²⁰ This is further underlined by the fact that Beyers Naude himself and five other members of the Christian Institute were served with banning orders on the same day.

However, even more influential than the debates mentioned by Theo Coggin above was the black consciousness movement which emerged during the late 1960's and early 1970's. This movement implied the awareness by black people of their identity and their economic and political power as a group. It reclaimed for black people their dignity as human beings and created a more determined solidarity (Boesak 1977).

Among the more prominent organisations to emerge were the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) which was formed at a conference held in July 1969 with the object of advancing black community awareness, dignity and pride. The Black People's Convention was formed in 1972 to promote black solidarity. These and other black organisations were particularly influential on those churches which had a majority of black members.

It was a black Methodist minister, Ernest Baartman, who was one of the first to give the black consciousness movement a theological undergirding. In a seminal paper delivered during the Methodist Church's Annual Conference in 1972 he explained the significance of the movement for the Church. Brian Wren refers to this moment:

A black Methodist minister in South Africa was asked to explain that upsurge of assertiveness, artistic creativity and

²⁰ Statement by Dr. Beyers Naude to T.F. Cunningham in an interview on 17 August 1994.

self-confidence among his people known as 'black consciousness'. 'It is beyond me to define in human words what it is,' he said. 'How do you put on paper the fact that you are awake?' (Wren 1977: 79)

The role of the black consciousness movement in the struggle for a democratic society was to be seen in its endeavour to empower the powerless. The majority of black people shared the sense of powerlessness of the Church. The bureaucratic system of apartheid had a far superior power base than its opposition. Not only did this force a submissive role upon black people but it also rendered negotiation unnecessary to the power holders.

In order to understand the impact of black consciousness on the events of June 1976 the notion of power as it was experienced in this movement needs to be recognised. Power is a relational commodity and as such it does not exist on its own. It exists only in relation to another individual or between groups. In this power relation there is either *power over* or *power with* others. Boesak endorses Galtung and makes it clear that 'for power as *power over others* to work, some kind of basic submissiveness to the power-wielder is needed.' (Galtung 1973: 33; Boesak 1977: 42) However, through black consciousness black people affirmed their belief that no longer could they be regarded as inferior simply on the grounds of race. Furthermore, black consciousness helped blacks to see that power was an inward reality and not only something external to the person or group, such as military might. Power as an inward reality has to do with the affirmation of one's worth and dignity. When this is actualised persons discover their self-respect and humanness.

For the relational power as *power over* to be defied, this inner self-affirmation needs to be established. Therefore black consciousness provided a positive base for black people to discover their inner power. It empowered the people to tap into their individual wealth and also their communal solidarity and this enabled them to take a more defiant stand against the apartheid system which dehumanised them.

Several church leaders and theologians have made reference to the fact that black consciousness was one of the most significant catalysts that enabled a number of church leaders to enter into solidarity with the oppressed. Ernest Baartman of the Methodist Church testified: 'When we began to do our theology in the context of black consciousness we saw that here was the call of Christ to recognise our own worth and the evil of oppression. This view definitely influenced the Church more and more after the Soweto uprising'²¹ John De Gruchy stated: 'Black consciousness was a spiritual reawakening which drew its resources from Christianity, but also discovered new meaning in African culture (De Gruchy 1979: .152).

The Asingeni Fund, although initially a relief fund, also supported the families of political prisoners as it later included the Defence and Aid Fund. This support from the South African Council of Churches angered the government and turned out to be the action that demonstrated the South African Council of Churches' willingness to commit themselves to solidarity with the oppressed. Nevertheless there were still a number of instances where the member churches struggled with this stance and debated issues in their conferences, assemblies and synods.

In terms of conflict resolution the Soweto crisis made it apparent that there are times when one or other of the parties involved are not ready for change or prepared to negotiate. This is particularly so when one party is at a serious disadvantage, the stronger party refuses to negotiate believing that it cannot gain anything from negotiations.

In these situations the disadvantaged party needs to be helped to develop positive power so that the conflict may be constructively engaged. Some negotiators have called this the 'levelling of the playing fields'. On the other hand there is a place for

²¹ E. Baartman in an interview with T.F. Cunningham in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, on June 28 1994.

the party using the *power over others* to be strongly challenged and urged to adopt more just policies.

In the case of the 1976 crisis it was quite clear that the government was not willing to 'place the system of apartheid on the agenda' for negotiation. The Church, in this case largely through the Christian Institute and the South African Council of Churches, adopted a prophetic stance challenging the status quo and identifying with the oppressed. The prophetic stance in which the Church expresses a strong 'word of the Lord' based on its understanding of the Scriptures (as explained in the section 'Theological Perspectives' above. Although this stance is likely to provoke a confrontation is a constructive way of drawing out the conflict so that it can be negotiated. The Asingeni Fund was indeed one of the 'prophetic challenges' of the churches. There is also little doubt that the churches and other organisations were spurred on by the black consciousness movement. One has to question though, with Beyers Naude whether the churches, generally, were yet able to fully commit themselves to radical change.

THE TRICAMERAL PARLIAMENT 1983

There were several significant events in the 1980's. However, the reform movement by the government with its attempt at 'minimal power-sharing' while still maintaining control provides the focus for this section.

Step 1. The Event

The institution of the new constitution and its tricameral Parliament sparked off an even greater resistance than experienced in the 1970's. The unrest led to the declaration of a State of Emergency in 1986 which lasted until 1990. Although the government had initiated a reform process under P.W. Botha it did not lead to any fundamental changes to the structures of apartheid.

On one level the unrest was a continuation of the crisis of 1976. The underlying causes were the dissatisfaction with black education, the persistence of high inflation and deepening unemployment. However, the creation of the new constitution which was established on 3 September in 1984 (after a nation-wide referendum of whites voted in favour of the constitution on 2 November 1983), and which included coloureds and Indians but excluded black representation in a tricameral Parliament intensified the conflict and triggered off further unrest throughout the country.

About 20 000 people attended rallies called over the weekend of 17 - 20 August in Cape Town, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Port Elizabeth by the United Democratic Front (UDF) to highlight opposition to the elections. After the elections stay-aways were called in September and October in the Vaal Triangle, Soweto and Kwa Thema. Localised demonstrations of dissatisfaction all converged in a major stay-away from work and schools in the Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging areas on the 5th and 6th of November 1984. This was the largest political stay-away on record at that time in South Africa (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter and Cullum 1985: 18).

Much of the political and quasi-political activity took place outside the parliamentary framework. Broadly speaking, extra-parliamentary politics took two forms: organised or spontaneous consumer boycotts, demonstrations, disturbances, or riots involving considerable numbers of people in various places and centred on a variety of issues; and secondly, planned acts of political violence carried out by political organisations or other groups of political activists. Most of the conflict was between opposition groups and the government authorities, but conflict within the black community also became increasingly common (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter and Cullum. 1985: 64. In all about 175 people were killed in 1984 in unrest related incidents, 149 of them between 3 September and the end of the year (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter and Cullum 1985: 18).

Step 2. Response Of The Churches

Church opposition also grew during the eighties. Two events which demonstrated the Church's participation in the struggle were the 'call to prayer for the end to unjust rule' and the publication of the 'Kairos Document' which argued for a prophetic theology that informed the Church's praxis in its resistance to the repressive structures of apartheid.

Some of the general responses to the establishment of the tricameral Parliament by the churches during 1984-1985 were:

Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk

In June 1985 *Die Kerkbode* reported that the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk blamed much of the violence on various social issues including the wages of black workers and job reservation, old age pensions for coloured people, the status and future of urban blacks, and riots in black areas. However, the NGK Synod's executive committee subsequently gave reasons for the current political violence, among them being 'serious problems in the political system of apartheid.' (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter, Cullum, Narsoo and Brouard 1986: 572-573).

The South African Catholic Bishops Conference

The annual plenary session of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference expressed deep concern over the suffering in the country's black town townships and in Namibia in January 1985 (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter, Cullum, Narsoo and Brouard 1986: 574).

Church Leaders Meeting With The State President

When the church leaders of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Assembly of the Baptist Union, met with the State President, in 1985 they called for the abandonment of influx control, an announcement of a national convention, the return of exiles, the release of political prisoners and for apartheid to be abolished (Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter, Cullum, Narsoo and Brouard 1986: 574).

The South African Council Of Churches

While most of the English speaking churches were making protest statements a more controversial response came from the South African Council of Churches' call for a national day of prayer on the anniversary of the June 16 Soweto uprising. The resolution calling on churches to pray 'for the abolition of all apartheid structures' was a response to Allan Boesak's address at the 1984 SACC National Conference:

... If the rulers will not hear the cries of the people, if they will not change, if they continue to prevent justice, let us pray them out of existence. God will hear our cry (Boesak and Villa-Vicencio 1986: 16).

An ecumenical working group was appointed to prepare a theological statement which would provide the rationale behind such a prayer. A three-person working group was appointed by the Western Province Council of Churches in consultation with the General Secretary of the SACC, Dr. Beyers Naude to consider the details of the statement. Many others including church leaders and theologians were also consulted.

There does not seem to be any documented statement from the government in response to this call to prayer for the end of unjust rule. There was, however, controversy over it among the churches. Peter Storey, President of the Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Philip Russell, of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, distanced themselves from the statement as neither of the churches they represented had been approached in regard to the acceptance of the document, nor had either given support for the 'removal of the present rulers in our country.'

Charles Villa-Vicencio clarified the problem in a press statement and then again later in the book he edited with Dr. Allan Boesak ((Boesak and Villa-Vicencio 1986: 18-20; Cooper, Shindler, McCaul, Potter, Cullum, Narsoo and Brouard 1986: 574). They stated that it was not the intention of those who had published the document to have the churches adopt it before its distribution. 'It was intended as a challenge *to* the churches, rather than being a document *of* the churches.' (Boesak and Villa-Vicencio 1986: 20).

The problem of language in the document which caused conflict was settled. Although Allan Boesak had used the term 'downfall' of the government in his address to the SACC National Conference. It was later agreed not to use this term as it led to confusion. Some saw it as a call for a 'violent overthrow' of the government. A document was finally published in support of a prayer for the call for the 'removal from power of those who persist in defying his [God's] laws' and 'the end to unjust rule' during the weeks leading up to the 16 June Soweto (Boesak and Villa-Vicencio 1986: 15).

In spite of the controversy surrounding the rationale for the prayer worship services were held in various parts of the country. An ecumenical service held in Cape

Town, at the African Episcopal Methodist Church in Hazendal, was attended by about three thousand people.

Once services such as the one mentioned were held the debate seemed to dissipate. There was, however, a conflict within a society which merits consideration for analysis. This conflict over the call to prayer for the end of unjust rule occurred when a youth group, the Wesley Guild of the J.C. Mvusi congregation in Port Elizabeth, supported the call to prayer and found themselves in conflict with the leaders of the Church.²²

This local conflict, one of the results of the establishment of the tricameral Parliament and subsequent unrest, will be the focus of attention in this study. As it forms a response of the Church, albeit a local one, it is a reflection of Church's struggle to deal with the political events of the time.

Peter Storey, then President of the Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, made a public statement on the issue in which he asked the question: 'What do you pray for?' In the statement he expressed the view that one can pray that one's rulers be inwardly transformed, but not that they be removed from office.

George Irvine Chairman of the Grahamstown District of the Methodist Church wrote a letter to the ministers. In his support of the President of the Methodist Church he argued: 'You can't pray for the downfall of the government, but must pray for the downfall of apartheid.'²³

The youth group of the JC Mvusi congregation challenged Peter Storey through the press stating that they disputed the views of the President of the Conference and

²² This incident was related to T.F. Cunningham in an interview by H.M. Dandala of the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg on 4 February 1994, in Johannesburg.

²³ Referred to T.F. Cunningham by H.M. Dandala in the interview on 4 February 1994, in Johannesburg.

Chairman of the District and that they would continue to pray for the downfall of the government.

In the Port Elizabeth North Circuit of the Methodist Church the older people saw the action of the youth as a flagrant disregard for the authority of the Church. A number of the church leadership therefore wanted some action to be taken against the youth.

This did not deter the young people in their resolve. When Peter Storey reaffirmed his position the youth came back more strongly and were adamant that they were going to support the SACC's call to prayer for the 'downfall' of the government (it is possible that they had not seen the final draft of the Theological Rationale). This not only caused division in the congregations of that circuit but also divided the youth among themselves (some of them wishing to be loyal to the church leaders).

The superintendent minister of the circuit, the Rev. H. Mvume Dandala, then decided to facilitate the conflict. He called together the young people who had challenged the President of the Conference. After setting a congenial atmosphere he raised the issue by suggesting that it was of common interest to all that the matter be resolved.

Dandala decided to deal with the way the young people had handled the conflict rather than with the debate over the theological legitimacy of the prayer itself. He explained his position to the youth group by saying: 'my problem is protocol: why has the president of the Wesley Guild not spoken to me? Why did you go to the press before speaking with me? If I wanted to defend you I would not know what to defend! Instead I had the President coming to me saying that my youth are causing problems. What do I do?'

'You could have gone to the President and then communicated with the structures ... also with the public through the press. If you had consulted with me I would have been morally obliged to permit you to express your mind. However you took up action without consulting me.' After lengthy discussion the young people agreed that they had acted rather rashly and were eager to resolve the matter.

Dandala then helped the youth to see that the issue was not a matter of his enforcing discipline, nor was it whether there should be prayer for the 'downfall' of the government or prayer for the downfall of apartheid. Rather the issue was 'think and let think: defend the right to think freely. In other words the issue is a pastoral one.'

He also believed that the principles of forgiveness and trust were involved though at this point he did not want to suggest this to the youth. He preferred these principles to emerge from his encounter with them rather than imposing them upon the young people. So he suggested several options that the youth could adopt.

After some further discussion the young people apologised for their lack of protocol and committed themselves to working with their superintendent minister in this matter. They still maintained that for them the appropriate response was prayer for the downfall of the government but accepted the fact that there were those who differed from them.

The conflict was amicably resolved when Mvume Dandala offered his assistance to the young people in the prayer and was able to satisfy both the Chairman of the District and the President of the Conference that the matter had been appropriately dealt with.

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

The conflict was a power struggle between the youth and the leadership of the Church. Although central to the conflict was the call to prayer for the end of unjust rule, the young people were in conflict with the President of the Conference and the District bishop.

The Reverend Mvume Dandala chose not to become embroiled in the content of the conflict, namely the issue of the prayer. Instead he summed up the problem as a power struggle and dealt with it as such.

Step 4. Critique Of The Conflict Resolution Strategy

The conflict between the youth, the older people and the minister of the congregation might have become a protracted one had Mvume Dandala not negotiated in a constructive manner. Dandala wisely observed an important principle in negotiating conflict: How a conflict is managed will determine whether the outcome will be successful or not (Kraybill).

This negotiating principle has been explained more fully by Ron Kraybill:

Democracy is built on the principle that human beings in most situation care more about the way in which decisions are made than about what is decided. Every democratic election proves the point. Always there is a group of people whose candidate lost. For the losers and their supporters, an outcome has been reached which they actively opposed. Nevertheless, losers rarely stage a rebellion. 'Losers' can almost always be counted upon to step aside and allow the 'winners' to move ahead, if the process of elections has been agreed upon in advance by all key parties and the ground rules have been observed (Kraybill: 2).

Dandala observed this principle by the way he facilitated the conflict with the young people. He used the skill of 'think process'. He began by generating an atmosphere which enabled himself and the youth to listen to one another. This was followed by a

clarification of the issue: recognising that it was not the young people's desire to observe the call to prayer that created conflict, but the way they attempted to achieve their goals.

Dandala then helped the youth to examine the options open to them giving them opportunity to suggest their options and to decide on most appropriate actions.

The question that remains, however, is whether the Church leadership was not heavy handed when communicating with the local church in this instance. While it is true to say that there are times when quick authoritative action is required, generally a more educative policy achieves preferable results.

TRANSITION 1990

Step 1. The Event

Since 1986 a series of events dramatically changed the situation in South Africa, even though at that time the National Party was still in power and the policy of apartheid remained on the statute books. Indeed the situation became quite fluid. The failure of apartheid and a growing awareness of the problems it had created for the whole country began to dawn on increasing number of whites. In particular the pressure through disinvestment as well as the liberation struggle by the African National Congress (ANC) created severe problems for big business and government.

Then came the sudden change of leadership in the National Party leading up to the election of F.W. De Klerk as State President. This resulted in the moves to unban the liberation movements on February 2, 1990, the releasing of Mr. Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years of imprisonment two weeks later, and the beginning of a process of intense negotiation between the government the ANC and other liberation movements.

The initiatives of President De Klerk sparked off much right wing reaction but at the same time they also created far-reaching expectations amongst an increasing number of frustrated black people. This was evident in the number of strike actions for higher wages, better living and working conditions, and a radical restructuring of education and health care in a country where the gap between the rich and poor is enormous.

At the same time there was an intensification of a power struggle between various groupings such as the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation, and the Inkatha Freedom Party. A spiral of violence erupted especially in Natal and the Transvaal, though some of it tribal and ethnically

based and some of it fuelled by reactionary elements within the state security forces. Most of it, however, rooted in the socio-economic devastation caused by apartheid.

Apart from the inauguration of the negotiation process through CODESSA, which eventually lost its way and was succeeded by the Multi-party Negotiating Forum, the most significant development was the formation of the National Peace Accord on 14 September 1991. Signatories represented 36 political parties, organisations, business and churches who committed themselves to work for a peaceful transformation of the political dispensation for the country. A priority was the introduction of reconstruction programmes to address the effects of political violence at a local level (National Peace Convention 1991).

The Peace Secretariat, of the National Peace Accord, created a structure which included local and regional peace committees. Peace committees were organised with the intention of creating a forum of negotiation between various groups such as the local political parties, the South African Police, the South African Defence Force, the non-governmental organisations and municipalities, civic committees, business and churches. This meant that there could be a communication forum between the different organisations as well as a team of mediators to deal with conflict throughout the country. Ten regional committees were formed and under them there were any number of local peace committees.

Although the violence continued unabated the transition to a democratically elected government was completed on April 27 1994 when for the first time all the people of South Africa were given opportunity to elect the government of their choice. This remarkable event took place in the most incredibly peaceful even euphoric atmosphere that could not have been imagined or presumed at any time prior to its occurrence.

The rapid change movement towards the transition to a democracy precipitated conflicts in many areas throughout the country. Apart from major acts of violence such as bombings in various public places there were also flashpoints in the urban centres.

The focus of this case study is the creation of the Peace Accord and in particular one conflict situation that occurred soon after the launching of Peace Accord. The Church's involvement through one of the Peace Committees in this conflict between the African National Congress Youth League and the South African Police.

For the purposes of this research one specific conflict which was facilitated by members of a Peace Committee in which the Church was involved during this period will be evaluated. The focus is on the conflict that occurred during a protest march by the African National Congress Youth League's to the Willowmoore Park Stadium in Benoni in October 1993. The specific conflict reflected here is significant because it reveals the commitment of the Church and the initiative of the Peace Committee during this period.

At the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa which assembled in Benoni in October 1993 it was announced that approximately 2500 members of the African National Youth League had planned to march from Daveyton to the Willowmoore Park Stadium where they would be addressed by Winnie Mandela and Peter Mokabe and deliver a memorandum to the police. It was feared by the Conference that violence could erupt should this march not be monitored by members of the Local Peace Committee.

As it happened the chairperson of the Local Peace Committee, Con Roux, and the co-ordinator of the peace monitors, the Rev. Brian Smith, a Methodist minister, were delegates at the Conference. It was decided therefore to release them so that

they could organise a team of monitors for the march. Before sending the two men on their mission the Presiding Bishop, Dr. Stanley Mogoba called the Conference to prayer for them and for peace during the march.

The march was controlled by the Internal Stability Unit (ISU) and it went well for most of the day until the end of the rally at the stadium as people prepared for the return journey to their homes in Daveyton. Prior to the march there had been an agreement between the police and the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League that at the conclusion of the rally the marchers would walk through the Benoni central district to the Northmead station where they would board a train for Daveyton.

Due to the lateness of the hour the marchers were refused permission to board the train at the Northmead station by the police who wanted them to walk all the way back to Daveyton. Hearing this the crowd became angry. The ISU immediately sealed off the area so that the marchers were confined to a city block. Nevertheless the marchers insisted on reaching the Northmead station. The police, on the other hand, were adamant that the marchers walk back to Daveyton.

As some of the crowd argued with the police over the procedures others taunted them. The police, sensing the indignation of the marchers declared it an illegal gathering and gave the people five minutes to disperse. As the order to disperse was given the police loaded their weapons. The cocking of the rifles was clearly audible and the crowd became alarmed and fearful.

Brian Smith then placed a monitor in front of every rifle. One monitor obviously feeling uncomfortable with this position asked: 'Why must I stand here ?' Smith replied loud enough for the police to hear: 'if that policeman has to shoot he has to shoot through you!' After first attempting to persuade the marchers to sit down and

be calm the Peace Monitors began mediating with the police and the ANC League leaders.

A great deal of pressure was now placed on the monitors as the anger of the crowd seemed to be mounting and they also feared that the police might start shooting after five minutes. They tried therefore to persuade the police to allow the marchers to catch the train.

It was finally agreed that the marchers were permitted to board the train. But instead of going the route of the Northmead station they were to walk to the Kleinfontein siding and board a train which would take them to the Dunswart station. From that point they would change over and board another train which would take them to Daveyton. So the marchers began moving towards the siding.

In the meantime another ISU unit was based at the Kleinfontein siding. When the front marchers arrived at the siding the ISU turned them away as the police in the town had not communicated with them. This action by the ISU caused confusion among the marchers who once again began to panic. They now had one unit of the police pushing them towards the siding, while another unit of police were forcing them away from the siding and towards the other police!

The marchers saw that they were trapped in an open field. The front marches turned around and coming back towards the rest began shouting: 'They have brought us to the field to kill us - the police and the monitors!' It appeared to them that there was a conspiracy between the police and the monitors.

Realising that the confusion among the marchers could cause further widespread panic the monitors approached the leaders whom they knew and convinced them not to attempt the train journey and start walking back to Daveyton along the road.

Encouraged by the monitors small pockets of marchers began running back to Daveyton, even so fearing that they might be shot as they ran.

Meanwhile the police were driving around in their vehicles, and to add to the confusion the flying squad arrived. By this time it was after 5.00 p.m. and the rush hour traffic heightened the already tense atmosphere. Groups of people were running ahead while others followed. Then a further problem occurred when the front runners started running towards the oncoming cars. The monitors drove their vehicles in front encouraging the runners to keep to one side of the road.

Other monitors in vehicles persuaded the drivers of the police vehicles not to drive too close to the marchers. By this time it was becoming dark. Marchers were still in fear of being shot as they ran towards Daveyton. In order to prevent the police driving too close to them the marchers began igniting the long grass on either side of the road all the way back to Daveyton. At first the burning of the grass did not cause much alarm, but then the back markers caught the heat and the smoke from the fires. This made matters worse since the marchers had been without water the whole day and many of the older people and young children were already dehydrated.

Monitors Con Roux and Brian Smith arrived at Daveyton first but as they came over a hill near Daveyton they saw a number of police vehicles stationed at the entrance of the township with blue lights flashing. Given the experience of the day and position of the unit the monitors realised that this sight would look like an ambush to the marches. They immediately negotiated the moving of the vehicles and switching off of the lights.

Meanwhile there were further complications on the road. The older people were lagging behind and some had collapsed. A number of peace monitors left their cars (with the exception of the driver) and used vehicles to ferry older people to Daveyton.

The marchers were still angry with the Peace Monitors because they believed that they were collaborating with the police. At first when the monitors left their cars many of the marchers thought that this act endangered their lives. But when people saw that older marchers were being ferried and the monitors were prepared to run with them they realised that the monitors were supporting them and suspicion was dissipated.

By 8.30 p.m. all marches were home. Amazingly there was only one casualty: a woman went into diabetic coma and was taken to a doctor. Nevertheless the monitors later insisted on an investigation of the behaviour of the police.

Step 2. Response Of The Churches

There was no direct response of churches to the events of the ANC Youth League's march. This was left to the Local Peace Committee who made their own report on the incident.

However, the response from the churches to political initiatives towards transition to democracy was positive. The churches encouraged the formation of the Peace Accord and served as a facilitator with business in its birth. It could almost be said that in some respects the churches were the custodians of the process. Significantly Bishop M. Stanley Mogoba of the Methodist Church who was elected Vice-chairperson of the National Secretariat, played a leading part in its formation and development.

An example of the church response on a local level where the impact of the peace initiative was the occasion when in 1993 the Wits Vaal Regional Peace Committee called for 5000 people from all sectors of the community to volunteer for training as peace monitors. The Boksburg-Benoni Local Peace Committee responded by committing itself to developing a network of 1000 trained peace monitors who

would serve communities in the strife torn areas of the East Rand. The Benoni Methodist Church supported this initiative by committing itself to train 1000 monitors, this number included 300 ministers of religion.

The Rustenburg Conference

In many respects the National Conference of Church Leaders in South Africa at Rustenburg, which took place in November 1990, was a unique and significant response of the churches to the transition initiatives. This Conference could possibly be seen as a preparation for the churches later involvement in the Peace Accord. The fact that About 230 church leaders from 97 denominations and para-church organisations (including foreign guests) met in an attempt to work towards a united Christian witness in a changing South Africa had a significant impact on participating churches' endeavour to work for peace. It is estimated that the Conference was representative of more than 90 per cent of the Christian community in South Africa, and this figure represents more than 70 per cent of the total population of the country.

It is acknowledged that 'the most important direct result of the Conference was the birth of a spirit of humility and confession among Church leaders. The failures of the Churches, to a greater or lesser degree, in allowing or even condoning the development of the serious social ills that have befallen the country over the past years were acknowledged and confessed.' (Alberts and Chikane 1991: 9)

Albert Nolan of the Institute for Contextual Theology was impressed with the way in which the Rustenburg Conference was able to draw together the complete spectrum of Christian witness from the liberation and black theologians through to the evangelical, charismatic and pro-apartheid churches. 'The Rustenburg Conference was a very important meeting of Christians at that time. One of its prime objectives was to discover the role of the Church in the future. However it did not succeed completely in what it was trying to do, and could not. It was too premature.'²⁴

²⁴ Interview with T.F. Cunningham in Johannesburg on 4 February 1994.

Nevertheless the Rustenburg Declaration which was drawn up at the end of the Conference represents a remarkably positive and prophetic statement for its time and helped to bring the churches closer together towards the work of reconciliation in South Africa.

Step 3. Analysis Of The Conflict

For the purposes of this research the analysis will reflect the conflict that occurred during the African Congress Youth League's march to the Willowmoore Park Stadium in Benoni in October 1993. This is but one example of many conflict incidents involving peace committees. The conflict reviewed here is significant because it reveals the commitment of the Church and the initiative of the Peace Committee during this period.

Reflecting on this event with monitor Brian Smith²⁵ some significant observations were made in regard to the conflict resolution process.

Prior to this event a good deal had been achieved in the development of relations between political groups, the Peace Committee and the South African Police. Furthermore in discussions prior to this event an agreement had been reached between the police unit in Benoni, and the ANC Youth League that the marchers would return to Daveyton by train.

As it turned out poor communications between the police and the ANC Youth League during this march led to the conflict where the latter argued that they had permission to board the train at the Northmead station but the ISU was ordering them to walk home. The peace monitors entered the conflict at this point, that is, when the march was taking place, and negotiated with the ANC Youth League and the police.

²⁵ Interview with T.F. Cunningham in Johannesburg on 4 February 1994.

It appears that this conflict was caused through poor communication among the leading players, the police, the marches and also the peace monitors (who unfortunately came onto the scene rather late).

Step 4. Critique Of The Conflict Resolution Strategy

In terms of the strategy for a resolution of the conflict monitors might have consulted with the operations room of the police headquarters in Benoni before rushing to the contact area. This would certainly have been able to determine who made which agreement and with whom at a higher level.

The marchers might have been encouraged to consult with their leaders. This kind of liaison between groups would have made it unnecessary for the police to declare the gathering illegal. Clear communication between groups, where there are suspicions on both sides, is always a prerequisite to constructive negotiation.

Secondly, the monitors needed to be seen to be impartial. Instead of driving up and down trying to keep control of the marchers it would have been more appropriate if the a greater number of the monitors had been on foot. Other monitors could then have remained with the police, monitoring their movements. As it was the monitors were perceived to be collaborating with the police and appeared to be as confused as the marchers and the police.

Creative options must always be investigated. For instance an alternative solution in this march was for the peace monitors to encourage the police to form a controlled corridor through the town as a safety measure for all concerned. The principle behind this action would be to communicate to the marchers that the police wished to be their helpers rather than their antagonists and therefore providing them with a safe passage home. This would have had a different impact upon the marchers. As it

was the conflict was exacerbated when the marchers perceived the police acting against them.

Referring to the incident where monitors were placed in front of police rifles aimed at the marchers Brian Smith recognised the danger of this move. However he confirmed that all the monitors placed in this position were Christians and that in situations like this the Church needed to identify with Christ and demonstrate his love by acts of love and compassion.

An analysis of the function and role of the Peace Committees shows their significance during the transition period. In *figure 1* on page 111 table processes in a typical negotiation scenario is demonstrated. The drawing shows a square table representing a two party negotiation. Leading negotiators face each other across the table. Behind them are the masses whom they are representing at the negotiating table.

The negotiation process that takes place across the table has been termed *vertical relationships* or *negotiations*. Negotiations also take place on each side of the table between members of the delegations. This relationship is called *horizontal negotiation*.

Then there is the important relationship between the masses and those at the table. At all times the table delegates who are the leaders must keep contact and continue to remain responsible to their support base. Should this contract be lost the negotiations will collapse. This was the reason for so many mass rallies held during the transition period. The leaders needed to rally their support and also hear the aspirations of the people as well as keep them abreast with developments around the table. This relationship between the table leaders and the masses has been called *sub-terranean* negotiation.

Finally there is the relationship that has most often been forgotten in negotiations such as the South African situation. We refer to the negotiations that should take place between the masses on either side. These are the two groups that are most like to become embroiled in violent clashes with one another. The question is how do they negotiate?

I have called this relationship *extra-terrestrial negotiation*. On the ground it is not seen as part of the table process or part of the national or main negotiation process. However, it cannot be ignored, for it contains the seeds of major and national conflict.

As it happens this was the role of the Peace Committees and therefore also of the Church in South Africa during the transition period. The Peace Committees were indeed comprised of the groups representing the sub-terranean negotiation. This is perhaps the most outstanding consequence of the Peace Accord. It brought together the masses supporting the African National Congress and the other liberation groups, including the non-governmental organisations supporting them, on the one hand, and the National Party, the South African Defence Force, the South African Police and the municipalities, into contact with each other with the function to find consensus in ensuing conflicts involving their parties.

It also meant that mediators, facilitators and monitors were trained on a mass scale in a short period. This brought thousands of people into contact with one another with a single goal that of bringing peace to the land. Skills in conflict resolution have thus become an invaluable asset to a country passing through such rapid change as South Africa is at present.

TABLE PROCESSES

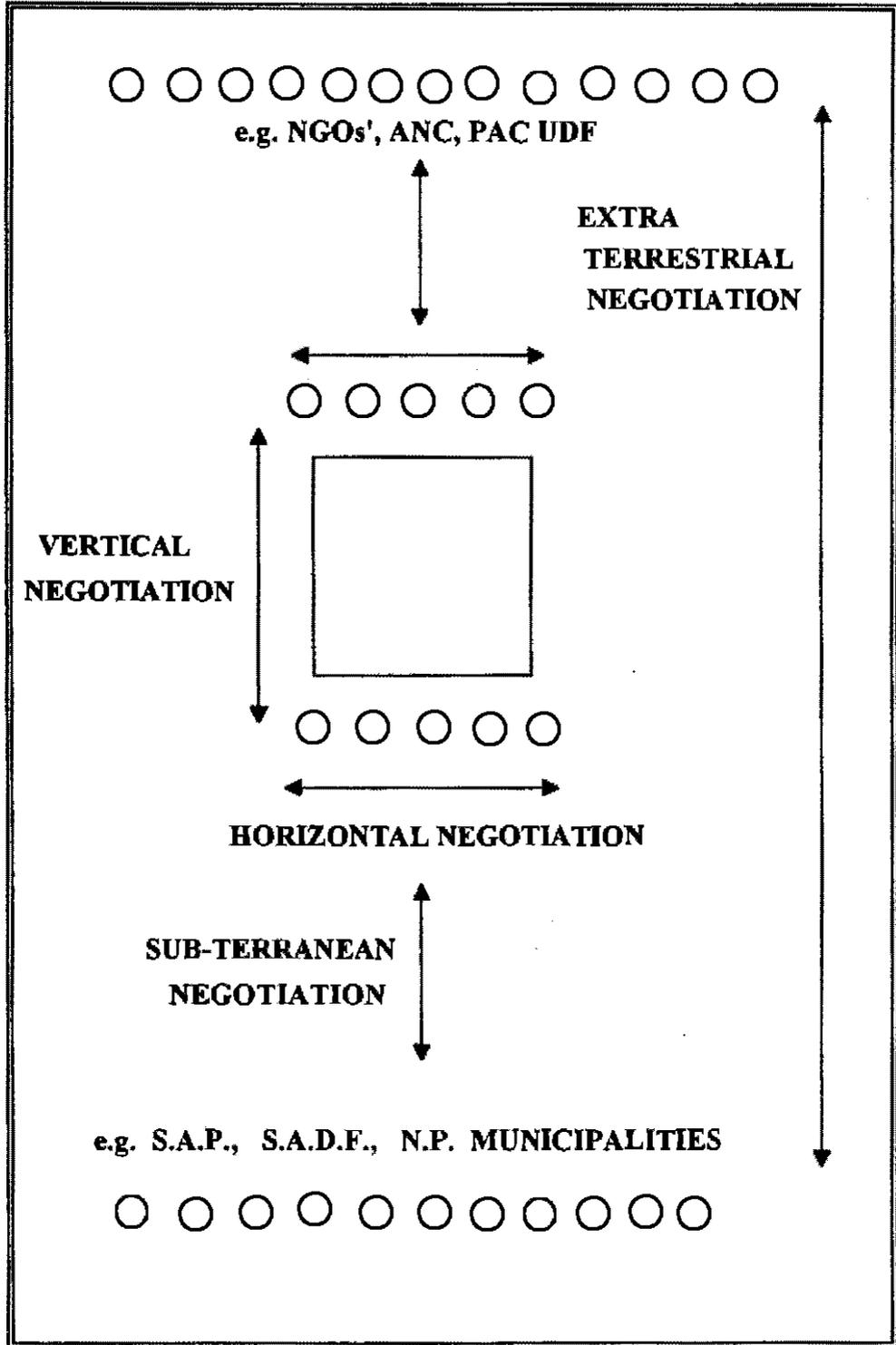


Figure 1

Conclusion

The overview of the churches' use of conflict resolving strategies during some of the major conflicts over the past four decades reveals to some extent a lack of creative strategies that would lead to significant social and political change. Certainly in the earlier stages of the National Party rule the churches, though certainly not co-opted by the state, appear to be unable to deal with the government's relentless disregard for human rights.

Some conclusions drawn from the overview may be summarised as follows:

The church's inability to use creative conflict resolution strategies for social change was bedevilled by its own internal divisions. This resulted in a theological and ideological split between the Afrikaans and the English speaking churches. Although not always clearly identified in the various conferences, assemblies and consultations there were different perceptions of the conflict between black and white Christians.

There does not appear to be any direct attempt to resolve these internal conflicts until the Rustenburg Conference and in this crisis the Church itself became a site of struggle. No doubt there were various groups within the churches and in the South African Council of Churches that attempted to address these problems.

The churches also tended to avoid direct confrontation with the government in earlier stages. The power of the state seemed overwhelming resulting in conflict avoiding strategies being adopted. In certain circumstances the churches relied more on prophetic statements which were necessary to expose conflict or to oppose the policies of government, than confrontation.

There does not appear to be a great deal of theoretical or practical understanding of processes or strategies of conflict resolution. In a number of situations the churches' seemed to rely on pronouncements followed in some instances by delegations to the

government. This suggests the need for the churches to consider some more informed approaches to conflict resolution.

It appears from the case studies that the Church was on a learning curve when considering its historical praxis. Most churches, for instance struggled with the Kairos Document powerfully which urged the Church to side with the oppressed. It has been noted that the churches seemed make an attempt to move in the direction of more active participation through more active resistance during the later 1970's after the Soweto riots. However, they seem to lack the skills (and perhaps the theological understandings) to manage it. In the 1980's the churches recognised the struggle against apartheid more emphatically but they still appear somewhat confused in regard to action.

In the 1990's the churches made a leap forward and took more initiative in the struggle for peace. A good deal more training in conflict resolution and peace making began to take place and a number of church leaders become more directly involved. Perhaps this was also due to the fact that the state looked towards the Church for help.

Consideration of the above suggests that an assessment of some of the conflict resolution theories and processes at present being used internationally and in some areas in South Africa would be an appropriate exercise. It is this enterprise that will be pursued in the next section.

PART THREE
THEORIES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

AN INTRODUCTION TO TERMS

The Church's involvement in the socio-political events of our time has brought it into conflict with political structures and internally within its own family. This much is evident in the foregoing section when examining the Church's involvement in some of the major socio-ecclesial conflicts in South Africa over the last four and a half decades. Clearly the Church is as vulnerable to conflicts as any other institution. Unfortunately, as is seen in the previous section the Church does not have a monopoly of conflict resolution skills. In fact Church leaders need to learn from the expertise of those who have studied and practised the art.

Not only has the Church to deal with its own internal conflicts but as has been shown in the previous section the Church is called upon to become involved in the facilitation of community and political conflicts. It is therefore imperative that Church leaders, in fact, Christians generally, learn to deal more skilfully with conflict situations. For these reasons there needs to be an examination of negotiation and mediation processes that are being used at present.

It is the intention in this section to present the approaches of theorists/practitioners in the field of conflict resolution which might be appropriate to the Church. However, before we embark on these presentations of conflict resolution facilitation approaches it will be useful to have a brief survey of conflict resolution options, beginning with the traditional competing method and following on with negotiation, mediation and facilitation.

11.1. COMPETING FOR ADVANTAGE

Parties become embroiled in an attempt to win the higher ground by engaging in what Dudley Weeks has termed 'conquest' conflict management (Weeks 1985:5).

Parties see each other as adversaries and endeavour to score a victory. This option is a power oriented approach using tactics such as an ability to argue, rank, and force that will overcome an opponent. This strategy for managing conflicts is based, therefore, on a win-lose principle. In terms of the discussion of conflict in the first chapter (page 4) of this thesis it results in a zero-sum game in which there were winners and losers.

11.2. NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is a familiar tool. It is the 'art of the possible', a mutual recognition that there are limits on unilateral action and that there may be solutions more advantageous than continued conflict. Negotiation occurs when two or more persons or groups with conflicting or competing interests meet in a conscious attempt to find some solution to their differences which they will mutually commit themselves to support and implement. A concomitant understanding should be that, should parties fail to reach an agreement within some specified time frame, each is free to pursue its interests as it sees fit, whether through unilateral decision-making, the courts, or other means.

Negotiation is also viewed as a way of mutually redefining an old relationship that is not operating satisfactorily or of establishing a new relationship where none existed before. This involves a problem-solving approach which seeks win-win solutions through interactive communication in contrast to the traditional adversarial win-lose approach (Van der Merwe 1988:10). As a problem solving process individuals or groups voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint decision about their mutual concerns.

Further, negotiation may include a bargaining relationship in which coercion is used to influence the behaviour of the other party. Bargaining refers to the process of making substantive, procedural or psychological trade-offs to reach an acceptable settlement (Van der Merwe 1988:10).

Implicit in the art of negotiation is the notion of communication. Here we refer to the communication processes or systems that are evident in attempts to seek solutions to conflicts. Morley and Stephenson, for example describe negotiation as ... any form of verbal communication, direct or indirect, whereby parties to a conflict of interest discuss, without resort to arbitration or other judicial processes, the form of any joint action which they might take to manage a dispute between them (Morely 1977:26).

Fisher and Ury provide another example where negotiation is referred to as form of communication:

Negotiation is a basic means of getting what you want from others. It is a back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed (Fisher and Ury 1981:xi) .

However, while 'communication' is, in its generic sense, a 'neutral' word, it can acquire a negative meaning. Van der Merwe notes how this occurred, for instance, among trade unions in South Africa in the early 1970s, when business management used the word to describe a specific system of communication (*liaison committees*). These *liaison committees* were alleged to have been manipulated by management to control emerging unions (Van Der Merwe 1988:10).

Although these committees were introduced in order to facilitate communication they were seen by some trade unions to be a means to prevent negotiation. Van der Merwe perceptively observes the fact that 'the word negotiation was not even mentioned in the original Black Labour Relations Act of 1953. *Liaison committees* were therefore channels whereby management communicated *to* rather than *with* workers. No wonder there was widespread rejection of these committees by the emerging trade unions.' (Van der Merwe 1988:10)

In a similar way that 'communication' can acquire a negative meaning in community relations so 'negotiation' may acquire a negative meaning in political relations. Again Van der Merwe cites an example of such an occurrence when the South African government originally appeared to be using the term 'negotiation' to describe its strategies of consultation and co-option. Consultation implied no cost to the dominant party because it largely controlled the process and set the agenda. Furthermore, consultations at that time were not conducted with legitimate representatives of the black people but with individuals either appointed by the government or elected by processes which were not considered legitimate by the masses (Van der Merwe 1988:10).

The point that Van der Merwe and others make is that effective negotiation presupposes productive communication processes which make parties credible participants in a dispute and thereby facilitate the possibility for a solution to be found.

Assuming then that parties come together with the intent of resolving a conflict through negotiation and communication in ways more effective than competing for advantage we can now investigate some of the ways that negotiation may be conducted. The following summary suggests various options that are available.

A. 'Two-Party' Negotiation:

When the parties in conflict negotiate without the assistance of outside intervention.

B. 'Third-Party' Negotiation:

When an outside intervener assists the parties in conflict. This could be achieved in several ways:

1. By arbitration (through the courts or by an individual or group selected by mutual agreement of the parties)
2. Mediation
3. Facilitation

A brief explanation of these options will serve the purposes of this introduction to terms:

11.2.1. Arbitration

As stated above arbitration occurs when outside agencies make the final decision regarding the conflict. It may occur when negotiation and mediation breakdown. The figure 2 below shows a graphic representation of this process:

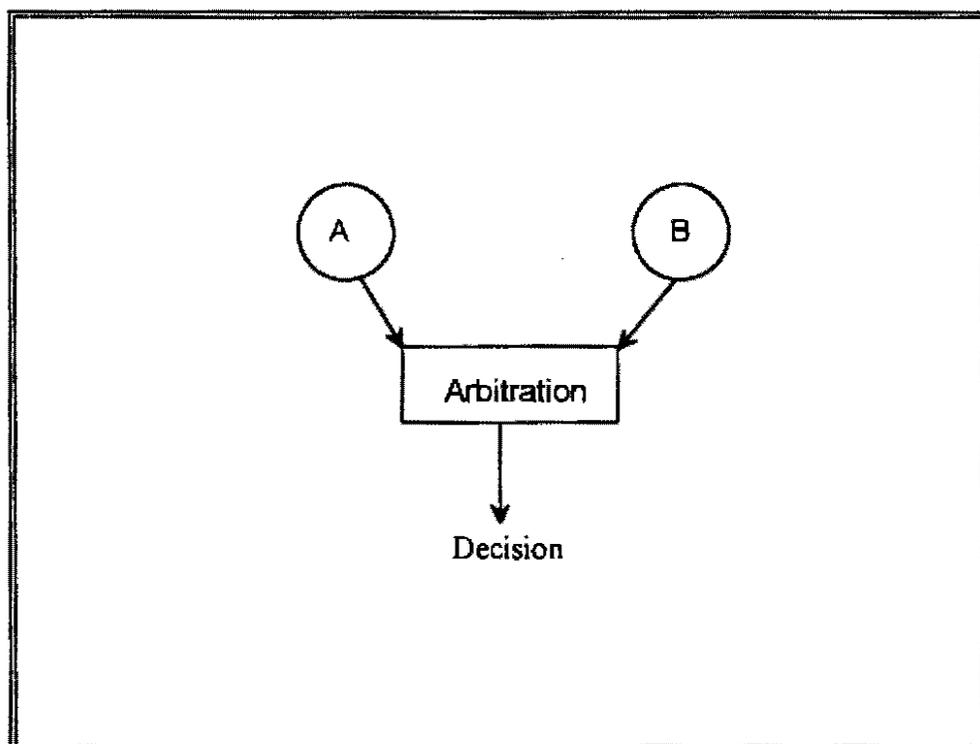


Figure 2

The diagram describes the manner in which the conflict parties present their case to an arbitrator who then makes a decision. The arbitrator's decision is, in effect, the resolution of the conflict.

11.2.2. Mediation

In the process of negotiation the parties involved in dispute negotiate a settlement between themselves. Where negotiation between parties is not possible because of rigid stances, inadequate communication or structural obstacles, parties may then agree to mediation. Simply stated then, 'mediation' is negotiation with the assistance of an independent intervener or 'third party'.

It follows that the core of mediation is the principle of a mediator acting as a facilitator. In court and arbitration investigations, evidence, arguments, and positions are weighed and a decision or recommendation is put forward by the third party. In mediation, it is the disputing parties themselves who have the primary responsibility for making recommendations and determining the final decisions; facilitators/mediators do not make decisions or recommendations.

Mediation has been variously defined. Cormick proposes a specific example of a definition:

Mediation is a voluntary process in which those involved in a dispute jointly explore and reconcile their differences. The mediator has no authority to impose a settlement. The authority of the mediator lies in the ability to assist the parties in resolving their own differences. The mediated dispute is resolved when the parties themselves reach what they consider to be a workable solution (Cormick 1977: 2-4).

There are a number of critical elements of the mediation process inherent in this particular definition: 1) The parties cannot be required to negotiate or be unduly coerced to agree to any particular settlement of their differences. Indeed, unless they are willing to enter into the process with some intent to reach an accommodation of

their differences, the mediation effort is not likely to be viable. 2) At some point in the process there will be a joint or face-to-face exploration of the issues. That is, mediation is seen to be an extension of the negotiation process. 3) The mediator supports and facilitates the negotiation-mediation process by helping to improve communications, serving as an interpreter, arranging meetings, suggesting alternatives. Whereas in labour-management disputes the mediator typically enters a dispute to revive lagging or severed negotiations, in community conflict the mediator often serves a primary function in establishing a negotiation relationship. 4) Any agreement reached is the creature of the parties and is deemed viable and acceptable by them. The mediator is not party to the agreement (Cormick 1977: 2-4)

There are many variations of mediation processes. Three of them, pertinent to this discussion are listed:

11.2.2.1. Traditional Mediation

The 'traditional' mediation process tends to focus on the bargaining approach with the mediator overseeing the bargaining and contributing to the agreements reached, see figure 3 below.

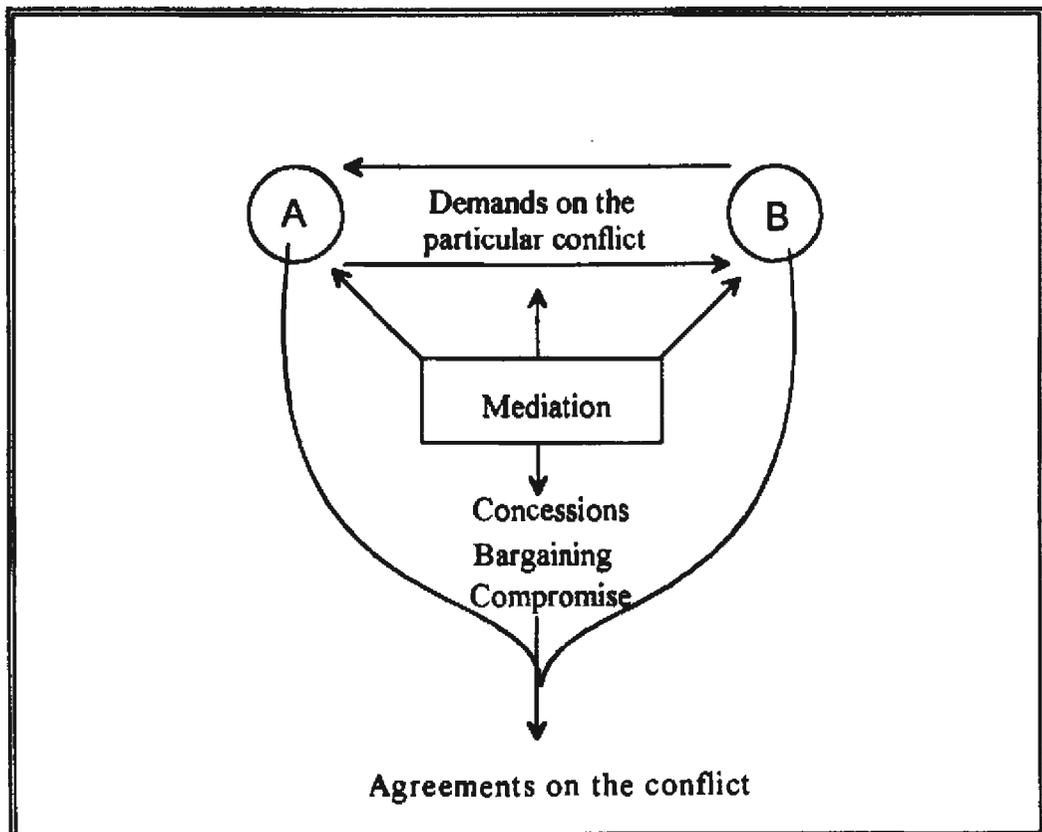


Figure 3.

11.2.2.2. Passive Facilitation

In passive facilitation the facilitator serves as a convener to bring conflicting parties together, but does not actively engage in conflict resolution action himself/herself/itself. In some cases, for instance, the convener acts as the chairperson of a meeting between the parties.

11.2.2.3. Active Facilitation

Although 'facilitation' has traditionally been understood in the more passive role of merely 'convening', Dudley Weeks, through his conflict partnership facilitation process, has introduced the term active facilitation (Weeks 1992). The facilitator

brings a process to the negotiation that empowers the conflict parties with skills they then use to resolve their own conflict (see figure 4 below).

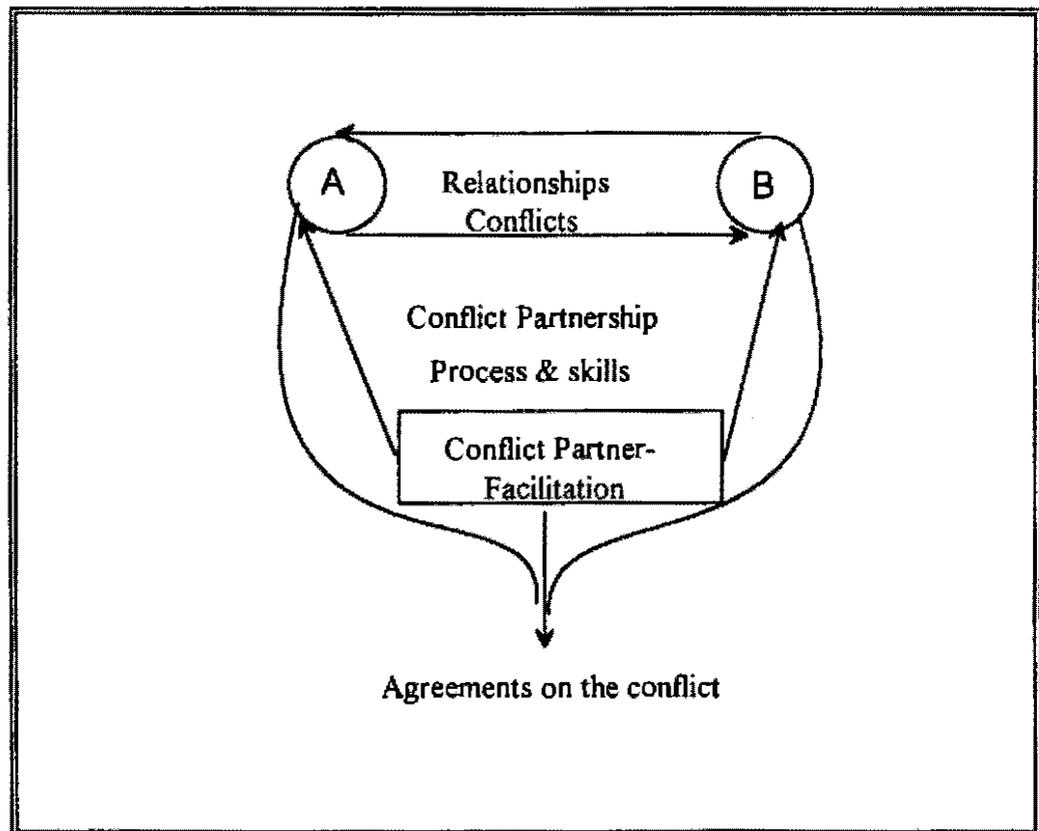


Figure 4.

The diagram shows the parties A and B have an interdependent relationship with each other but are involved in conflict. They have requested a facilitator help them find a solution to their problem. The facilitator offers a process and guides them through it.

11.3. THE MEDIATOR/FACILITATOR

While there is an obvious link between the mediation process and the facilitator(s) which makes it difficult to separate them it is helpful isolate them for the sake of definition. Here the focus will be on the nature and role of the facilitator or third party.

The facilitator is an independent actor who has his or her organisational base outside of the parties to the dispute. The cost of mediation is usually borne by some independent agency or, in a some instances, jointly by the parties. The facilitator/mediator should be acceptable at some level of confidence to all of the parties in the dispute and be able to understand and accept (though not necessarily agree with the parties), the legitimacy of the values, perceptions, and positions of all the parties.

Although the third party is external to the disputants V. Jabri sees that the mediating person/group may be an offshoot of a pre-existing relationship between at least two others (Jabri 1990: 5). J.Z. Rubin shows that the third party is '... spawned by the relationship between the other two (Rubin 1981: 5). However, one cannot be too categorical here. H W Van der Merwe et. al argue that mediators are often strangers to the parties in conflict and have been selected because they are not involved in the issue or with the parties (Van der Merwe, Maree, Zaaiman, Philip and Muller 1989: 15) . Admittedly, Van der Merwe et. al make a distinction between the problem-solving process and the mediation process (the former being an informal process while the latter is a collaborative process according to them) and suggest that one significant distinction is the fact that in the problem-solving process the disputants know the third-party.

Facilitators/Mediators do not investigate, seek evidence, or attempt to determine who is right or what would be fair. Instead, facilitators/mediators focus on helping conflicting parties to work together to find mutually agreeable solutions. They

encourage parties to present what they see as the relevant information without the constraints of elaborate rules of 'admissible evidence.'

Finally, facilitators/mediators do not have the power to enforce agreements reached by the parties. While the courts and binding arbitration can lead to settlements that are enforceable, mediated agreements depend on the good faith of the parties. For this reason facilitators/mediators can seek to help the parties obtain resolutions that truly meet their needs and that they can carry out.

11.4. A STUDY OF SPECIALISTS IN FACILITATION PROCESSES

There are a number of internationally known conflict resolution specialists whose contribution in this field have been invaluable. Three of these contributions have been selected for special study in this section. The theories of John Burton, Roger Fisher and William Ury (their joint research and practice will be examined), and Dudley Weeks are considered appropriate not only due to their world wide acknowledgement but also because all three have committed themselves in print, visited South Africa and influenced the development of conflict resolution processes in a time of unrest and transition. A presentation of their approaches will provide an opportunity to explore possibilities for the Church's facilitation of conflicts.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: JOHN BURTON

The first of the three theorists-practitioners to be examined is John Burton and his particular approach to conflict resolution. Professor John Burton began a distinguished career in the Australian public service as a delegate to the United Nations Charter Conference in 1945. He was appointed Permanent Head of the Australian Foreign Office in 1947, and High Commissioner for Ceylon in 1951.

After retirement from government service he founded the Centre for the Analysis of Conflict at the University College of London and served as Director of the Conflict Resolution Project of the University of Maryland Centre for Development and Conflict Resolution. In 1985 he joined the faculty of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at George Mason University.

The value and significance of John Burton's approach to conflict and its resolution will be ascertained by the following presentation and critique of his model.

12.1. DEEP-ROOTED CONFLICT

Critical to an understanding of John Burton's approach is his conception of the nature of conflict. He uses the term 'deep-rooted conflict' to describe the dynamics of painful and uncompromising conflicts.

12.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEEP-ROOTED CONFLICT

The first characteristic of deep-rooted conflict is its *degree of seriousness*. The 'seriousness' of a conflict refers to the impact of a particular dispute upon an individual, group or society. In this regard there is a distinction between on the one hand, a dispute which is a feature of normal and frequently co-operative and creative relationships which can be handled by less sophisticated means and, on the other

hand, a conflict which is serious in its consequences, that is, it could lead to widespread violence. This type of conflict requires, he believes, major analytical and policy re-structuring for its resolution. It is this latter type that Burton refers to as 'deep-rooted' conflict.

This distinction is significant for Burton because in his assessment in many more cases than is realised courts, lawyers, mediators and public officials have been treating disputes in a dysfunctionally superficial way. There are cases that normally go to courts, to arbitration or to power bargaining negotiation that require far more analytical treatment to prevent further adverse and costly social, political or economic consequences in the longer term. For example Burton argues that arbitrary settlement of landlord and tenant disputes could set patterns that in the longer term lead to major social and economic problems in housing (Burton 1990:15).

At the same time it is noted that even quite ordinary and potentially functional disputes may become deep-rooted and therefore sometimes violent. A conflict may become 'serious' through, for example, inappropriate interaction between parties such as negative power play or inept processes of third party intervention (Burton 1990:16). An instance of inappropriate process for deep-rooted conflict would be the bargaining approach. Burton explains that bargaining is an attempt at reaching a solution by compromising a position.

A second characteristic of deep-rooted conflicts is that they involve '*basic human needs*'. It is generally thought that competing interests or scarce materials are the driving forces of conflict. Burton, however, believes the problem is much deeper. He contends that basic needs such as security, recognition, identity and human development are at the core of deep-rooted conflict. These basic needs, he believes, will not be compromised nor will they yield to pressure. They 'will be pursued regardless of consequences' (Burton 1987:16). It is for this reason that few

references are made in Burton's study series on conflict to an extensive literature that deals with a bargaining approach.

A third characteristic of deep-rooted conflict is that *it occurs at all social levels*. It involves all the various relationship configurations such as conflict between institutions and authorities as well as among individuals and groups. Furthermore deep-rooted conflict involves not only highly politicised situations but also interpersonal conflicts such as marriage and family relationships where interdependency is high. It particularly involves cases that arise out of demands on parties to make certain changes in behaviour which are unacceptable or beyond tolerance or capability.

In each situation the conflict is considered by Burton to be symptomatic of frustrated basic human needs. Some examples of symptoms of intractable conflicts which would qualify as being deep-rooted include: hostage taking, illegal strikes, public protest movements, ethnic violence, terrorism, and gang warfare and many other forms of opposition to authorities at one social level or another (Burton 1990: 15).

12.3. A THEORY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

John Burton moves away from a bargaining approach to conflict resolution in favour of a problem solving method. He believes this is the more productive approach particularly in deep-rooted conflict. Problem solving calls for facilitative mediation or negotiation enabling the parties to achieve their goals and values without posturing for positions or compromise. Following this route conflict is resolved by removing underlying causes usually defined as the existence of incompatible goals or alternatively, opposing interests.

Fundamentally the way to resolve deep-rooted conflict is first to recognise that it is caused by the failure to deal with the denial of basic, inalienable values and/or the frustration of basic human needs. Christopher Mitchell makes the point:

...only arrangements that fully satisfy BHNs [basic human needs] can bring about any final resolution of the conflict - one which 'deals fully' with the issues in dispute and establishes a new, self-supporting relationship between the adversaries (Burton 1990b: 152).

If it is accepted that deep-rooted conflict is most likely to be caused by the frustration of basic needs such as identity, recognition, security and other human and societal values, then what Burton terms 'facilitated' conflict resolution aims at determining specifically such human needs and then assisting parties 'to deduce what alterations in structures, institutions and policies are required to enable the fulfillment of needs.' (Burton: 1987: 23) In other words an in-depth analysis of the total situation including the structures and policies involved is required in order to bring about acceptable changes.

It is maintained that dealing with basic human needs enables negotiators and mediators to facilitate a conflict at a deeper level than that provided for in the more traditional approaches. Furthermore an important consequence of the basic human needs approach is that the outcome of conflict does not have to be a win-lose struggle. The more security, identity, and development one party experiences the more and not the less, are the opportunities for the satisfaction of these same needs by the other parties to a conflict.

12.4. THE NATURE AND FORM OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

As the conflict resolution theory of Burton relies on an understanding of basic human needs the question that arises is: what is the nature and form of basic human needs? While John Burton introduced this approach to conflict resolution it should

be recognised that his concept of basic human needs arose in the context of a theory of human development or as in the case of Abraham Maslow, a theory of motivation (Maslow 1987).

One of the controversies that emerges from the question of basic human needs is the perennial nature vs nurture debate. A full discussion of this issue is not relevant to this thesis though it deserves mention to give it some context. Those who identify with the nature argument would see basic human needs as instinctive drives towards the fulfilment of the human personality. The 'instinctivists' are supported by such authorities as Freud (as discussed in chapter two above) and Lorenz. It is also interesting to note that Dennis Sandole includes theologians such as St. Augustine and Niebuhr whom he understands to believe in a flawed human nature due to original sin among those supporting biological factors that shape human behaviour (Burton 1990b:65). On the other hand Erich Fromm, espousing Idealism, would challenge the instinctivists, though admitting that biological factors do play a part in the expression of human behaviour.

Ascertaining a precise definition of needs as understood by the Burton school is no mean task. Mitchell admits to this difficulty and refers to Katrin Lederer, for instance, who underscores the difficulty:

At best, the existence of a need can be concluded indirectly either from the respective satisfiers that the person uses or strives for or from symptoms of frustration caused by any kind of non-satisfaction (Burton 1990b: 157).

Although the nature of needs appears ambiguous there is evidence in research which provides substance for an argument that basic needs do exist. Some examples of research confirms that basic needs can be taken seriously. The research of D.M. Davis for instance, shows that two year old children can 'know' their needs, and, left alone can act appropriately in response to them (Burton 1990b: 61). Davies also finds that violence becomes increasingly likely when any kind of basic need which is

normally gratified suddenly becomes deprived. John Burton also suggests a link between the violation of basic needs and violent conflict. Further there is evidence of 'deviant' behaviour followed by the lack of the need for self esteem in the work of Karin Horney. Maslow's research reveals the existence of a hierarchy of human needs (Maslow 1987). In his discussion Dennis Sandole refers to a body of research in which basic human needs have been identified (Burton 1990b).

The problem concerning the nature of basic human needs can be approached from the other side. The question then is whether one can clearly ascertain what is *not* a manifestation of a basic need. In other words could not all behaviour result from either the denial of, or the achievement of some basic need? Gilbert Rist's words highlight the relevance of the problem, 'if everything is a need, then need means nothing' (Burton 1990b: 158). It is precisely at this point that the debate becomes especially pertinent. If a conflict resolution process is to be linked with a concept of basic human needs then negotiators and mediators should be clear about what the needs are.

This is a crucial issue made difficult by the variety of human needs postulated by different theorists particularly so when one goes beyond the physical needs that all humans require for survival. Perhaps the most well-known system of needs is that found in Maslow's theory of motivation (Maslow 1987). His hierarchy of needs identifies five basic levels of needs, in ascending order: (1) physiological maintenance, (2) safety, (3) love and belongingness, (4) self esteem and security, and (5) self-actualisation. The levels of needs assume a hierarchical structure of ranked prepotencies. Thus each level of needs, beginning with the physiological, is more prepotent than those which follow. This means that each level must be fairly well satisfied before a person will turn to the next prepotent or higher need (Maslow 1987).

Maslow's categories of needs are generally accepted by the Burton school though with some variations (Burton 1990b: 64). M.H. Banks refers to three basic human needs that are important for conflict resolution: basic resources, self-determination, and the need for association. James C. Davies' modification, accepts four substantive needs in descending order of prepotency: the physical, social-affectional, self-esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Then there are 'three closely interrelated implemental needs' - security, knowledge, and power. These latter are pursued mainly, though not exclusively, as a means to achieve the four substantive needs (Burton 1990b: 64). John Galtung (according to Mitchell in Burton's book, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*), on the other hand refers to four basic needs, security, welfare, identity and freedom needs (Burton 1990b: 159). John Burton has undoubtedly been influenced by Maslow's work although he employs Paul Site's system: needs for response, security, recognition, stimulation, distributive justice, meaning, rationality (including the need to be seen as rational), and control (Burton 1990b: 64).

12.5. THE HIERARCHICAL NATURE OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

It would appear that many basic human needs writers agree with Maslow and Davies that there is some form of hierarchy of needs moving from the physical to self-actualisation needs. Most of those who support this view would also tend towards some flexibility in the priority listing. For instance, Maslow and Davies agree that in some contexts the order of priorities could be reversed. An example would be Mahatma Gandhi's willingness to be deprived physically after possibly being fulfilled at a higher level. However, Davies argues that such reversals are 'very unusual in frequency and brief in duration.' (Burton 1990b: 165)

If one accepts the existence of such a hierarchy of needs, then conflict resolution might become a matter of satisfying the most important needs first. Of course a debate arise over the order in such a hierarchy. The argument would then centre on whether 'importance' refers to the lower needs and move to the higher, or perhaps in some cases the social needs may demand first consideration.

Some theorists show different variations of priority lists, elevating those that might generally be dependent on a lower level to a more paramount position. Burton's approach is an example of this variation. He argues that basic human needs such as security and identity will be pursued by individuals 'subject only to constraints they impose upon themselves in their need to maintain valued relations,' (Burton 1990b: 161) suggesting that these needs are paramount.

Mitchell refers to the work of Oscar Nudler and points out that he has a clearly hierarchical understanding of human needs. He begins with the need for identity as the most fundamental need of the person. This need is then supported by two other *fundamental* needs: the need to grow and the need to transcend. From each of these there arise a set of *derived* needs, including shelter, affection, security, self-esteem or meaningfulness. In Nudler's hierarchy, the *fundamental* needs are invariable, but the *derived* needs differ according to the context of the individual or group.

Although there may be some agreement as regards the hierarchical nature of human needs one is struck by the variety of approaches assumed by different writers. This in itself poses some problems for the practice of conflict resolution.

Mitchell also raises further questions which are pertinent to conflict resolution. If there is such a thing as a hierarchy of needs, or alternatively, some form in which some needs are less important than others, or some *essential* and others *peripheral* what are the implications for conflict resolution? Do negotiators and mediators have to identify the needs and come to an agreement over which are the most important? And if some are *essential* and others *peripheral* are there also different degrees by which a conflict may be 'resolved', so that some resolutions are better than others (i.e. they fulfil more peripheral needs, having already fulfilled the essential needs)? (Burton 1990b: 161)

12.6. DYNAMIC VS. STATIC APPROACH

It has already been stated above that Davies, for one, argues for occasions when the order of needs in a hierarchy are reversed, or changed - albeit usually for short periods of time depending on social and cultural circumstances. This does suggest a more dynamic understanding of human needs. John Galtung also accepts a dynamic view of human needs admitting the impact of environmental factors so that needs and need hierarchies are not 'socialisation independent' (Burton 1990b: 165).

Notwithstanding the views of Maslow, Burton, Davies and Galtung it cannot be assumed that there is general acceptance by theorists of the dynamism of basic human needs. In fact it appears that the more widely accepted view is that basic needs are unchangeable and do not alter over time.

Whether one chooses the dynamic view or the static option there is a dilemma. If changes in a person's or party's basic human needs occur due to certain environmental circumstances or in response to some external input then it would make the task of conflict resolution process rather difficult. For instance negotiation could become a confusing process of following a series of 'need' changes. On the other hand it can be argued that the possibility of change could place the need hierarchy in a situation somewhat malleable, assisting parties to move to an agreement.

12.7. HUMAN NEEDS AND DEVELOPMENT

Burton himself notes some apparent limitations on the pursuit of human needs as an explanation of behaviour. When individuals experience recognition as persons and have the opportunity to develop their potential, they do not feel the need to struggle for security by some unusual behaviour, or by seeking an identity group through which to exercise control of the environment. The practical reality, however, is that there are few persons other than members of elite groups so happily endowed. Most often, these privileged few remain unconscious of the gulf which separates them

from the 'needy,' in the sense in which Burton defines 'need.' The concern of political elites, for example, is role defence, which requires those representing a coercive system to justify their position by attributing crime and rebellion to the personal failings of 'anti-social' persons.

But for peoples who lack not only recognition, but even the raw essentials of existence, the opportunity to pursue such human needs is severely constrained. Where such opportunity ceases to exist, as has been the case in parts of South Africa, a total apathy prevails. Inferior environmental situations can reduce human beings to a condition in which there is little scope for struggles for identity, let alone recognition as persons.

Between these two extremes, that is, between those who have gained personal recognition and those whose struggle is for sheer survival, lie the vast majority of people who exist at various stages of human development in between the above groups. It is this mass of persons who will pursue by all means at their disposal the basic human needs of security, identity, and development. These are most likely to be the people who are the source of most interpersonal and intersocietal conflict, and who become involved in conflict with authorities at all levels, from parents to national authoritative elites.

12.8. SUMMARY OF THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN NEEDS DISCUSSION

To sum up the above discussion on the nature of human needs it is suggested that a number of conceptual and theoretical clarifications need to be made if the basic needs theory is to make a lasting contribution to conflict resolution processes. First, it is necessary to reach consensus about the nature and number of basic human needs. Second, further study needs to be made on whether there is a need hierarchy, including whether there are those which are essential for full human development and others that are desirable but peripheral. Third, some more work has to be done

to clarify the question of universality of human needs in human nature irrespective of whether persons come from rural or industrial cultures. Fourth, there is the question of whether or not human needs are fundamental and unchanging over time and in differing circumstances, or whether they remain basic in spite of circumstance or upbringing.

12.9. THE FACILITATION OF CONFLICT

John Burton's notions of conflict resolution are based on several theoretical foundations which, as has been noted above, raise a number of questions. How Burton proposes to put these theoretical propositions into practice is summarised below. The summarised form is gleaned from his handbook, *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict* (Burton 1987).

12.9.1. Features of the Facilitation

Burton outlines several features of facilitated conflict resolution:

12.9.1.1. It attempts to differentiate between the interests of the parties that are negotiable and the underlying, basic, needs and motivations that cannot be bargained.

12.9.1.2. It is analytical of motives and values, of perceptions of motives and values as well as of confusions between interests, strategies and goals of the parties.

12.9.1.3. It provides opportunity to address the problems involved in ignoring, suppressing or failing to promote non-negotiable needs.

12.9.1.4. It attempts to help parties in a conflict to discover what changes in structures and policies are required to enable the fulfilment of needs.

12.9.1.5. It seeks to help parties involved in monitoring events and communications.

12.9.2. Procedures For Facilitation

There are no laid down procedures for the facilitation of conflict in Burton's writings. He does, however, offer ground rules for a process, and one can discern certain phases in the mediation or negotiation procedure.

12.9.2.1. Entry

This first phase involves the preparations for the coming together of the parties in dispute. It also involves understanding the nature of the facilitation by all parties concerned. Recognising that it is based on the theory that universal needs of all parties can be met, and that a win-win outcome is possible.

The goal is not to begin with demands and bargaining or to push for compromise. Burton indicates that experience shows that heads of states and communities often respond positively to the idea of exploratory discussions for which they do not have to take any public responsibility before entering into more specific communications. Rule Thirty-Eight makes it quite clear: 'There should be no proposals put forward by any side until the analysis of the situation is complete and a definition of the situation is agreed.' (Burton 1987: 60)

12.9.2.2. The Preparatory Phase

The focus in this phase is on the responsibilities of the parties and various arrangements for the meetings. These would include financial arrangements, the location of the facilitation, accommodation of parties during the meetings (decisions as to whether parties should be housed separately, etc), a decision regarding records taken and publication of agreements reached and the need for an interpreter, following a discussion on the language used in the meetings.

12.9.2.3. The Analytical Phase

During this phase parties are invited to make initial presentations. Participants are encouraged to focus on the values and goals that are at stake in the

conflict. The presentations are followed by questions of clarification in relation to values and goal posed by the facilitation panel.

At the end of an analytical session the panel prepares a discussion paper for the following session. Further discussion and clarification of values and goals takes place after the participants have studied the paper. It is expected that several key issues should emerge from these discussions including such problems as leadership, identity fears, etc.

Finally the panel prepares a list of proposals or a summary in proposition form of all that has taken place, making certain that it covers the main issues and all the view-points presented.

12.9.2.4. The Search For Options

The parties are now assisted to ascertain what changes in structures, institutions and policies are required to implement the agreed propositions. During this phase the parties are encouraged to break away from the traditional power struggles and majority controls which tend to block the process. The panel therefore helps the parties to be open to change and search for creative options. The options are deduced from the agreed statements of values. These options are translated into policies, institutions and structures.

12.9.2.5. Re-Entry And Follow-Up

Parties are helped to firm up their agreements and make follow-up arrangements such as future meetings that will take place between them.

12.9.3. Summary Of The Facilitation Process

One of the positive values of this approach to the facilitation of conflict is its endeavour to penetrate deeply into the roots of a dispute. Its emphasis on deep-rooted conflict has been considered by a number of facilitators to be a unique contribution of this school.

A second important contribution is the way it attempts to incorporate the concerns of all parties in conflict in order to meet the basic needs of the parties. The recognition that people will suffer the most severe discomfort in order to obtain the satisfaction of their basic needs is worth considering.

This approach to facilitation, however, appears to need highly skilled practitioners who understand the theory behind the procedures. There has been some criticism that it is high in its theoretical assumptions but low in its 'user friendliness' when it comes to putting it into practice. Moreover the fact that in practice the facilitation of conflict is over controlled by the facilitator further lends itself to the criticism that it needs 'experts' to adopt its strategies. While this is not a criticism if the process is to be employed by professionals it does become a problem for facilitators who intend serving the community and the Church as laypersons in the field of conflict resolution.

PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION: ROGER FISHER AND WILLIAM URY

The principled negotiation method of *conflict resolution* developed at the Harvard Negotiation Project in Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America is aimed at helping parties to make decisions on issues based on the merits of the situation rather than through a bargaining process. Two of the founders of this approach to conflict resolution, Roger Fisher (Williston Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and Director of the Harvard Negotiation Project) and William Ury, believe that their approach can be widely used in many different contexts ranging from international politics and business disputes to family quarrels.

13.1. RULES OF THUMB

Four basic elements define Fisher and Ury's strategy for negotiation. These concepts are seen to be rules of thumb which are prescriptive and functional. They set out the standards which need to be applied for successful negotiation of conflict. As such they form the building blocks of the principled negotiation approach to conflict resolution:¹

- Separate the people from the problem.
- Focus on interests, not positions.
- Generate a variety of possibilities or options before deciding what to do.
- Insist that the result be based on some objective standard (Fisher & Ury 1981: 11).

13.1.1. Separate The People From The Problem

The first element suggests that conflicts are caused by ineffective communications due to the different perceptions of the problem held by the parties. Fisher and Ury

¹ These basic rules of thumb were explained to me in an interview with Professor Roger Fisher at the Harvard Negotiation Project in Boston on 20 October 1990. See also an undated paper by Bruce M. Patton, Associate Director of the Harvard Negotiation Project, Reassessing Getting to Yes and Principled Negotiation.

believe that parties therefore often hold on to positions based on their own perceptions of the problem. This situation is compounded when these positions become emotionally identified with their egos. The strategy then is to disentangle the 'people problem' from the conflict problem. When this is done the participants in the conflict 'should come to see themselves as working side by side, attacking the problem, not each other.' (Fisher 1981: 11).

The difficulty with this rule of thumb is that it obscures the interrelationship between people, issues and process. Perceptions of the problem and misperceptions of persons involved should be clarified. But if the interrelationship between the people involved and the substance of the conflict is separated the negotiation is likely to be experienced as an emotionally cold affair. Indeed, as Patton discovered, the rule to separate the people from the substance has been one of the reasons for the criticism of principled negotiation as 'emotionless, over intellectualised rationality.' (Patton 1983: 22).

In a later book Fisher and Brown have attempted to correct this impression. They do so by urging the separation of the two concerns: the process (the way the conflict is handled) and the substance (the problem and the goals/results). The one affects the other: how a conflict is handled will affect the results.

The people element or the relationship between the parties is directly linked to the process. So according to Fisher and Brown, in order to achieve good results in a relationship,

...we need to focus on the results themselves and on the kind of process that will yield those results. We need to ask ourselves what a well-managed relationship looks like and how we can develop one. In a relationship, each of us is a joint manager of the process, a manager with significant if limited ability to shape the relationship and to determine how it functions. Like the production manager, we need to think

about how we deal with problems as well as the problems themselves (Fisher Ury 1981: 11).

In terms of this rule of thumb the difference between the two books **Getting to YES** and **Getting Together** is that in the former the people are separated from the problem whereas in the latter the relationship between the people involved is handled in the process though still separated from the problem. This is certainly a positive development in conflict resolution theory, however the question is whether the process itself improves the relationship of the parties. Fisher and Scott suggest some guidelines such as 'Don't make a relationship contingent on agreement' and 'Don't try to buy a better relationship.' (Fisher and Brown 1988: 19-23) The problem is that these suggestions are useful tips for negotiation, but they are not built into the process. Other techniques which are extremely important for relationship building and effective communication skills dealt with by Fisher and Scott include, active listening, sending clear messages, consulting with the other parties before deciding on an action. The process advocated by the Harvard Negotiation Project will be examined more fully below.

13. 1.2. Focus On Interests, Not On Positions

The second basic element focuses on underlying interests. Fisher and Ury stress the distinction between positions and interests. A stated position is a person's or group's declared point of departure or 'bottom-line' which they will use as a negotiating mechanism in order to achieve their goals in a conflict. This bargaining position often obscures an underlying interest of the party. Compromising between the positions of the parties is not likely to satisfy the human needs of the parties that led them initially to take up those positions.

Positional bargaining also has the disadvantage of aggravating the relationship between the parties. This is particularly so if a position is perceived to be an extreme one because the other party to the conflict believing it to be unreasonable, assumes

that there is little regard for the relationship. This approach therefore puts the relationship and the substance into conflict with one another.

The distinction between positions and interests is somewhat blurred in **Getting to YES**. Apparently interests are 'needs, desires, concerns, and fears.' (Fisher and Ury 1981: 42) Interests are concerns that motivate people. Positions on the other hand are statements of what a party has decided upon as its solution to a problem. Interests therefore are what causes people to decide on a position.

If parties' interests lie behind their positions then an objective of negotiation would be to reconcile interests rather than positions. Fisher and Ury make a further point when they state that we should not assume that parties' interests are necessarily opposed to one another. Their interests may in fact be compatible. If this should become clear to the parties then the agreement will be reasonably durable.

13.1.3. Generate A Variety Of Options

The third element highlights the difficulty of seeking solutions while under pressure. In a situation where one is locked in dispute with another party it is difficult to be creative and find the one solution that will resolve the conflict. To overcome this problem it is suggested by Fisher and Ury that parties brainstorm a number of options that will be mutually advantageous to the parties involved in the conflict.

However, simply brainstorming options is not sufficient. Procedure for generating options include four steps that form a circle chart. This circle chart will be discussed below as it sets out the Fisher-Ury model for problem solving.

13.1.4. Insist That The Result Be Based On Some Objective Standard

In the fourth basic element Fisher and Ury recognise the problem of a dispute becoming deadlocked over a clash of interests. A typical response to this situation is for parties to fall back on positional bargaining: talking about what they are willing and unwilling to accept. The strategy in this case is to agree on some fair

independent or objective criteria upon which to determine the outcome of the negotiation. Such an agreement forces the parties to look for a fair deal for all rather than one that will be of advantage to their respective goals irrespective of what it means to the other party.

An example of an objective criterion in a dispute proposed by Fisher and Ury is one in which a building contractor accepts the client's wish for steel girders in the roof but then demands that the house owner agrees to shallow foundations. In order to resolve this dispute the client may call for objective safety standards. In other words he/she may ask 'What are the general standard specifications for these soil conditions?' The disputing parties may then come to some agreement based on these objective criteria (Fisher and Ury 1981: 85)

Fisher and Ury believe that the principled negotiation approach has the advantage of protecting a relationship rather than have it be threatened by constant bargaining over positions. Nevertheless, it is recognised by them that a party might begin by announcing that their position is an issue of principle and refuse to consider the other side's case. This is not what Fisher and Ury mean by principled negotiation. Agreement based on objective criteria does not mean insisting that it be based solely on the criterion advanced by one party only. What one party believes to be fair may not be fair to the other. For this reason parties need to insist on an objective standard or principle as a basis for negotiation.

However, while we are strongly advised to insist on using objective criteria in shaping and choosing a negotiated settlement, **Getting to YES** also says: 'Shifting discussion in a negotiation ... to the question of how the matter ought to be decided does not end the argument, nor does it guarantee a favourable result. Principled negotiation thus 'provides a strategy you can vigorously pursue without the high costs of positional bargaining' (Fisher and Ury 1981: 96). This appears to imply that a party's goal, or an outcome favourable to him/her/them is unchanged, and that

principled negotiation is merely a more expedient way of pursuing it. But there seems to be a problem here, since using this more expedient method requires judging possible outcomes not by how favourable they are for one's side, but how fair they seem judged by objective (non-partisan) criteria.

The dilemma is that even if we are committed to a 'fair' outcome, there are differing views of fairness. If we have our view based on objective standards, and they have theirs, how are we closer to agreement? On which objective standard are we to settle? What we seem to have here is the situation where positional bargaining masquerades as principled negotiation!

Patton attempts to deal with this problem as follows:

Faced with conflicting, at least partially legitimate standards, the fundamental question is whether we recommend that a negotiator disregard any advantages of skill or circumstance to push for an outcome seen from the broadest societal perspective as the fairest within the range of fairness. Such an approach, freely sacrificing one's own interests to an ultimate principle, might be called 'saintly negotiation.' (Patton 1983: 15)

However, Patton finds that the overwhelming consensus of students and colleagues is that 'saintly negotiation' should not be the recommendation of the Harvard Negotiation Project. This, they contend, is more 'fairness' than most people want or are capable of giving. Furthermore it is believed that individuals can choose to be saints, but without a pragmatic, personal justification for this rule it would be inconsistent and ineffective to propose it as a general standard (Patton 1983: 16).

It appears then that a general standard commonly advanced is the Hobbesian antithesis to the saintly approach: when it comes right down to it, one should attempt whatever one can get away with. Certainly some would suggest that at a

fundamental level of negotiation this principle applies. To make matters more difficult no individual can have the God-like knowledge and perspective to know in the totality of the circumstances what is fair or unfair between two negotiators in a society. And what societal standard of fairness should apply? Utilitarian? Rawlsian? Kantian? Without such knowledge, trying to play God is inappropriate and possibly destructive.

While these rationalisations may seem to be somewhat empty, and perhaps self-serving, they hint at underlying considerations that are important in a conflict. For instance some of the questions that may emerge from considerations of fairness are: What is the societal context of the negotiation? Is one of the negotiators significantly richer or poorer than the other? Is there life at stake? How important is this negotiation to each? Are there significant external forces involved? Is there a large imbalance in natural ability between the negotiators? Is either incompetent? What alternatives do they have?

13.2. BUILDING A PROTECTION PLAN

What if a failure in negotiation is becoming apparent, or if the other party is in a better position? What do interests, options or standards help if the other party is in a far more powerful position? Fisher and Ury believe that any method of negotiation needs *first*, to build in some protection plan against losing all advantage, and *second*, to make the most of the assets one has so that any agreement reached will satisfy one's interests as well as possible (Fisher and Ury 1981: 101).

13.2.1. Creating A Bottom Line

The concern of most negotiators is what happens if agreements do not seem to be attainable. In this case a major danger might be that one becomes too accommodating and thereby forfeits too much ground to the other side.

Parties overcome this fear by using a bottom-line approach. The bottom-line determines just how far a negotiator is prepared to go. This approach provides protection from overbearing pressure to meet the demands of the other party.

Fisher and Ury argue that this protection plan is too costly. It is, for example, too rigid and inhibits imagination. By definition a bottom-line is a position that will not change. Maintaining a bottom-line approach, therefore, is unlikely to produce agreements that will satisfy all parties in a way that will reconcile them.

13.2.2. Identify Your Batna

The alternative to relying on a bottom-line, according to Fisher and Ury in **Getting to YES**, is to identify one's own or group's *Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement* (BATNA). (Fisher and Ury 1981: 104) Identifying one's BATNA provides security which protects one from accepting terms which might be too unfavourable and at the same time from rejecting those agreements which would be in one's interests to accept. In a more recent book Ury explains the advantage of a BATNA by suggesting that 'It is your best way of satisfying your interests *without* the other's agreement.' (Fisher and Ury 1981: 20)

While developing a party's BATNA may provide protection it appears to be another way of holding to a bottom-line. Whereas bottom-line thinking tends to be negotiating from a position, the BATNA approach seems to be a way of negotiating with an eye constantly on one's best alternative. For example Ury suggests that when one knows one's interests and has considered one's BATNA, then the question might be whether to negotiate at all! (Ury 1991: 21).

Furthermore it is suggested that if a party is able to develop a strong BATNA it will provide a basis of power in negotiation. So if a party negotiates with another party that has a weak BATNA it places the former in a stronger, or more powerful, position. In other words it appears from Fisher and Ury's argument that the basis of

power of the parties is relative to their respective BATNAs. So the advice given to negotiators is to improve their BATNA before going into negotiation.

It seems, however, that by relying on BATNA to protect a party either from unscrupulous negotiators as well as one's own insecurity, it will be difficult to avoid using the BATNA as a position which one either keeps in the back pocket or even presents to the other party.

13.3. THE PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Fisher and Ury's conflict resolution process is circular as described in the diagram below. It may be seen to be a medical model beginning with an exploration of the symptoms of the conflict. Facilitators ask questions that will draw out the significant problems, specifically attempting to identify the point where the relationship deteriorated or failed.

During this phase facilitators help the parties to develop their preferred scenario. They identify their best possible solution. Though not stated in the diagram, facilitators help the parties to probe their best alternative to a negotiated agreement.

In the second phase the parties are helped to diagnose their situation. This phase is the analytical stage of the process. Parties try to understand their problem. They attempt to discover why their relationship deteriorated to the extent that it has.

The third phase is prescriptive. At this point the parties are encouraged to probe possible solutions. A number of options are generated so that different strategies may be viewed in perspective and generally possible ways of handling the situation are identified.

The fourth phase is the action part of the process. The parties decide on what must be done so that the conflict may be successfully dealt with. Each step is clearly identified and agreements are reached.

The following chart presents the process in diagrammatic form:

THE HARVARD NEGOTIATION PROJECT²

Diagram describing the negotiation process.

<p>II. DIAGNOSIS</p> <p>The situation is diagnosed in general terms. Conflict parties try to understand the problem. If something has gone wrong with the relationship the parties try to discover what it is.</p>	<p>III. PRESCRIPTION</p> <p>What are the possible strategies? What are some theoretical cures? Generate broad ideas about what might be done?</p>
<p>I. SYMPTOMS</p> <p>What is wrong? What are the current symptoms? What is the preferred situation?</p>	<p>IV. ACTIONS</p> <p>What might be done? What specific steps might be taken to deal with the problem?</p>

² This diagram was presented to me in a discussion with Dr. Roger Fisher in a personal interview I had with him at the Harvard Negotiation Project in Cambridge, Boston in October 1990. See also the Circle Chart in Fisher R and Ury William, *Getting to Yes*, (London, Arrow Books Limited, 1981), p. 70.

13.4. DIAGNOSTIC CHECKLIST

A checklist which assists facilitators and parties in discerning whether they are covering all the aspects to arrive at the best possible solution to the conflict is suggested as follows:

As a tool which can be used in Step 11 Fisher makes use of a checklist to analyse whether strategies would produce a durable outcome. The list³ is as follows:

13.4.1. Alternatives

What is our BATNA? Can we improve it?

What's theirs ? Can we worsen it legitimately?

13.4.2. Interests

What are our interests? What are their interests? What is their currently perceived choice?

Are we giving them a problem or an answer?

13.4.3. Options

Can we invent more possible agreements?

Are our agreements good for all parties? Can we/need we change their choice?

Can we separate inventing from deciding?

13.4.4. Legitimacy

Are we using objective criteria?

Criteria that will appeal to *them*?

To third the parties involved?

³ This list was given to me during the interview with Roger Fisher at the Harvard Negotiation Project in Boston in October 1991. It is printed on a card so that it may be carried in one's pocket.

13.4.5. Communication

Are we listening? Open to persuasion?

(Or not?) Do they know it?

13.4.6. Relationship

Can we improve the interaction?

Can we be more concerned or softer on the people?

Can we be more rigorous or harder on the problem?

Should we consult before deciding?

13.4.7. Commitments

What realistic commitments come next?

Are they credible? and 'Yesable'?

Are they compliance-prone?

13.5. SUMMARY

The principled negotiation approach of the Harvard Negotiation Project provides a defined practice for dispute resolution which has successfully served a number of organisations. The programme also succeeds in its goal to promote collaboration and communication between practitioners and scholars.

This approach has been used for the training of facilitators in political forums in South Africa, particularly prior to the elections. Its emphasis on BATNA, the best alternative to a negotiated agreement, is one of the appealing aspects to the process. Those involved in conflict resolution theories feel that the BATNA principle makes the process a realistic one and also a safe one. However, it is also this protective principle that invites criticism from others as it tends to encourage bottom line demands.

Another aspect of the process that is attractive to many is the fact that it seeks for solutions that are principled or fair. This has been particularly helpful in South Africa where the basic issue is the question of justice. This approach therefore encourages parties to look for the best possible but worthwhile option in a dispute. It is this principle that makes the approach attractive to the Church. In all its dealings in conflict the Church must keep uppermost in mind the question of justice. It is not simply a peaceful settlement that is required, but a just peace!

The three major problems that the critics raise in terms of this approach are first that it tends towards the bargaining process - the very thing it wants to avoid, and second that its process tends not to be as flexible as one might wish. This latter criticism refers to circular chart described in the diagram above which does not seem allow much leeway for individual spontaneity in terms of process. The third problem is that it is a diagnostic model. In counselling parlance it would be considered over directive. This is made more apparent when the approach seems to lack a 'built-in' relationship building skill or step.

THE CONFLICT PARTNERSHIP APPROACH:

DUDLEY WEEKS

The conflict partnership approach to conflict resolution evolved through the work of Dr. Dudley Weeks. The foundations of this approach are based on principles of human behaviour, inter-personal and group communication, and on experiential research and application. Weeks is not particularly given to construct theories of conflict resolution for academic purposes. Rather he wishes to make available knowledge and skills in dealing with conflict, so that human relationships and personal development are enhanced. This is not to say that Weeks' approach is in any way superficial or lacking in intellectual integrity. On the contrary, as a political scientist Dr. Weeks' concepts and practical competence are supported by wide experience as a mediator in many parts of the world, as well as creative insight and extensive theoretical knowledge gained from research in the field.

The basis for his approach to conflict resolution was formed early in his life. Having grown up in conflict prone American South Weeks himself admits that he experienced racism, sexism and ageism among many other community and business conflicts. Further influences were his experiences as a youth worker in the civil rights and peace movements, a teacher, a paramedic, and a human rights and social change activist in Asia Weeks 1992: X-XI).

Having become disillusioned with the traditional approaches to negotiation and mediation Weeks formulated the conflict partnership process. Weeks has used this process to facilitate institutional and international conflicts in his own country and other places such as South Africa, the Soviet Union, Northern Ireland, Central America, Asia the Middle East and more recently in the Bosnia conflict.

Dudley Weeks' commitment to peace and reconstruction has recently seen the development of Future Links South Africa. This organisation has been inaugurated by young people in South Africa towards improving conflict partnership skills particularly among young people. The primary aim being to build positive relationships among people throughout the country for the future. The organisation has links with similar organisations in several parts of the world.

14.1. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

There are five foundational principles in the conflict partnership concept espoused by Weeks. The first is the principle that the usual adversarial relationship in a conflict situation can be transformed into one in which the parties are more willing to work together and confront their problems. Weeks wants to stress that conflicting parties become partners dealing with a conflict in which they both have a share and which they may resolve together.

The second basic principle states that a conflict need not determine the whole of the conflicting parties' relationship. In other words their relationship is larger than the particular conflict that they are experiencing. As Weeks explains it:

Conflicts usually punctuate a relationship rather than define the entire relationship. However, people often lose sight of the needs, goals, and other positive aspects of the overall relationship when in a conflict. A single conflict, in effect, is allowed to *become* the relationship (Weeks 1992: 64).

Weeks rightly asserts in the third basic principle that conflict resolution should improve the relationship between conflicting parties. This notion is critical of settlements to conflicts which offer short term solutions. Outcomes which do not hold promise of long term settlements are more likely to damage future relationships.

A test of an effective process is whether all parties feel that they have received something of benefit from their interaction. This attitude forms the fourth core principle which emphasises the understanding that although the parties may not receive the benefit they originally expected 'they must have some need, value, or feeling satisfied if they are to support whatever resolution is eventually agreed upon.' (Weeks 1992: 65)

Finally relationship building and conflict resolution are linked. The process of conflict resolution itself should provide life skills that empower parties to sustain a relationship. The significance of this principle is that parties are empowered to continue building relationships and avoid destructive conflicts in the future.

This last principle underlines the strength of the conflict partnership approach. It places a great deal of stress on the importance of relationship building in conflict resolution. At the same time, however, this accent on relationship building begs a question that needs to be addressed: Does Weeks overemphasise the relationship to the detriment of the goals of the conflict partners? In other words is there not a point where a party will risk relationship for the sake of achieving a worthwhile goal?

Weeks has responded to this concern by stating,

To be sure, there are some particular conflicts that involve needs so crucial to one party's life that the relationship cannot be healthy unless those needs of that particular conflict are met. Examples of such conflicts are those involving injustice, destruction to the positive development of one party, and structural /systematic factors that maintain exploitation. In those cases, the improvement of the relationship depends upon the needs of the disadvantaged party being met. This is where conflict resolution and social change become inseparable. But far too often a particular conflict is dealt with in a way that gives too little attention to how the desires or goals of that particular conflict fit into the needs of the overall relationship. Often, getting what one wants in a particular conflict can actually harm the overall relationship.⁴

A comparison of Weeks and Fisher and Burton in this regard is noteworthy. Fisher, in his first book *Getting to Yes*, recommends that conflicting parties work on building their relationship but many critics felt that he tended in his negotiation strategy to concentrate primarily on the interests of the parties (Fisher and Ury 1981.)⁵

John Burton's stress on human needs such as security, identity and recognition referred to earlier in this section is also pertinent to this discussion. For instance Ron Kraybill, supporting Burton, says:

An understanding of deep-rooted conflict implies strategies for dealing with adversaries that differ from conventional wisdom. One implication: Where basic human needs are at stake, it is impossible to permanently suppress an opponent, regardless of military or political power. In the words of John Burton, 'basic human needs' will be pursued, regardless of consequences (Kraybill 1991).

Burton's stress on basic human needs appears to take pre-eminence over the building of relationships. However, following Burton's process he would argue that dealing with human needs will lead to more fulfilling and lasting human relationships.

Weeks' response to Burton is that the individual's or group's needs and goals are taken seriously in the conflict partnership approach and effort is given to helping parties achieve some of their needs and goals though he does not specify them in the way that Burton does (Weeks 1992: 36-41). But Weeks adds what he feels is an essential element: in the concept of shared needs which he calls 'the building blocks of effective conflict resolution.' An investigation into Weeks' conflict partnership

⁴ Statement made to me in an interview with Dr. Dudley Weeks in Grahamstown, South Africa on 12 February 1988.

⁵ Roger Fisher subsequently co-authored a sequel to 'Getting to Yes' in which he deals more specifically with relationship building in negotiation, see Fisher and Brown 1988.

process will provide some validation or otherwise of his confidence in relationship building as a significant means towards helping parties achieve some of their goals.

14.2. SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

Weeks also identifies seven supporting principles which he calls 'ingredients of conflict.' (Weeks 1992: 33) They are: diversity and differences, needs, perceptions, power, values and principles, feelings and emotions, and internal conflict. These are elements of conflicts which inevitably surface and if dealt with provide a clearer understanding of the conflict.

14.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

The conflict partnership approach places considerable responsibility upon the conflict resolution process. This means that an effective process will contribute to the development of a healthy relationship between parties while a poorly co-ordinated process or the lack thereof, on the other hand, will tend to allow the relationship to degenerate. Weeks therefore underscores the need for process as against what he calls thinking in terms of 'event', or in other words, attempting 'quick-fix' methods of conflict resolution.

When the above principles are successfully applied in practice the parties become more confident that the conflict can be confronted. They also begin to see that they need each other to solve their problems.

14.4. EIGHT ESSENTIAL SKILLS

In his earlier work (Weeks 1984) Weeks described twenty-four skills involved in the resolution of conflict. His most recent book combines them into eight essential skills. These skills form the basis for a process that transforms the way conflict is perceived and dealt with. The skills help parties to deal with their conflict in a new way by focusing such vital issues in their relationship as individual and shared needs,

perceptions, goals, potentially shared power, and specific action steps of the conflict partners.

Weeks describes his process as a pathway through which conflict partners are empowered to work through their differences and use them constructively while at the same time improving their relationship. The steps in the process are represented by skills that conflict parties may use to resolve their own conflicts and that facilitators employ to assist parties resolve their conflicts and at the same time learn new skills to cope with conflict in the future.

Although Weeks feels strongly about ensuring that conflict resolution is a process he does not believe that the skills should follow one another in a strict order of priority. They are not an agenda for a meeting between the parties. Although there might be a natural flow of one to the next Weeks prefers facilitators to be flexible in the process.

Since the process of the conflict partnership relies on the skills it is necessary present them:

14.4.1. Creating An Effective Atmosphere

The first skill focuses on the atmosphere in which the conflict resolution process takes place. This task is of critical importance to the conflict partnership approach as it largely determines how the parties/individuals will view the conflict as well as their relationship with each other. The atmosphere might be tense when parties first meet so that it may not be conducive to creative decision making. The skill then is to create an atmosphere in which the parties can agree and disagree in a manner that will promote positive interactions.

Weeks suggests careful planning of the first meeting. How the conflict parties meet, when and where they meet, and the opening statements are some of the important decisions a facilitator, or negotiating parties need to make in order to create an

atmosphere in which a constructive process might begin (Weeks 1984: 15; Weeks 1992: 71).

The key element in creating an effective atmosphere is to focus on establishing a process of 'we dealing with this conflict together,' so that it becomes a case of 'we versus the conflict' rather than 'I versus you' which tends to increase the mood of a battlefield.

14.4.2. Clarifying Perceptions Of The Parties

The second skill focuses on perceptions of the parties. Weeks believes that perceptions, whether they are correct or not are important as they exert enormous influence over the attitudes and behaviour of the parties. Conflict partners are encouraged to clarify their perceptions of the conflict and not assume that they know what the conflict is about, or that they see the conflict in the same way.

In some cases, a conflict may be perceived to be between two individuals whereas in fact at least one of the individuals concerned has a conflict within him/herself and is projecting it upon the other. The internal conflict needs to be clarified in order to confront the issue more openly and creatively. Clarification of the conflict may also involve such questions as: *Is the conflict over values or preferences? Is the conflict really over needs or desires? and Is the conflict over goals or methods?*

Further clarification of the conflict involves the investigation of the conflict itself. This includes exploring the components of the conflict, sorting them and deciding which to deal with first. This exercise will help isolate what Weeks calls the *ghost* problem(s) from the actual conflict. Ghost conflicts are minor problems which are elevated to the level of serious conflicts.

The task of clarifying perceptions extends to questions of self-awareness and perceptions of the other parties. Questions of self or own party refer to issues such as, *how am I/are we perceiving the conflict? What are my/our immediate needs?*

What does the relationship need if it is to be improved? If I/we do not achieve what I/we are needing how will I/we be damaged? An examination of one's approach to dealing with the conflict is also pertinent. This involves reflections on the threats, expectations or fears that might be causing negative behaviour patterns in the attempt to resolve the conflict? Weeks sees that some of these attitudes can cause parties to lock themselves into unnecessary roles. The most obvious of these are the authority roles. Using role power becomes a substitute for an effective partnership approach.

Finally clarifying perceptions of the other party is crucial. As the conflict partnership approach is a shared process it is advocated that parties clarify their perceptions of one another. Weeks believes that misperceptions of one another can cause an escalation in the conflict. Clearing up of misperceptions can lead to deeper understanding of the other and a more positive attitude towards the other party. For instance the stereotyping of the other party based on seeing only their negative aspects and ignoring their positive possibilities both creates damaging conflicts and greatly obstructs resolving conflicts (Weeks 1992: 89).

14.4.3. Focusing On Individual And Shared Needs

The third skill focuses on individual and shared needs. This is a critical skill as

...needs form one of the essential foundations of relationships. Unless both the needs of the parties in the relationship and the needs of the relationship itself are dealt with effectively, the relationship cannot realise its full potential (Weeks 1992: 127).

Weeks maintains that the emphasis on needs is a move away from the traditional bargaining approach. In the bargaining approach each group presents a set of demands which they feel must be met in order to achieve resolution of the conflict. This often results in increased defensiveness and often in an impasse. In this kind of situation Weeks suggests that the groups focus on what they most need and also

what the workplace (assuming a labour dispute) relationship needs in order to avoid recurring disagreements. Weeks' contention is that it is often the case that demands presented at the negotiating table are the group's effort to secure advantage over the other party rather than to build an effective and sustainable resolution. If individual and shared needs, rather than a set of demands, are emphasised the process is far less threatening and has the opportunity to produce more effective results.

Shared needs of the conflict partners are especially critical. For Weeks shared needs are the basis upon which a relationship can be held together and from which an effective conflict resolution can result. This is persuasive argument as these are needs which are common to all conflicting parties. Meeting these shared needs first enables the parties to build trust, to deal more effectively with individual needs, and to improve their overall relationship for the future while resolving particular conflicts.

14.4.4. Building Shared Positive Power

Weeks maintains that every relationship involves power and that when used positively it enhances the quality of relationships and gives the groups the ability to act more effectively towards a resolution of the conflict. Weeks explores three sets of power relationships: self power, the partner's power, and shared power. Conflict partnership, he asserts uses this power positively.

Power is often perceived to be a negative force and attempts are made to use it in order to gain some advantage. It has the characteristics of attempting to disempower the other party and focuses on a 'power over rather than a power with relationship,' (Weeks 1992: 148). A major problem with this use of power is its tendency to encourage the other parties in the conflict to increase their negative power and so creates enormous tension.

Positive power on the other hand seeks to promote the constructive capabilities of all parties involved in a conflict (Weeks 1992: 156). This will include efforts to

discover the felt needs of the other party/ies and at the same time being in charge of one's own behaviour rather than allowing the other party to determine one's action.

When power is used positively in relation to the other party it involves 'reaching for the partner's positive potential and power.' (Weeks 1992: 156) This means affirming the positive points in the partner's contributions and so enlists further potential and constructive suggestions. It also encourages the principle that the contribution of the other party is needed in order to find a solution to the problem.

14.4.5. Look To The Future Learn From The Past

The fifth skill keeps negotiations on the present and future but learns from the past. One of the problems of many attempts at conflict resolution is the tendency to dwell on the past. Weeks believes that this inclination creates a negative use of the past and becomes one of the most disempowering patterns in a conflict. Past failures or experiences of the other party hinder or even block the development of positive and creative processes towards conflict resolution.

The conflict partnership approach therefore uses improved relationship patterns to focus first on the needs of the present and the future and then tries to understand what part past events played to create the conflict. This way the past is used as a tool which enables the conflict partners to learn from their previous mistakes and to handle the present-future more enterprisingly.

Weeks also focuses on forgiveness and apology in a new way as elements of positive power and a positive use of the past. He comments that

Forgiveness and apology are not signs of weakness or condoning past behaviour. Rather, they are saying that we are more than just the negative behaviour you or I have done. We have the capability not to repeat that negative behaviour. Thus forgiveness and apology are liberating for both parties. We may never be able to forgive the negative act, but we can forgive the person or groups because they are more than just that negative act.⁶

⁶ Statement made during a conversation with T.F. Cunningham on 30 June 1993 in Grahamstown.

14.4.6. Generating Options

Generating options becomes the sixth skill in the process and makes use of the more positive understanding the parties have of one another through using the other skills (Weeks 1984: 82; Weeks 1992: 183). Each party is encouraged to generate alternative options individually before working on future possibilities together. Parties come together with specific options to meet some of the shared needs already expressed, and steps toward dealing with the conflict and improving the relationship. But it is critical that options be generated **together** as well, thus activating a 'power-with' relationship.

14.4.7. Developing 'Doables'

As options are generated, some of them will become the substance of the next skill, 'Developing Doables' (Weeks 1984: 56; Weeks 1992: 203). The word 'doable' is Weeks' way of expressing an action that can be performed, an agreement that is easier to reach. Some of the key options are identified to see which have the potential of becoming a 'doable'.

Weeks explains the characteristics of a 'doable' as follows:

A 'doable' is an action that embodies the following:

1. It stands a good chance of being accomplished.
2. It does not favour one party at the expense of other parties.
3. It usually requires the participation of all parties involved in the conflict in order to be implemented successfully.
4. It meets one or more shared needs.
5. It meets one or more individual needs that are not incompatible with another party's individual needs.
6. It uses the positive power of the conflict partners, ideally involving shared positive power, in which the partners need each other to make the process work.
7. It helps build trust, momentum, and confidence in working together.

8. It adds another stepping-stone along the pathway to improving the overall relationship and reaching mutual-benefit outcomes of particular conflicts within the relationship (Weeks 1992: 206).

It is important to emphasise that Weeks sees 'doables' as actions that are not usually the focus of major issues of the conflict. Agreeing on 'doables' builds a greater confidence and trust that makes agreement on major issues more possible.

14.4.8. Develop Mutual-Benefit Agreements

Weeks is careful to explain that a 'doable' must not be seen to be a 'quick-fix' method of solving the conflict. Rather it is a stepping stone toward improving the relationship and finding creative ways toward some resolution. A number of successive 'doables' might be needed before an effective outcome is accomplished. When this point has been reached the parties are encouraged to develop mutual-benefit agreements which are built on the 'doables' and are capable of resolving the conflict and firming up the improved relationship. This is the eighth skill in the conflict partnership process (Weeks 1984: 99; Weeks 1992: 223).

Mutual-benefit agreements need to be built on clearly understood perceptions of the conflict, persons or groups involved, and the specific steps each of the partners has agreed to take. The agreements are also based on individual and shared needs and the positive power of all persons/groups involved.

14.5. SUMMARY

Assessing the value of Dudley Weeks' approach it is clear that it has certain significant benefits for would be conflict resolution facilitators and negotiators. First, persons in conflict learn to empower themselves with skills for the future. As facilitators use the skills in a conflict situation the conflict parties are also discovering their resourcefulness in dealing with their problem. It becomes therefore

a pro-active process helping individuals and groups to improve their communication skills before the emergence of further destructive conflicts.

Another benefit is the flexibility of the process. The process is not a model that is applied as a programme for any given situation. As persons learn the skills they are used in conflict resolution according to the needs, skills, and personality of the facilitator(s).

Thirdly, as is claimed by the approaches of Burton, Fisher, and others, Weeks has indicated that conflict partnership skills are appropriate for community conflicts involving organisations, families and individuals as well as international conflicts. However, Weeks approach is possibly more accessible to a wider spread of groups and organisations, and in particular the Church, provided they are able to learn the skills. This approach is suited to the Church as its emphasis on relationship building can be supported theologically.

PART FOUR
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS A THEOLOGICAL
OPTION AND A MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS A THEOLOGICAL OPTION

The purpose of this final section is to examine the theological dimension of conflict resolution. This enquiry raises the question: how can conflict resolution be understood as a role of the Church in social and political conflict? The issue is not the tendency toward conflict inherent in any institution including the Church.¹ This view was underscored by the Massachusetts Council of Churches when they delved in divisions amongst the churches of the ecumenical community. In their report they concluded: 'the question we must face is not whether we will disagree from time to time, but how we can do so with reconciling aims' (Mid-stream 1996: 216). We do not condone the division in the Church or world. It is simply a fact that as T F Torrance expounded it

the Church is sent by Christ into a world that is rent by disharmony and dissension, torn and disrupted by sin, for it belongs to the nature of sin to divide, destroy unity, to isolate people, to disrupt fellowship, to separate man from God and man from man - that is, the very world which we know today (Torrance 1975: 22).

So the challenge is what the fact of being the Church brings to the resolution of conflict and how the Church can deal with conflict both within its structures and in the wider community. A problem emerging from these questions is the fact that conflict resolution is a term used more often by sociologists, political analysts and management consultants than by theologians. In fact when members of the Massachusetts Council of Churches set up a working group to explore guidelines for a process for dealing constructively with difficult issues in ecumenical relations in 1996 they expressed their indebtedness to 'the ongoing progress of the social sciences in the theory of conflict resolution and encourage our churches to make use of applicable material' (Mid-stream 1996: 219). One of the reasons for the absence of specific references to conflict resolution in theological debate is that the term

¹ It has been argued in chapter one of this dissertation that conflict is an inescapable experience of humankind.

'conflict resolution' does not have a theological history as a concept. Its theological meaning and practice is therefore unclear.

In the socio-ecclesial overview of the Church's role in some of the major conflicts over the past four decades in part two above it became apparent that there were times when Church leaders struggled to make appropriate responses in conflict situations. This is of course to be expected as political and ecclesial conflicts are seldom smooth passages. Reflection on the role of the Church in conflict and theoretical assumptions of conflict resolution will, we hope, elucidate possibilities for a theological and practical understanding of conflict resolution in the Church.

A significant aspect of this thesis in responding to the problem of developing a theological understanding of conflict resolution for the Church is the view of conflict resolution as a function or ministry of the Church that falls within the ambit of the Church's reconciling work. However, it must be noted here that reconciliation also has wider meanings. For example it has different meanings in a non-theological setting such as the socio-political context than within the experience of the Church. The political understanding of reconciliation and its relationship with the theological view will be more fully examined in chapter sixteen below. At this point it is important to keep in mind that reconciliation when considered theologically is directly concerned with the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through whom God is reconciling the world to Godself (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Ephesians:2:11-18). The Church therefore has the responsibility to exercise a reconciling ministry that includes conflict resolution through its pastoral ministry, its structures, its liturgy and its prophetic mission in the world.

In the endeavour to develop an understanding of conflict resolution as an action of the Church the dialogue between theology and practice needs to be clarified. Without the development of a theology of conflict resolution it will remain a technique used in the Church and borrowed uncritically from management or

political science. Thomas W Ogeltree confirms this dialogic approach maintaining that 'when we allow these two interests to undergo separate development, we impoverish and distort them both' (Browning 1983: 83). Furthermore in a helpful book on practical theology which includes models of the dialogue between theology and praxis (practice), *A Primer in Practical Theology*, L M Heyns and H J C Pieterse assert that 'the two are inseparably linked, like the two sides of a coin. The relationship between theory and praxis, being one of bipolar tension, is vital and dynamic, characterised by constant interaction' (Heyns and Pieterse 1990: 33).

For this reason a theology of conflict resolution based on a theology of reconciliation will enrich the practice of negotiation and mediation by placing it within the spectrum of God's actions in the world. At the same time theology needs to be informed by the practice, or the reflection on the practice of conflict resolution. Insights gained from this exercise may not necessarily change or transform theological presuppositions but will certainly deepen and enrich theological insights. The task therefore is to create an ongoing dialogue between the theology and practice of conflict resolution.

In one sense the ministry of conflict resolution is a specialised one in which Christians learn the skills of negotiation and mediation and offer them to resolve social and political conflict. Conflict resolution is also the ministry of every congregation in its pastoral practice including its prophetic outreach, its worship, and its pastoral care. This possibility of conflict resolution being part of the parish ministry will be probed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Theoretical and practical presuppositions regarding conflict resolution have been examined in the work of three major theorists, namely John Burton, Roger Fisher and Dudley Weeks. The study of their theories and practices of conflict resolution reveals that they preferred different approaches or made divergent theoretical points of departure. Each one has developed his respective approach to a sophisticated

level. It is therefore not the aim of this dissertation to create yet another conflict resolution method but rather to discover some crucial theological elements of conflict resolution that are relevant to the ministry of the Church.

A recommended approach for the conflict resolution strategist in the Church is to examine the method of each of the theorists discussed above (part three) and choose one of them as a basis from which to develop a process unique to the person or group, and the theological perspective. In order to facilitate this approach to conflict resolution the methods of the practitioners will be revisited at appropriate moments and brought into dialogue with theological presuppositions and pastoral concerns.

A more immediate task is the examination of conflict resolution in the light of a theology of mediation. The study of a theology of mediation will provide a framework for a theological perspective of conflict resolution and reconciliation. When a basis for a theology of conflict resolution and reconciliation has been formed, it will be appropriate to explore the Church's role in political conflict.

A THEOLOGY OF MEDIATION

In order to explore the possibility of a theological perspective for conflict resolution a theology of mediation will be examined. There are two reasons for the assumption that a theology of mediation will assist in providing a theological framework for conflict resolution. First, mediation and conflict resolution both refer to the attempt to resolve a clash between two or more apparently irreconcilable interests. Secondly, a theology of mediation is more accessible than a theology of conflict resolution. The reason is simply that conflict resolution, as mentioned above, is most often used in other disciplines such as management, sociology and politics.

The Christian theology of mediation has its source in the mediation between God and humanity through the person of Jesus Christ the Mediator. An analysis of Jesus Christ's role as Mediator therefore provides the foundation for a theology of mediation and elucidates the relation between mediation and conflict resolution in theological terms.

In part one of this dissertation the relationship between conflict and sin was discussed. It was argued that the traditional story of Genesis places the responsibility for sin on the first persons, Adam and Eve who by their own free choice acted out of self-centred interest and alienated themselves from God and from each other. The Fall corrupted human nature to the extent that all later generations of humankind are depraved or, as Paul says are under the power of sin (Romans 3:10).

As a result of the Fall people live in separation from God and therefore are often in destructive relationships with one another. It was noted that the conflict which resulted from the Fall is a condition of alienation that was a consequence of sin. In other words, the argument was that conflict itself was not the problem. It was the sin of humankind that caused the conflict. Alternatively it was a provocative decision on the part of human beings who failed to deal constructively with the conflict between themselves and God.

As it was pointed out in part 1 above, the risk of creation placed humankind in a condition in which sin was possible. Furthermore the fact that we are not God places limitations upon us so that we can do nothing to overcome the alienation caused by sin. We find ourselves in a helpless situation. We are estranged from ourselves, our fellow human beings from the earth and from the source of our life, God, and there is nothing that we can do to overcome the estrangement. Therefore the alienation of God and humankind requires mediation.

Two significant events constitute Jesus Christ as the Mediator in the alienation between God and humankind. First, the Incarnation event which reveals Jesus Christ as the Divine-Human revelation of God. Christ wholly identifies himself with God's cause but also identified himself completely with humankind. He gave himself so unceasingly to humankind as really to feel the whole misery of humanity (Brunner). Jesus Christ is the Mediator, then, in the first instance because of *who* he is: the Divine-Human revelation of God. It is due to his nature, therefore, that he constitutes the mediation between the Creator and the fallen world.

There is, however, a double connection in the meaning of the mediation of Jesus Christ. The first has been mentioned, that is, he is the Mediator on account of *who* he is: the revelation of God. The second connection that makes him the Mediator is his *work of reconciliation*. The event of the Cross is the focal action in which Jesus Christ mediates the encounter between God and humankind. Of course we must not separate the *Person* of the Mediator, Jesus Christ, from the *work* of the Mediator. Jesus is the Mediator on account of his work, and also because of *who* he is in himself. He is the Mediator because in him the eternal Word is present, and because in him the eternal light enters our world, and also because in him the eternal purpose of God is made known. The Incarnation and the Cross form an indissoluble unity in the mediation of Jesus Christ.

This emphasis on both the *divine person* or *Being* of Christ and the *work of reconciliation* of Christ as Mediator is important as it deals with Torrance's problem with the Arian issue. Maintaining the Divine-Human relation and the work of reconciliation in the life, teaching and death of Jesus Christ in unity counters Torrance's concern regarding Arian ideas about the creaturely and intermediary status of Christ which then casts suspicion on his mediatorial role. Torrance goes to some length to assert the Divine-Human status of the Mediator Christ:

Athanasius showed that while the Son or Logos was *internal* to the Being of God, and therefore co-eternal and co-essential with him, his mediatorial life and work in Jesus Christ results from his condescension to be our High Priest, Advocate and Mediator, and must be understood therefore in terms of what he came to undertake for our sake, on our behalf, and in our place, in effecting atoning reconciliation with God (Torrance 1975: 115).

The significance of his suffering on the Cross lies in the fact that the Mediator acted vicariously both for humanity and for God. As the Mediator for the people he does not simply stand between them and God but for them before God. For God he stands for the righteousness of God and unity and love with God. It is precisely his willingness to suffer on the cross that makes him the Mediator. His identification with God and with God's love for humankind leads him to the suffering on the cross as the way to redeem humankind. Yet at the same time Jesus' total identification with humankind on the cross causes him excruciating God-forsakenness. As Moltmann states it 'this torment in his torments was this abandonment by God' (Moltmann 1974: 149).

Moltmann gives further explanation of Christ's forsakenness on the cross in a later book *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Here the sufferings of Christ is understood as the theology of the surrender in the New Testament (Moltmann 1990: 172). Moltmann finds that Paul uses the expression 'give up' for 'the divine wrath and God's

judgement on human sin' (Moltmann 1990 : 172). So when Jesus is forsaken by God on the cross it means that he has been 'given up' by God.

When Jesus experiences the God-forsakenness he cries out 'why?'. Paul sees the answer as 'He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?' (Romans 8:32; Moltmann 1990: 172). In this 'dark night' of death the Father and the Son are so widely separated that the direct relationship between them breaks off. Jesus died a 'Godless death'.

Paradoxically as the Son surrenders to the will of the Father there is a bond that unites them. Moltmann makes the poignant statement: '... on the cross the Father and the Son are so much at one that they present a single surrendering movement. On Golgotha it is true in a special way that "He who sees the Son sees the Father" ' (Moltmann 1990: 174).

We need to read the surrender of Jesus both ways. It is indeed the surrender of the Son by the Father but it is also the surrender of the Son to the divine will of the Father for the sake of godless lost of the world. When viewed from this side we see the mediating role of Christ. He stands in the place of those who have separated themselves from God so that 'he became a curse for us' (Galatians 3:13).

Christ's vicarious suffering on the cross for humanity is a powerful means of mediation because of who he is, the Son of God. It is not just any person who has died on the cross for humanity, it is the Incarnated One. This confirms the unity of the Person of the Christ and his work of reconciliation on the cross which makes him the perfect mediator between God and humankind.

It is finally through the Cross of Christ that humankind is able to recognise the possibility of redemption. As Brunner states it,

The mediator is the One who - as the Mediator - makes us able to hear the first commandment. We do not hear this voice of God - or we do not hear it without hearing it wrongly - save through the Mediator. (Brunner 1946: 592)

At this point the idea of Mediator emerges in its fullest significance. For only at the cross of Christ can we see fully what it is that separates us from God; and it is also here alone that we see that we need no longer to be separated from God. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ accomplished in his suffering on the cross reconciliation with God becomes possible.

In Acts 15 Paul tells the story of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile as well as their unity in Christ. This means that we must take a step further Brunner's suggestion that the mediation of Jesus makes it possible for us to hear the first commandment. The mediation of Jesus unites us with God so that we are able to love him with all our being but in so doing we are called into solidarity with our neighbour, more especially with the poor, oppressed, marginalised, sick and dying. The further step is, therefore, that the mediation of Jesus *also* enables us to hear the second commandment. The point being made here is that the mediation of Jesus Christ effects the reconciliation of God and humankind *and* the harmonising of the relationships between persons, group and organisations more particularly where there is enmity. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul testifies that by Christ's death on the cross Jews and Gentiles were brought together in unity (Ephesians 2:16). André Dumas, on reading Bonhoeffer, makes reference to Christ's mediation between persons, 'The relationship between two people is a real threat without the presence of the One whose mediation is not a barrier but a foundation for each of the partners' (Dumas 1971: 132). Dumas is referring to Bonhoeffer's discovery that the mediation of Christ is grounded in objective love. There is always the danger of subjectivity and emotionalism in human relationships. It is for this reason that Dumas believes that 'the more there is a stress on immediacy, no matter how sensitive, the clearer and stronger must be the emphasis on creative mediation'(Dumas 1971: 132).

In his book *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer stresses the notion of the spiritual community as an alternative to the emotional, self-centred community where there is a profound yearning for immediate union with others but finds it in a distorted form. The spiritual community, on the other hand, is one mediated through Christ in which the I-You relationship is not an emotional fusion based on desire, but a unity grounded in love for each other for the sake of Christ (Kelly 1996: 41-47). So for Bonhoeffer this kind of spiritual bondedness is one that is possible only through the mediation of Christ:

... a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. Among human beings there is strife. "He is our peace" (Eph. 2:14), says Paul of Jesus Christ. In him, broken and divided humanity has become one. Without Christ there is discord between God and humanity and between one human being and another. Christ has become the mediator who has made peace with God and peace among human beings. Without Christ we would not know God; we could neither call on God nor come to God. Moreover, without Christ we would not know other Christians around us; nor could we approach them. The way to them is blocked by one's own ego [das eigene Ich]. Christ opened up the way to God and to one another. Now Christians can live with each other in peace; they can love and serve one another; they can become one. But they can continue to do so only through Jesus Christ. Only in Jesus Christ are we one; only through him are we bound together. He remains the one and only mediator throughout eternity (Kelly 1996: 32-33).

If the mediation of Jesus Christ through the cross and resurrection makes reconciliation with God and between persons possible, are we at liberty to conclude that as the Mediator Jesus Christ was 'doing conflict resolution'? Certainly he was resolving the conflict in the form of alienation between God and humanity caused by humanity's selfishness, egocentricity and rejection of God. Jesus' mediation through

his life, death and resurrection met the needs of God and of humanity so that the way was opened for the restoration of humanity's future relationship with God.

There is, however, one consideration that militates against the notion that the mediation of Jesus Christ is a process of conflict resolution. Politically speaking conflict resolution is a human relations task in which conflict between two or more equals (though not necessarily equal in power or advantage) is resolved. In other words the term *conflict resolution* has been used primarily in political and management circles, that is in secular terms, for the work of reconciliation between persons, groups and organisations all of whom may be considered to be equals. But the conflict between God and humankind caused by the sin of humanity is in no way between equals. It is between the Creator and the created, between Ultimate purpose and human desire. So when we speak theologically of the conflict or separation of God and humankind and between people it goes *against the grain* to suggest that this is conflict resolution. It is rather *reconciliation*. How then are we theologically to link reconciliation, mediation and conflict resolution? Or is this just a case of semantics?

Whatever conclusions about these questions one might arrive at it is obvious that since conflict resolution involves the healing of discord among persons and groups a more salient theology of conflict resolution and its relationship to reconciliation is necessary if it is to have a significant role in the Church. To begin this task we suggest that a theology of conflict resolution be shaped by an understanding of Jesus as the Mediator. In his letter to the Church at Ephesus Paul shows how Jesus Christ has made it possible for the healing of divisions among persons and groups:

But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the death of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace. By his death on the cross

he destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God. So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all -- to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father (Ephesians 2:13-18, Good News translation).

An example of a conflict situation might clarify the argument thus far. If we consider the conflict described in the Acts of the Apostles between the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians (Acts 13 & 14) we see that the resolving of this crisis by the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) was an act of conflict resolution. But as the process of peace making between these parties took place through Jesus Christ there was also a spiritual reconciliation between these groups and between them and God. So through the mediation of Jesus God reconciles us to Godself and to one another. Although conflict resolution is not normally used synonymous with reconciliation it may nevertheless lead to unity with God. In other words persons in conflict with one another may negotiate or mediate an agreement with one another and continue to develop their relationship with one another and together be reconciled to God. Approached this way it can be argued that conflict resolution has a place within the process of reconciliation. Conflict resolution is therefore linked to reconciliation. As the relationship between conflict resolution and reconciliation is complex it will be examined more fully in the next chapter.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

It has been proposed above that a theology of conflict resolution emerges from within a theology of reconciliation. In order to pursue the task of expanding the study of the relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution two problems need to be considered. The first is the question of the link between the process of conflict resolution and the process of reconciliation and whether they can be equated or at least integrated in some way. The second problem is a contextual one, that is to consider the relevance of reconciliation and conflict resolution to the political challenge facing South Africa at present specifically in regard to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Before examining the issues referred to above a distinction needs to be made between conflicts which are *settled* and those which are *resolved*. This discussion will clear away the false notion that conflict resolution offers a short cut to reconciliation.

17.1. RESOLUTION AND SETTLEMENT

It is maintained by most conflict resolution theorists that only in terms of a *resolution* and not simply a settlement can a conflict be regarded as having been concluded in such a way as to prevent a resurgence of the dispute between the parties.

Settlements tend to be negotiated in situations characterised by successful coercion, either by one of the parties or sometimes by powerful outsiders. For instance A.J.R. Groom contends that the settlement of a conflict is a situation in which overt violence has been largely eliminated but in which coercive politics, or the desire to act coercively, remains (Groom undated: 7). This is what Groom calls *conflict settlement* which is not self-sustaining. Conflict resolution, on the other hand, denotes a situation in which all the parties to a dispute are satisfied with the

relationships, close or distant, new or old, which constitute the outcome of the conflict.

Dudley Weeks recognises the same problem. He maintains that parties sometimes negotiate a 'quick-fix' or 'band-aid' solution. This means that a solution is sought without dealing fully with the conflict. For instance persons or groups might become threatened if the true nature of the conflict should emerge as they might lack confidence in their conflict resolution skills. They then avoid their vulnerabilities and come to an agreement without dealing fully with the issues involved. The relationship between parties in such situations remains fragile and liable to break down at the earliest opportunity (Weeks D. 1992:26).

John Burton asserts that there can be a settlement of a conflict through compromise. However Burton's emphasis on the need to satisfy basic human needs leads him to contend that compromises are to be avoided if the issues being discussed are those on which there cannot be compromise such as identity, security and recognition (Burton J. and Dukes F. 1990:199). Nevertheless there are indications that decisions based on compromise are not always stable.

An example of a settlement is the agreement at the end of the Cottesloe meetings of the South African Council of Churches in 1960 which was examined in part two above. In spite of the euphoria after an agreement was reached, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk withdrew from the South African Council of Churches soon after the consultations. The breakdown in the agreement so soon after the Consultations is indicative of the kind of settlement reached based largely on compromise.

As so often happens parties who desire to resolve their conflict tend to concentrate on their relationship with one another and do not give enough attention to the issues that are causing the strife. By contrast *resolutions* of conflicts (as opposed to

settlements) are obtained through a process which deals with the issues causing the breakdown in a manner that meets the expectations all parties concerned. Such a resolution of conflict will more likely yield creative patterns of relationship between parties with a greater potential to endure. Christopher Mitchell for example suggests that a resolution of a conflict is characterised by a solution which is:

1. *Complete*, in that the issues in conflict disappear from the political agenda and/or cease to have any salience for the parties to the agreement.
2. *Acceptable*, generally, to all the parties to the dispute, not merely to one side, or to elite factions within the adversaries.
3. *Self-supporting*, in that there is no necessity for third-party sanctions (positive or negative) to maintain the provisions of the agreement in place.
4. *Satisfactory* to all the parties in the sense of being perceived as 'fair' or 'just' according to their value systems.
5. *Uncompromising*, in the sense that the terms are not characterised by the sacrifice of goals as part of a compromised, 'half a loaf' solution.
6. *Innovative*, in the sense that the solution establishes some new and positive relationship between the parties.
7. *Uncoerced*, in that the adversaries freely arrive at the solution themselves without any imposition by an authoritative (but perhaps non-legitimised) outside agency (Mitchell 1990:150-151).

The significance of this emphasis on *resolution* rather than *settlement* for this thesis is that conflict resolution should not be viewed as a soft option or a quick path towards reconciliation. In other words, to express it more positively conflicts that are skilfully processed take the issues involved seriously and do not avoid contentious matters or in some cases potentially violent situations in order to work through the strife.

As shown in a theology of mediation above, conflict resolution can be theologically linked to the process of reconciliation. The explanation of *resolution* as distinct from *settlement* provides an indication of the positive role that conflict resolution might have in the process of reconciliation. The reason for this confidence in conflict resolution is that as a process, in common with reconciliation, it requires that the causes of conflict be addressed and that the necessary changes in the relationships be made without compromise.

17.2. RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

It has been noted in chapter fourteen above that reconciliation is a term that has relevance to both political and theological concerns. Due to the fact that in this study we are interested in social and political conflict, a brief examination of reconciliation in the political context in South Africa will be considered.

Before embarking upon the analysis of reconciliation in the political context we will explore the distinction between a secular or political use of reconciliation and the theological view of the term. When viewed theologically we see reconciliation through the eyes of faith in God's presence in what may seem to be very ordinary socially or psychologically explicable phenomena. It is accepted that reconciliation understood in the social and political context has meaning and purpose without calling upon any particular theological foundation.

In political or secular dialogue reconciliation does not necessarily mean that there is compatibility between parties about political ideology or agenda. It does mean that there is agreement on a political dispensation that can form the basis for parties to compete for the leadership of a group or nation in a peaceful, or relatively peaceful, manner.

However, during the ideological and political struggle against the apartheid system in South Africa reconciliation was questionable. Certainly as a symbol, *reconciliation* was not able to call the people of South Africa to a common purpose. Professor D. Smit for instance, maintained that reconciliation did not seem to have the necessary symbolic power to transform this society (Vorster 1986:88). Smit asserts that the problem with the symbol of reconciliation was its ambivalence at that time. One of the reasons for this problem was that the various ideological groups viewed the experience of reconciliation differently. An example of this ambivalence is Beyers Naude's suggestion that sanctions were the last hope for reconciliation while Professor Johan Heyns argued that sanctions were an obstacle in the way of reconciliation (Vorster 1986). Then there were those who saw in reconciliation at that time the opposite of its usual meaning. For instance it was a negative symbol implying something 'cheap' or 'false' in the Kairos Document in 1985 and the Accompanying Letter to the Belhar Draft Confession (Cloete and Smit 1984: 4-6).

Since the first national non-racial general elections in South Africa in 1994 and the inauguration of the Government of National Unity there has been a political transformation. One of the effects of change is that reconciliation has now become a key symbol in political corridors in South Africa. People are being encouraged to seek reconciliation.

Evidence of the change in attitude and desire for reconciliation in South Africa is demonstrated by the widespread interest in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was installed by the South African Parliament under the

leadership of the former Archbishop of Cape Town, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and Dr. Alex Boraine in 1996. Politically the work of this Commission is another phase in the negotiations that took place before the elections and in that sense the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is part of the process of conflict resolution in the South African political arena.

An article by Simon Barber writing in the Eastern Province Herald reflecting on some important lessons to be learned by South Africa from Chile's experience of their Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1990 provides a useful backdrop to the relationship between conflict resolution and reconciliation.² A member of the Chilean Commission, Jose Zalaquett, is reported by Barber as saying that the Chileans were mindful of the need to deal with human rights violators responsibly. There was the danger of allowing the emotions to dictate the process by going 'all out for the arrest and punishment of human rights violators.' In a Truth Commission such as the one in Chile and that initiated in South Africa there is always the fear that 'the quest for perfect justice might lead only to a backlash and further injustice.' Nevertheless in the Chilean context the president of the Chilean Commission promised 'the whole truth and justice to the maximum extent possible.'

Barber suggests that a lesson to be learned from the Chilean experience is that 'the goal of the enquiry cannot be perfect justice, but should rather be national reconciliation and the development of a "shared memory" which makes possible both forgiveness and its essential precursor, sincere penitence, and just as importantly, vaccinates the democracy against further abuses of power.'³

Barber's reflection throws some light on the different roles of reconciliation and conflict resolution. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa forms part of the ongoing negotiations arising from the demise of apartheid as an official political system. This is the work of conflict resolution in which all parties attempt to

² Eastern Province Herald, September 13, 1994, p. 4.

³ Eastern Province Herald, September 13, 1994, p. 4.

come to terms with the past and generate new patterns of relationships that will create lasting benefits for all.

The reference to forgiveness, penitence and 'shared memory' is the language of reconciliation. The emphasis is on the restoration and healing of broken relationships and of coming to terms with the past. Theologically forgiveness and penitence are essential to reconciliation. This fact will be further developed later when discussing the process of reconciliation. However, though there is a close relationship between a theology of reconciliation, which includes forgiveness, and the politics of forgiveness, there is difficulty in identifying forgiveness in politics. For instance Donald Shriver, in his remarkable book, *An Ethic for Enemies* comes to the conclusion that forgiveness is not at home in the secular environment. Shriver believes that the Church must take some responsibility for the fact that forgiveness lacks ethical significance in the public sphere. He writes:

We can terminate this excursion into church history here, for this sketch is enough to justify these several introductory conclusions: that secular observers like Hannah Arendt are not mistaken in finding a distinctive, prominent place for forgiveness in the teachings of the New Testament; that, in spite of its important if not central place in the ethics of the New Testament church, forgiveness seldom if ever attained an impressive place in the ethics that the church sought to commend to its secular host society; that the medieval institution of penance solidified this tendency, not only in the secrecy and individualization of the confessional but in its ordinary confinement of 'sin' to the sphere of personal conduct; and that the Protestant Reformation, while making a strong attempt to resocialize the idea of forgiveness and repentance as a function of a church congregation, continued to stress the power of divine over human forgiveness (Shriver 1995: 58).

Shriver is probably right in suggesting that there is hesitation on the part of many to use the language of forgiveness in a political or nonreligious context. He maintains that 'if forgiveness is to escape its religious captivity and enter the ranks of ordinary political virtues, it has to acquire more precise, dynamic, and politically contexted

definition than it has usually enjoyed' (Shriver 1995: 7). Despite Shriver's finding it is significant that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa has provided an acceptable place for persons and groups to forgive one another so that there can be a process of healing and cleansing throughout the nation. It is possible that in South Africa the fact that such a high percentage of the people have some religious inheritance gives credibility to the work of the Truth Commission and to its encouragement of perpetrators to confess and seek apology and for victims to offer forgiveness. Another possible contribution to the experience in South Africa was the attitude of Nelson Mandela as leader of the African National Congress and its allies in the negotiations with the National Party and its allies. In his autobiography Mandela writes:

I never sought to undermine Mr. de Klerk [leader of the National Party], for the practical reason that the weaker he was, the weaker the negotiations process. To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes your partner (Mandela 1994:734-735).

Returning to the notion of conflict resolution. The analysis of the theories of conflict resolution practitioners examined in part three above shows that the experience of forgiveness and penitence are not imperative in the conflict resolution process. If they were experienced during the facilitation of a conflict then it would be a bonus. In other words parties might arrive at a firm agreement on their future relationship *without* there being any experience of forgiveness or penitence in the process. This, of course, takes into consideration that a well crafted resolution will include a satisfactory way of dealing with past failures and injustices. On the other hand, we should conclude that if conflicting parties are to be *reconciled* to one another (theologically speaking) in a healing relationship then forgiveness and penitence *must be present*.

The distinction becomes clearer when the processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation are compared. First, the conflict resolution process focuses on a

specific conflict. Looking back on the analysis of the theorists John Burton, Roger Fisher and Dudley Weeks it was noted that while each of them emphasises a particular theory of conflict resolution there were some commonalities such as the need to understand what the conflict is about, exploring needs, generating options and helping parties explore common goals. Each of them, and Weeks in particular, agreed that if the facilitation or negotiation process is well managed then it will more likely yield the benefit of improved relationships between the parties concerned. In a particular conflict the facilitators may recognise the need for some form of restitution by one or both parties but the decision to implement such a programme or event would be the responsibility of the parties involved. The important point is that the outcome or solution of a conflict always remains the responsibility of the parties concerned, and not the facilitators. This process encourages the parties to own the process and take responsibility for a positive outcome.

The fact that politicians and political analysts refer to reconciliation (in whatever way it is interpreted) means that the term reconciliation is not the exclusive domain of the Church. However *reconciliation* may be understood in a more general way in politics than assumed in the Church. Shriver supports the view that in politics forgivers are prepared to begin living with the enemy again on some level of positive mutual affirmation. In politics this implies some form of *co-existence*. So Shriver remarks, 'We need not call the new relation *reconciliation*, a word best reserved, perhaps, for the end of a process that forgiveness begins' (Shriver 1995: 8-9).

Shriver suggests a poignant definition of forgiveness in politics when he writes

Forgiveness in a political context, then, is an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation. Such a combination calls for a collective turning from the past that neither ignores past evil nor excuses it, that neither overlooks justice nor reduces justice to revenge, that insists on the humanity of enemies even in their commission of dehumanizing deeds, and that values the justice that restores political community above the justice that destroys it (Shriver 1995: 9).

It is appropriate that we now develop the theological meaning of reconciliation in terms of its relationship to conflict resolution (Vorster 1986). South African theologians have wrestled with the meaning of reconciliation through the years of the political struggle. Michael Cassidy, for instance, was well aware of the need for social transformation in South Africa. He was, however, concerned that if prior emphasis was given to the social dimension of reconciliation people would become so involved with developing good human relationships that spiritual reconciliation with God may not happen. He explains: 'We must start here, with each of us being personally reconciled to God, born again of his Spirit and filled with his Life and Calvary-love, and then preach it. Otherwise others, caught up in the preoccupations of the horizontal, will forget it too' (Cassidy 1989:262).

Although Cassidy's perspective tends to be individualistic the significance of his approach to reconciliation is his emphasis on the primacy of the vertical dimension. He makes it clear that we need continually to be reminded of the biblical emphasis on the fundamental importance of reconciliation between God and humankind.

Liberation theologians in South Africa do not disagree with Cassidy's call for humankind to be reconciled to God. But they argue that any attempt at reconciliation that does not take seriously enough the horizontal aspects of human relationships will be futile. Itumeleng Mosala, for example argued that there was no possibility of reconciliation between black and white people in South Africa until oppressive structures and institutions were transformed in South Africa (Mosala 1987: 24-25).

Bishop Mmutlanyane Stanley Mogoba of the Methodist Church speaks in much the same vein when referring to the Kairos Document:

The debate about reconciliation has been raging for some time. The Kairos Document put it very pithily: 'There can be no true reconciliation and no genuine peace without justice.'

Any form of peace or reconciliation that allows the sin of injustice and oppression to continue is a false peace and counterfeit reconciliation. This kind of "reconciliation" has nothing whatsoever to do with the Christian faith' (Mogoba 1994: 56).

Alluding to the possibility of a form of reconciliation that offers only false peace and counterfeit reconciliation Mogoba made his position clear when he wrote that reconciliation was costly and not theoretical. Counterfeit reconciliation was a spiritual reconciliation with God without social transformation. Mogoba's call for reconciliation that was costly corresponds to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's incisive study of costly grace in his volume, *The Cost of Discipleship* (Bonhoeffer 1959:35 ff.). Cheap grace for Bonhoeffer was the 'deadly enemy' of the Church. In essence it was justification of sin without changing anything so that causes of sin are not dealt with. Writing at the time of the Church's struggle with the apartheid system, John De Gruchy refers to Bonhoeffer's interpretation of the theology of the cross:

A theology of the cross has direct implications for the church and the Christian in the world. In the first place, it prevents the evangelical emphasis on the Word and faith, which Bonhoeffer affirmed, from resulting in cheap grace. This is the burden of Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*. For Bonhoeffer, a theology of the cross means obedient discipleship (De Gruchy 1984: 27).

As long ago as 1981 Mogoba stated what reconciliation meant:

- giving people back their human dignity;
- regaining our own human dignity;
- sharing living space;
- employment;
- parity of wages;
- no more resettlements;
- normal mortality rates for all groups;

- universal suffrage; and
- a national convention (Mogoba 1994:57).

Mogoba's point must be taken seriously. He evidently means that anything short of a practical outworking of reconciliation among the people of South Africa, dealing constructively with injustices of the past cannot not be called reconciliation.

The conclusion we draw from this discussion is that it is not a debate about two types of reconciliation, the 'vertical' and the 'horizontal', but rather it is about the conditions for reconciliation. The evangelicals believe that the conditions for reconciliation are personal repentance whereas Mogoba and others hold that reconciliation is impossible without certain presuppositions - most of which represented conflicting interests. Both are relevant for reconciliation and need to be pursued. Reconciliation is between God and humankind but at the same time it concerns human relationships.

But more importantly for this thesis is the relationship that this debate uncovers between reconciliation and conflict resolution. If we can accept the principle that reconciliation involves both the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' relationships then we can suggest that the presuppositions underscored by the liberation theologians deal with the conflict or interests which can be negotiated through conflict resolution processes such as those represented by the theorists in part three of this dissertation. This is in fact what occurred in the South African political situation. Through negotiations which led to the general elections and the removal of apartheid laws the whole situation changed paving the way for Mogoba and others to call for reconciliation among all peoples of South Africa.

Before continuing with the relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution the basis or theological foundation of reconciliation must be further established. We refer here to the priority of God's initiative in Christ as Mediator.

Reconciliation is possible only because God was in Christ reconciling Godself to us (Romans 5). The beginning is not any action of our own, but God's initiative. In New Testament thinking God reconciles us and the world to Godself as it is expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All is from God, who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.' In Paul's teaching the stress falls consistently on God as the originator of the act of reconciliation. As J. Dupont (in Martin 1981: 106) states: 'God does not reconcile himself to the world, he reconciles the world to himself.'

It must be kept in mind that though all reconciliation is the work of God we must not fall into the trap of passivity. We are invited to engage in the ministry of reconciliation as God's servants (2 Corinthians 5:16-19). We do not wait for all peoples first to become receptive to his Spirit. Rather as servants of God we work in his name for the reconciliation of all peoples. So as Christians engage in the work of reconciliation they become the servants of the Mediator, or in the Pauline phrase, 'ambassadors for Christ'. But even here the initiative is still God's. Paul states (Good News translation) 'let God change you from enemies into his friends!' Paul is clearly referring to some conflict in the Corinthian Church.

This means that reconciliation has a spiritual dimension. It is not simply a political, psychological or management function. Reconciliation therefore affects the individuals as well as the human relationships amongst those involved in conflict. For Paul reconciliation implies deliverance from sin and the restoration of human wholeness. In Jesus' ministry this is seen in his healing ministry and his forgiving acts. It is also indicated in Jesus' mission as the overthrow of alien powers and the freeing of prisoners (Luke 4:16-30). For Paul it is the overthrow of spirit-powers and localised in membership of the new community living under Christ's dominion. For both Jesus and Paul there is the fundamental assertion that human lives can be

released from the power of evil, forgiven, rehabilitated, and reordered in the will of God.

The next emerging problem is the question of the distinction between the terms reconciliation and conflict resolution. Neuhaus had this in mind when he stated: 'Reconciliation, then, is not an adjustment to limitations, nor is it a negotiated settlement' (Neuhaus 1979:75). Unfortunately he did not go on to show how he understood negotiated settlement or conflict resolution.

Although Neuhaus is quite categorical in separating reconciliation and conflict resolution as contrary to one another it is the contention of this thesis that the two terms are more closely linked. In political language the two terms seem to refer to similar events. Reconciliation when used in a political context seems to refer to a consensus of opinion, dealing with the past and working together in the future, among people groups or a nation. This understanding of reconciliation corresponds to what is meant by conflict resolution which implies a process through which parties in dispute overcome their differences in such a way that their relationship with one another is improved (Weeks, Fisher, Burton).

When the two terms reconciliation and conflict resolution are considered theologically, however, then Neuhaus' objection is understandable. In reconciliation, as explained above, whatever the context the priority of the Church's unity with God and the transformation of relationships between peoples is implied.

In the political or social sphere parties to a conflict will most likely not be seeking unity with God. Certainly the Church cannot expect political parties to grasp the spiritual significance of reconciliation. Nonetheless when the Church is intervening or negotiating a resolution to a conflict it will see it in the broader context of reconciliation following Paul in his statement to the Church at Corinth that 'God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Theologically conflict resolution on its own cannot be identified as synonymous with reconciliation. They have different nuances. While they are both concerned with human relationships, conflict resolution generally speaking, is a response to the second commandment of Jesus rather than the first, while reconciliation in Christ implies also the first commandment as shown by Brunner. The relationship between the two terms can be explained if we recognise that conflict resolution as a process is part of the broader concept of reconciliation. It is a step or a stage in a process that may result in the reconciliation of two or more parties to one another in a deeper way (perhaps spiritual) than is normally the case in conflict resolution. So the Church becomes involved in the ministry of reconciliation in the socio-political context through the process of conflict resolution.

The conclusion we are moving towards is that although there might be some distinction between the way theologians use the notion of reconciliation and the way politicians might do so, there is nevertheless a close relationship between the two. In other words the reconciliation that might occur between political groups is not something that simply exists alongside the peace that Christ has created between peoples, but is in fact the very embodiment of that peace, or an aspect of it.

The relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution becomes clear when they are viewed as a process. We have already noted the emphasis that the conflict resolution theorists place on process for a resolution of conflict. An argument can also be made for a theology of reconciliation as a process.

However, there is a tendency by some biblical theologians to regard reconciliation as an event rather than a process. Gabriel Abe, for instance takes umbrage against the notion of reconciliation as a process. He contends that Christ's sacrifice on the cross as an expression of God's love for humankind overcame the demonic forces. One

assumes that Abe believes that this act of Christ initiated and reconciled sinners to God. Abe writes:

It is God who takes the initiative and effects reconciliation, thus he is the subject and mankind the object. Reconciliation is not a process, but a completed act of God through Christ his agent by means of his atoning death (Romans 5:6-11). (Abe 1996: 6).

It is the thesis of this dissertation that although the Cross and Resurrection event is pivotal for reconciliation, the appropriation of this event is experienced as a process. Even an instantaneous experience of being delivered or 'saved' has the elements of process. For instance the experience of God's love, recognition of alienation, and acceptance of what God has done and will do in the future take the form of revelation and response as though they were 'proceeding instances' of an encounter with God.

According to Ralph Martin, in his study, *Reconciliation*, Pauline theology includes cosmic life in the orbit of God's all embracing love. He stresses that 'Reconciliation' takes on the meaning of harmony and peace within the cosmic order' (Martin 1981:118 ff). So as God reconciles the universe there is a sense in which God's reconciling work does not stop until all creation becomes free.

Neuhaus referred to reconciliation as a life long spiritual journey with God (Neuhaus 1979:76). As we mature in our experience of God we become more deeply reconciled to God. Yet while it is a life long process, as Neuhaus and others have noted, it is also a present experience. The essence of this present experience of reconciliation with God, ourselves and others can be broken down into stages. Howard Clinebell maintains that reconciliation is a five-stage process: *confrontation, confession, forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation* (Clinebell 1984:142-149). Although Clinebell sees this path of reconciliation (he calls it the 'path of

forgiveness') in the context of pastoral care, his insight is relevant to wider social contexts.

An examination of a process of reconciliation such as the one indicated by Clinebell and comparable phases in a conflict resolution process will provide insight into the relationship between the two processes. It is maintained here that they are not parallel processes but that conflict resolution is incorporated into the broader process of reconciliation.

In a conflict situation individuals and groups need to *confront* one another in order to begin a process of reconciliation. The alienating structures or behaviours causing conflict must be exposed. Only as persons or groups recognise their sin, brokenness or unjust behaviour are they able or willing to seek reconciliation. Honest confrontation spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15) enables people to deal with their inner conflicts, their inter-personal, and their inter-group conflicts. As Clinebell asserts: 'most people do not begin to change until they experience the pain of their present behaviour. Confrontation may help them become aware of this pain' (Clinebell 1984:144).

The act of confrontation is significantly expressed in the biblical stories of the prophets who confronted Israelite kings and the elite with their sins. In the New Testament there are a number of occasions where Jesus confronts the powers. One saying of Jesus in Matthew's gospel exemplifies his position: 'If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering' (Matthew 5:23-24).

Liberation theologians also expressed the necessity for a confronting gospel. Hugo Assman, writing about the liberation that comes from Christ asserts that

'Evangelization is liberating because it is a message of total freedom, which necessarily includes a demand for the transformation of the historical and political conditions in which men live' (Assmann 1975: 20-21). Jean Luis Segundo makes the same point when he asserts that the first step in doing Christian theology is commitment to and solidarity with the poor (Segundo 1977: 81).

In this case the confrontation step provides the place for conflict resolution in this path. Whether through negotiation or mediation, conflict resolution creates the possibility for reconciliation. In a conflict resolution process such as one of those proposed by the theorists examined in this dissertation, confrontation is an invitation, or a demand, that parties negotiate and begin a process of reconciliation. Skilfully handled through negotiation or mediation, a conflict resolution process becomes a means whereby parties are able to confront one another constructively. In Weeks' process, parties confront each other in an atmosphere appropriate for dealing with a tense and sometimes combative relationship and go on to clarify the conflict.

Confrontation then leads to *confession*. Theologically confession is an essential phase of the reconciliation process (Mark 1:14). Experiencing and confessing painful guilt feelings or destructive behaviour opens the possibility for cleansing and healing. In inter-personal and group conflict, parties admit that there is a problem and accept responsibility for their part in the strife. This act creates the possibility for the restoration of the relationship to take place.

In social or political conflict, however, parties need to be encouraged to admit that there is a problem. There are situations where it is understandable and even acceptable that individuals who are still somewhat untrusting of each other may not wish to 'confess' to each other. This does not preclude the idea that both may confess privately in their heart to God or to others or even to themselves. Such confession is important if there is to be repentance. It is helpful, nevertheless, for

parties to explore the history of their relationship in order to understand the events or behaviours that led to it becoming a conflicting one.

In his conflict resolution process Dudley Weeks encourages persons or groups in conflict to learn from their past (but not dwell on the past). He believes

we are all products of the past, as are our relationships and our conflicts. The past may be brief or long, but it still has an influence on our present situation. Even though the past does indeed matter, we deny our own power and the power of development and change if we allow ourselves to be defined by the past, to be trapped in perceptions that use past patterns to limit present and future possibilities (Weeks 1992:165).

This process of looking to the past and learning from it is possibly a way in which social and political groups are able to confess to one another.

The acceptance of *forgiveness* follows confession in the process of reconciliation. Building on effective spiritual counselling the minister or priest may serve as a channel of God's forgiveness. In this case the prayer of absolution becomes a meaningful act.

The teaching of Paul in his letters to Philippians and Philemon demonstrate the importance of forgiveness in reconciliation. In situations of conflict as Christians loved one another, forgave and were compassionate to one another, and showed in their mutual attitudes that they shared a new spirit which was not self-centred but one that made for unity and harmony, so they were giving expression to the authenticity of the message of reconciliation. In this regard Vincent Taylor found that in the teaching of Jesus forgiveness concerned the things which stood in the way of fellowship (Taylor 1946:13). Forgiveness therefore in both the teaching of Jesus and in the Acts and epistles of Paul, according to Taylor, cannot be identified with reconciliation; it is a stage antecedent to reconciliation; it is that which makes reconciliation possible (Vincent 1946:3).

Donald Shriver in his study of forgiveness in politics refers to Hannah Arendt's point that forgiveness is 'one of two human capacities that make possible genuine social change' (Shriver 1995: 6). The problem, however, is that forgiveness has been 'captured' by religion. Shriver shares the view of Reinhold Niebuhr when he states that 'if forgiveness is to escape its religious captivity and enter the ranks of ordinary political virtues, it has to acquire more precise, dynamic, and politically contexted definition than it has usually enjoyed (Shriver 1995: 7).

Once again, as in 'confession', the conflict resolution process may not include the step of forgiveness where parties are not Christians. However, though not indicated as a specific step in the process, forgiveness could, as in the case of *confession*, play a positive role in the resolution of social and political conflict. Again Weeks is helpful from a socio-political perspective. For him forgiveness accomplishes several important things:

Forgiveness

- acknowledges the fact that we all sometimes fall short of the best we can do, that we are all still growing and improving.
- communicates to conflict partners that they are not being defined or judged solely on some past negative behaviour
- reaches for the positive power of the conflict partner to learn from the past and make positive contributions in spite of past behaviour that has helped create and perpetuate damaging conflicts
- helps create an atmosphere that encourages both conflict partners to move beyond the past and focus on the present-future
- increases the positive power of the person doing the forgiving.
(Weeks 1992:181)

It is surprising that Clinebell does not include *repentance* in his 'path of forgiveness'. If repentance means 'to turn around' or 'to change' then Clinebell might have considered 'confession' and 'restitution' as acts of repentance. Certainly Shriver admits to repentance as the 'twin' of forgiveness (Shriver 1995: 6). Also in a summary of forgiveness in politics he expresses it a way that seems to include repentance:

Forgiveness in a political context, then, is an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation. Such a combination calls for a collective turning from the past that neither ignores past evil nor excuses it, that neither overlooks justice nor reduces justice to revenge, that insists on the humanity of enemies even in their commission of dehumanising deeds, and that values the justice that restores political community above the justice that destroys it (Shriver 1995: 9).

If confession and forgiveness have been experienced then they must be followed by *restitution* in order to lead on to reconciliation. This is an important stage as it redresses the wrongs which have caused the painful alienation and helps to avoid a repetition of the hurting behaviours. People involved take responsibility for their actions in the past as well as for the future. Restitution thus involves willingness to change the existing situation, including structures and behaviours so that transformation may take place. An example might be dealing with the list of changes suggested by Mogoba above.

In the conflict resolution process parties negotiate agreements in which past wrongs are dealt with and future relationships enhanced. Once again there is no step where 'restitution' is specifically mentioned in the conflict resolution process outlined by the theorists examined. However in each of them parties are offered opportunity to address the issues, including structures and behaviours and create new relationships. As parties negotiate their differences and expectations of each other restitution may

be built into the agreements. This is facilitated by a process that secures solutions or outcomes that are of benefit to all parties concerned.

In terms of *reconciliation* Clinebell's contention is that if the first four movements, *confrontation, confession, forgiveness and restitution*, (and here we would include *repentance*) have been experienced then reconciliation - a well-being with God, self and others - will occur. There is a restoration of relationship with God and a transformation of the situation. In other words reconciliation is the product of a process. However, it needs also to be emphasised that reconciliation is largely discovered and not strategised or achieved. What is meant here is that the process of reconciliation is more a spirituality that responds to God's reconciling action.

It was stated above that the Church was not the only organisation or movement that uses the term *reconciliation*. In this regard reference has been made to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the political analysis of Simon Barber. What then is the distinction between the way reconciliation is understood by theologians and the way it is interpreted by politicians and political analysts? The fundamental distinction is in the acknowledgement of God's activity in the experience of reconciliation. The Church's emphasis on the supremacy of God and the priority of God's initiative in Christ the Mediator (Romans 5) are the keys to the theological understanding of reconciliation. There could not be common agreement with this statement of faith in political circles.

What then can the Church hope for in political conflict? The theological response is that the Church anticipates the coming of God's Kingdom and participates as an agent of God's initiative in reconciling the world to God. Therefore the Church may initiate the process of reconciliation in political conflict with a process of conflict resolution. Church negotiators or mediators enter the conflict using the knowledge and skills of conflict resolution. But when using conflict resolution skills the Church anticipates the possibility of reconciliation. This is understandable inasmuch as the

love of God and neighbour lies at the heart of the gospel. As James Leatt, Theo Kneifel and Klaus Nürnberger point out 'People deeply touched by God's love cannot want to be separate. Reconciled with God they are, of necessity, reconciled with each other on the basis of God's suffering acceptance. And so they congregate' (Leatt, Kneifel, Nürnberger 1986:290). So when the Church negotiates or mediates in political conflict it does so with this understanding of reconciliation in mind. This means that the Church negotiates in political and community conflict as far as possible for a resolution that will be a sign of the Kingdom of God. In other words the Church is always open to God's initiative and reconciling activity.

From this analysis of the reconciliation process it is important to recognise that conflict resolution as a step in the process of reconciliation does not always end with all parties being committed to the Kingdom of God. A resolution to a dispute brings parties together in an agreement that will help them to develop and improve their relationship with each other. Parties not committed to the Christian gospel will be less likely to feel motivated towards a reconciliation experience that includes unity with God. In certain circumstances, however, parties may build on their agreements and through improved relationships and discover deeper spiritual reconciliation.

The Church engages in conflict resolution in the service of Christ and humanity always with the hope of reconciliation recognising that conflict resolution is a step in this direction. This is why the Church is able to become involved in negotiation and mediation with political groups. In other words conflict resolution for the Church is a process in the pathway of reconciliation. Many times the Church will be resolving conflicts in the service of the Kingdom of God without achieving reconciliation in the full theological sense of that term which implies unity with God.

17.3. SUMMARY

This analysis of reconciliation and conflict resolution has focused on the way reconciliation is perceived in the political context and examined its theological

meaning. It has then probed the relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution. The scope of reconciliation includes (a) the initiative of God, (b) addressing the predicament of alienation, brokenness and distress (c) through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Mediator (d) who reconciles the universe to God.

A significant finding of this thesis is that conflict resolution has a meaningful place in the service of the Church and that as a healing ministry it is theologically based in the process of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the broader concept. Conflict resolution is significantly a step in the reconciliation process.

Occurring within the context of reconciliation conflict resolution has an indispensable role in the reconciliation process. It facilitates confrontation between individuals or groups and contributes towards change in relationships where there is conflict. Without constructive conflict resolution reconciliation becomes in the words of Mogoba, 'counterfeit reconciliation.'

At the same time, however, conflict resolution as a process in social and political conflict may stand on its own. This means that parties may arrive at agreements which are substantive, lasting and which mutually benefit all parties, without following through with reconciliation, that is a complete restoration of relationships in the theological understanding of that term as indicated above.

17.4. RESOLUTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

South Africa has passed through a process of transformation since the elections in April 1994. Whether this transformation to democracy will fulfil the hopes of the majority of citizens will depend largely on the success reconstruction development programme of the Government of National Unity. It is this programme that addresses the ravages of inequality caused by the apartheid system of the previous regime.

According to Professor A.S. Koorts, Vice-Chairperson of the Transitional Local Council in Port Elizabeth, the RDP is an integrated and sustainable programme that is people-driven and that links reconstruction and development. Furthermore a key goal of the programme is nation-building and therefore it must contribute to the democratisation of South Africa (Koorts 1994).

Referring to change that had taken place in the country the presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Bishop Mmutlanyane Mogoba said that moments of joy and ecstasy do not last forever. In his address to the Methodist Conference on 15 September 1994 he said that honeymoons were justified but if they have to benefit the people concerned they must be followed by commitment to very hard work. God expects us to be responsible and hardworking beings who are co-creators with God. He went on to say:

For this reason we as a Church must give full support to the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP). The RDP is, of course, not a quick-fix or a waving of a magic wand, but an invitation to join in transforming our harsh world into a contemporary garden of Eden. All our members should support the RDP as a way of eradicating poverty, providing affordable houses and other services, and giving all of us a chance to work for the sustenance of our families. The RDP may have been instituted by a political party but it refers to a national crisis and all of us should rise above political loyalties and interests in our efforts to make it work. We should resist the temptations of politicising what is certainly a matter of life and death for so many of our fellow countrymen and women. For this to happen, violence must be completely eradicated and the industrial action reduced to only the most pressing issues. For us, as a Church, increases in industrial action are *not* justifiable so long as so many people are unemployed. We see the priority of our nation at this time to be the poor, the unemployed, and the informal settlements (Mogoba 1994: 2).

Dr. Khoza Mgojo, President of the South African Council of Churches, addressing the Rustenburg Conference in 1990, said: 'In this situation, I believe, the Church has to reconsider its role. Previously, the Church attempted to negotiate on behalf of the masses. Now the legitimate black political leaders are free to organise politically. I believe that the Church's role is not to play as a political *negotiator* but as a supportive and critical *facilitator* of negotiations which will lead to a peaceful, non-racial, and democratic South Africa' (Alberts L., Chikane F. 1991:40).

17.4.1. Linking Conflict Resolution And Reconstruction

Conflict resolution is in effect a social change strategy. It enables participants to change, (even transform) their way of behaving, including their structures, so that a more positive future may be envisaged.

Effective social change is not an event, it is a complex process consisting of wise and interlinked action steps. Mobilisation strategies need to be conceived as only one part of a comprehensive process, not as *events* that leave the mobilised and impassioned participants and new supporters with no follow-up plan of viable action.

A constructive conflict resolution process is thus a pro-active one in that it is an empowering facilitation of conflict. If a conflict is mediated or negotiated successfully and is *process* oriented rather than *event* oriented the conflict parties experience of working together will be built into their relationship after resolution has taken place. The difference between *process* and *event* is that the latter focuses primarily on issues. Major issues, such as the grossly inequitable distribution of political and economic power, the lack of systematic access to viable change available to those disadvantaged by the apartheid system, are all critical components of societal conflicts and must be confronted. *How* they are confronted is what *process* is all about.

If a creative process is used in a negotiated or facilitated conflict the parties will go beyond choosing strategies that only give them a platform to argue why their

positions are 'right' and the positions of the adversaries are 'wrong'. In a constructive process, such as Dudley Weeks' partnership approach, the parties learn how to use the process in their on-going future relationship.

In John Burton's basic human needs approach a key to dealing with deep-rooted conflict is the restructuring of the present system so that such basic needs as identity, security and recognition are fulfilled. The mobilisation of these structures becomes an on-going venture.

17.4.2. The Theology Of Reconstruction

In order to evaluate the role that reconstruction plays in relation to the Church there needs to be discussion of the theology of reconstruction. A question that needs to be addressed, for instance, is whether involvement in reconstruction does not lead the Church into complicity with the government, a situation that would have been considered abhorrent during the time of struggle against the apartheid system.

Charles Villa-Vicencio's book, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, is an insightful treatment of the problem of theology and reconstruction. An important thesis of the book is that a theological shift is needed in a post-apartheid situation under a government committed to promoting national reconstruction. In Villa-Vicencio's words,

The response of liberation theology to a church on the side of oppressive regimes has been part of the hope and the promise of people and a church in exile. It must now be translated into a theology of home-coming and nation-building (Villa-Vicencio 1992:32).

After researching other historical examples of social and political transformations Villa-Vicencio finds that 'a theology useful in resistance does not easily become a useful instrument in the period of reconstruction (Villa-Vicencio 1992:34). This argument of Villa-Vicencio, however, has elicited a vehement response from Dr.

Sam Maluleke in the Institute for Contextual Theology's journal, *Challenge* (Nolan 1994). Dr. Maluleke sees problems with the call to a shift from theologies of liberation to theologies of reconstruction. He believes that the call to make this shift is a dangerous one particularly as it comes from

'the South African liberal church tradition... we must remember that the liberal tradition is a tradition which, as Tony Balcomb has observed, in any conflict situation, tends to look for a "third-way" out. Is the proposal for a theology of reconstruction not a third way option?'

Maluleke is concerned that the theology of reconstruction will be expected to replace the prophetic voice and commitment to the poor of liberation theology and become simply a theological 'stamp upon a political programme.'

Charles Villa-Vicencio's reply is equally emphatic. He rejects any notion of reconstruction theology simply giving credibility to the government's reconstruction programme. However the theology of reconstruction is 'intended to facilitate this process [of nation-building] in a constructive manner.'

Villa-Vicencio does not intend doing away with liberation theology but to ensure that liberation theology, which is a contextual theology, takes the transformation in the political context of South Africa seriously. Ultimately prophetic theology is committed to the "'Revolution of God", which requires a commitment to continuing change and social revolution ... the struggle is a long and enduring one' (Nolan 1994).

This issue is likely to continue to provoke debate. For the purposes of this discussion on resolution and reconstruction it would be important to heed the warning of Sam Maluleke that a theology of reconstruction, and therefore also the conflict resolution approach implicit in reconstruction, does not slide into a kind of third-way theological thinking supported by the Western liberal tradition that Anthony Balcomb speaks of.

To avoid this happening a theology of reconstruction needs the purifying fire of liberation theology and its commitment to the poor and oppressed. Villa-Vicencio admits this challenge to reconstruction theology but at the same time his point about the risk of resistance movements becoming counter-revolutionary is also timely. Liberation theologians need to recognise the transformation taking place in South Africa and contextually sharpen its analysis of the situation.

Perhaps both reconstruction theologies and liberation theologies could make significant contributions to the Church in South Africa if they further developed within the ambit of their respective contextual theologies the role of African spirituality in the Church on this continent. Bishop Mogoba suggests that there should be a great deal more concentration on African values and spirituality in the reconstruction of the Church. The African Church, he believes, 'can truly become a force for change in world Christianity' (Mogoba 1994: 3).

In summary some of the theological and political emphases that need to be supported in a programme of reconstruction are as follows:

1. The theology of a people created in the image of God needs to be 're-created' in the minds of the nation. In society people have discriminated against people on issues that they could do nothing about, for example the colour of skin, there is a need for a reconstruction of values.
2. Reconstruction involves dispossessing the rich from their dependency on wealth and power and liberating their belief in the potential of and respect for the dispossessed. For instance they need to be freed from the perception that redistribution necessarily creates dependency.

3. Reconstruction and nation-building without liberative gospel will end in another set of status quo precepts. On the other hand liberation theology in the new *kairas* could become another resistance movement without constructive development. Reconstruction and liberation theology need to join hands for a commitment to the poor and the development of all the peoples of South Africa.

Reconciliation and Reconstruction are twin movements in the process of renewal in South Africa. Conflict resolution has a vital role in both movements. First it is located in the pathway of reconciliation and helps parties to confront positively and seek creative options and new possibilities that will serve the interests of all. Then conflict resolution's task in reconstruction is similar. As a social change method it motivates parties to build and not destroy.

17.5. CONCLUSION

This analysis of reconciliation and conflict resolution has focused on the way reconciliation is perceived in the political context, and examined its theological meaning. It has then probed the relationship between reconciliation and conflict resolution. The scope of reconciliation includes (a) the initiative of God, (b) addressing the predicament of alienation, brokenness and distress (c) through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Mediator (d) who reconciles the universe to God.

A significant finding of this thesis is that conflict resolution has a meaningful place in the service of the Church and that as a healing ministry it is theologically based in the process of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the broader concept. Conflict resolution is significantly a step in the reconciliation process.

Occurring within the context of reconciliation conflict resolution has an indispensable role in the reconciliation process. It facilitates confrontation between individuals or groups and contributes towards change in relationships where there is

conflict. Without constructive conflict resolution reconciliation becomes in the words of Mogoba, 'counterfeit reconciliation.'

At the same time, however, conflict resolution as a process in social and political conflict may stand on its own. This means that parties may arrive at agreements which are substantive, lasting and which mutually benefit all parties, without following through with reconciliation, that is a complete restoration of relationships in the theological understanding of that term as indicated above.

A theology of reconstruction builds on the foundations of reconciliation and resolution. It proclaims a liberative gospel in a time of peace and rebuilding of the nation. Reconstruction theology stands between a critical reflection on the past and the promise of a more fulfilling future for all peoples.

In order to build on the expectations of reconstruction and development there needs to be further analysis of the role of the Church in the political future of South Africa. The question is how does the Church participate in social change? In the following chapter some possible directions will be explored.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The role of the Church in political conflict is integrally related to its prophetic mission in the world. This mission involves the ministry of reconciliation of which conflict resolution forms a part. In its attempt to be true to its identity and its mission the Church finds itself in situations where it has to decide on strategies for political change. The more clarity the Church has about its function in political and social change the more precisely the Church is able practice conflict resolution.

The Church's role refers to its concern for and involvement in particular social and political events, its analysis of its relationship to specific conflicts and to the political decisions of parties. For instance it might ask: to what extent is the Church's concern mainly understood as active, partisan efforts to induce social change? Is it to be assumed that the churches should not only be *proposing* courses of social and political action but also that they should organise to bring about those proposed courses of action? Responses to questions such as these give some indication of the problems that arise when investigating the role of the Church in the political arena with reference to conflict and its resolution.

Although the strategy for involvement in political conflict might vary depending on the context it will be determined by its relationship to the theology of mediation and reconciliation. The dialectic between theology and practice will be formative in deciding the direction of the Church in the pursuit of its mission in political conflict. The nature and practice of conflict resolution by the Church will therefore need to be in dialogue with the theology of mediation and reconciliation.

It is necessary at this point to recall the meaning of terms in order to clarify the role of the Church in conflict resolution. Conflict resolution takes the form of negotiation (when the Church itself is involved in a conflict), or an intervention in situations of conflict involving other parties, political or social, in which the Church may not be directly involved.

An example of the former is the Church's negotiation with the South African government with regard to the Bantu Education Act in 1955, referred to in part two above. Here Church schools were affected by the Act so that the Church needed to confront the government and negotiate a just solution to the conflict.

An example of an intervention by the Church is the invitation extended to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Bishop Stanley Mogoba to mediate the discord between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party when they met Dr. Nelson Mandela and Chief Minister Gatsha Buthelezi before the South African general elections in April 1994.

In both cases the Church entered the conflict with a particular perspective regarding its political role through negotiation and mediation. How the Church perceives its role in political conflict will determine the manner in which it becomes involved in conflict resolution. There are two possible stances that may be adopted by the Church in political conflict, namely, a neutral perspective, and liberationist perspective. Both of these perspectives through will be examined. This analysis will be followed by a critique of these positions using insights of conflict resolution theory.

18.1. THE CHURCH AS A NEUTRAL PARTY

There are several reasons why an organisation such as the Church may adopt a neutral position in political conflict. Generally neutrality or non-alignment is embraced when taking sides in conflict is considered to be theologically, morally or strategically inappropriate in political conflict. Four basic categories of rationale supporting a neutral stance by the Church in South Africa are considered here.

I have called the first rationale *distance neutrality*. It concerns the analysis of a political situation which suggests that the Church is external to the conflict. For example the Church in South Africa might consider itself neutral to the conflict in

Northern Ireland simply because it is not involved or implicated in that conflict. In this case the Church in South Africa may consider that it is too removed from the situation and that it therefore does not understand the problems in Northern Ireland. Furthermore it may consider that its involvement in the conflict is not desirable from the point of view of either or both the Irish and the South African communities.

This rationale for neutrality is not dependent on geographic distance from the conflict. For instance in a more recent development church leaders in South Africa have taken sides against the Nigerian government after certain political activists were executed. The leaders deplored the Nigerian regime's disregard for human rights and called, for international disinvestment and particularly an embargo on oil from Nigeria. Although there is a great deal of distance between South Africa and Nigeria the two countries do have relationships with one another. So in this case their relationship with each other draws South Africa into the conflict.

A second explanation for a neutral position indicates that the Church may be close enough to a conflict situation to play a part but for various reasons choose not to do so. I have named this view *passive neutrality* which means that the Church turns a blind eye to the conflict and concerns itself with 'spiritual' work. In this case the Church excludes itself from involvement because it believes its calling is spiritual and not political.

The third category is *negative neutrality* since it argues that the Church may choose to remain neutral due to a negative perception of conflict. As discussed in chapter one of this thesis conflict is often viewed as a zero-sum battle in which groups compete for strong positions to support their base. This understanding of conflict creates a reluctance to become directly involved in political struggle for fear of the consequences for all parties.

Following a similar line of thought as above *negative neutrality* suggests that the Church may be persuaded to opt for a neutral position due to an abhorrence of the use of force by those who are involved in political struggle. In this case church leaders may become deeply suspicious of the way power is used by political groups. The problem is compounded if the Church experiences a sense of powerlessness as noted in part two above, for instance, by some observers after the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act in 1955.

The fourth category for the rationale of neutrality by the Church is called *ideological neutrality*. While this position has broad ideological or political concerns in the case of the Church it has a theological basis. It argues for neutrality on the grounds that politics is out of bounds for the Church. For instance it might be held that the gospel transcends politics and reshapes it. The task of the Church is therefore not to become involved in political struggle but to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the gospel impacts upon persons and organisations including political groups it enables them to change their ways so that a transformation of society will follow. This approach is typical of some 'third way thinking' (not to be confused with Walter Wink's 'Jesus' Third Way') according to an intriguing research by Anthony Balcomb (Balcomb 1993). It is maintained that the Church proclaims a transcendent gospel which preserves it from ideologies that entrap political movements. Basically Balcomb sees third way thinking as a theology that endeavours to counteract or avoid the political power struggle. This inevitably means there is an attempt to avoid political issues altogether (Balcomb 1993).

In the same category of *ideological neutrality* is the argument that involvement in political conflict is likely to create division within the church body. Alternatively it places the Church in an invidious position in regard to its witness to the world. The Church needs to demonstrate a model of unity and to lead by example. Therefore to become implicated in political conflict with its concomitant divisions and struggle

would be counter productive or at least weaken its authority to witness to the gospel of Christ.

The final category in this discussion is *mediation neutrality*. This rationale is based on the assumption that mediation in political conflict implies that the Church cannot be aligned to one party and at the same time be available as a mediator. The belief therefore is that the mediator must be unbiased and neutral. There are issues in this statement that need further exposure and explanation and will be considered below when the Church's role as mediator is examined.

These five categories of neutrality in social and political conflict can be summed up by a statement which provides an example of the neutral perspective taken from the research of Balcomb in his investigation into the role of the National Initiative for Reconciliation:

There were four basic reasons given by the NIR [National Initiative for Reconciliation] for the need to remain politically neutral.

First, all perspectives on the political situation reflected ideological bias and therefore fundamentally distorted views. Second, to take sides politically was not expedient as this would jeopardise the necessary accessibility to all sides in the conflict and thus adversely affect the role of the church as mediator. Third, the endemic violence of the situation called for a clear-cut dissociation from what were ostensibly only two political alternatives - a 'violent peace' or 'a violent revolution'. Fourth, it was not necessary to take on the aspect of a specific political position because the church, in prayer and reflection, was able to exercise its own unique understanding of, and make its own unique contribution to, the situation, without seeing itself accountable to political positions (Balcomb 1993:87).

The fact that there appears to be such varying bases for a neutral stance in political conflict gives some indication of its ambiguity. Theological reflection reveals a similar problem. Albert Nolan expresses his contention that there are difficulties with the insistence of neutrality in conflict. He maintains that 'it makes reconciliation an *absolute principle* that must be applied in *all* cases of conflict' (Nolan 1984:4).

Yet on the other hand, a neutral stance that avoids the conflict makes reconciliation impossible. It has been shown above that reconciliation is a process which begins with constructive confrontation. If the Church avoids conflict or refuses to become involved by remaining neutral then it also will not fulfil its prophetic role as one that confront political parties and enables the reconciliation process to take place.

18.1.2. The Illusion Of Neutrality

Ron Kraybill, an experienced mediator at the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, maintains that the notion that mediators are value-free and neutral to all outcomes held by many people in conflict is 'naive, dangerous, and damaging to the possibilities for mediators to contribute in significant ways to building a society that is not only peaceful, but also just' (Kraybill R. 1994:1). For Kraybill neutrality is an illusion as there is no such thing as a detached or objective observer. He argues that even the person sitting in silence while two others are involved in a fight the person sitting there communicates assumptions or values which influence the situation (Kraybill 1992:13).

Albert Nolan supports the argument of Kraybill that there are problems with the insistence of neutrality in conflict. He maintains that 'it makes reconciliation an *absolute principle* that must be applied in *all* cases of conflict' (Nolan 1984:4). Nolan also argues that this approach assumes that all conflicts are based on misunderstandings and that blame lies equally on both sides. On this basis all that is needed is to bring the two parties together and the misunderstandings will be solved. However, as Nolan points out, not all conflicts are over misunderstandings. In some

conflicts one side is being unjust and oppressive and the other is suffering injustice. In such cases, Nolan believes, not taking sides would be quite wrong (Nolan 1984:5).

18.2. THE CHURCH TAKING SIDES IN POLITICAL CONFLICT

The alternative to a neutral role of the Church in political conflict is understood as an active, partisan effort to induce social change. That is to say, it is maintained that the churches should not only be proposing social and political change but also that they should organise and act to bring about the preferred transformation. This approach is commonly subsumed under the theological category of the prophetic mission of the Church (Neuhaus 1986:3).

It should not be overlooked that this conception of prophetic proclamation can be found across the entire political spectrum from left to right. For example Peter Berger made this point when he said

the so-called New Christian Right feels itself engaged in a crusade to change American society in accordance with highly specific programs about which, it seems, it does not have even a scintilla of doubt. Precisely the same sort of moral certitude and programmatic specificity characterises those on the other side of the political fence, 'soft' liberals as well as 'hard' leftists (in Neuhaus 1986:3).

Nevertheless under extreme conditions when normal political action is made impossible by such interventions as unjust laws, the banning of political organisations and the suspension or restricting of democratic opposition, the Church is in a position to take up the cause of the helpless and the victims of injustice. Even in normal political conflict the exponents of this view believe that the Christian faith has a very clear political function and message which calls people to liberating action. Although Berger refers to some contradictions in terms of the prophetic proclamation of Christian groups he does recognise the duty of the Church not to

remain silent in the face of gross injustice; speaking up against such injustice is, indeed, its prophetic mission. However, he wants to draw the line against the Church prescribing a specific social or political programme (Neuhaus 1986:8).

18.2.1. Political Theologies

The perspective of taking sides is typical of the political theologies of which the theology of liberation is the best known. Liberation theology offered a reinterpretation of the Christian faith as a whole in terms of the struggle for political liberation, making use of the Marxist model of social analysis of the class struggle. So the gospel is interpreted from the perspective of the poor and oppressed, who are seen as the agents of God's redemptive activity.

Gustavo Gutiérrez pointed out that to deny the facts of class struggle is really to put oneself on the side of the dominant section. Neutrality is impossible. It is not a question of admitting or denying a fact which confronts us; rather it is a question of which side we are on. When the Church rejects the class struggle, it is objectively operating as a part of the prevailing system. The class struggle is a fact and neutrality is not possible (Gutiérrez 1974:271).

Gutiérrez's position is not based on political strategy but on theological grounds and specifically on the Christian's love for humanity. In this sense Christian love is uncompromising:

The gospel announces the love of God for all people and calls us to love as God loves. But to accept the class struggle means to decide for some against others. To live both realities without juxtapositions is a great challenge for the Christian committed to the totality of the process of liberation. This is a challenge that leads him to deepen his faith and to mature in his love for others (Gutiérrez 1974:275).

According to this interpretation, the gospel can only be good news if it is understood in the way the poor understand it. So in the context of the political struggle in South Africa before April 27 1994 when the apartheid system oppressed the majority of the people the Church was expected to identify itself, in the name of Christ, with the power struggle of the oppressed in order to bring about new political structures (Alberts and Chikane 1991:93-95).

In the Latin American context Jose Miguez Bonino argues that the mission of the Church is not only to promote sound political values but also to give them concrete expression. He goes even further by declaring that the Church must make its position clear regarding a given system it supports based on theological values, without going so far as taking political power itself:

There is a definite, particular option involved for the Church. It has to *decide* in favour of a given system at a given time and to support it (111/7). Therefore, the Church participates in politics. It may make the wrong choice, to be sure, but it cannot avoid making one. In this light one must understand the option of the Priests of the Third World for Peronism in Argentina. (2) This political action of the Church stops, however, this side of access to political power. The mission of the Church is a prophetic one, and its power is therefore the power of the *word* (it announces, denounces, exhorts, teaches, but 'it has not been given the task of exercising political power') (Bonino 1975:68).

Bonino's analysis of socio-political conflict is in accord with other liberation theologians recognising it to be a class struggle. For Bonino this fact cannot only be attributed to Marx: 'Even Calvin, with keen realism, describes the economic and social realms, under the sway of sin, as a battlefield in which greed and self-seeking have destroyed an original community of justice and introduced exploitation, injustice, and disorder . It is a struggle for power to reshape society and the effort of the oppressed to create a new society 'in which work will be related to need and creation and not to profit' (Bonino 1975: 119).

What Bonino cannot understand is the reason why the Church while recognising the intolerable injustice of an economic and social situation even after singling out the structures responsible for the inequitableness, appeals to those in power to change and at the same time condemns the struggle of the oppressed in their attempt to change it. Bonino asserts that one explanation for this kind of action of the Church is to be found in 'the insertion of ecclesiastical and theological structures in the oppressive class, in the consequent exclusion of the oppressed as agents of ecclesiastical leadership and theological reflection, in the hold of the system on the mind and interests of the churches' (Bonino 1975: 121).

Another explanation is the problem that struggle or conflict presents for the Church. For example there is the concern that political struggle and violence are incompatible with Christ's clear example and command of universal love. Bonino's response is that while violence is always questionable nowhere in the gospels is it admitted that Jesus' love for all can be interpreted as 'tolerance, compromise, or acceptance of evil or as good-natured easygoing bonhomie' (Bonino 1975:122-123).

Bonino has a problem with the way European and North American theology understands the Church's political action in the world. His critique of Jurgen Moltmann's work in this regard exposes the issue. He finds, for example, that in his major book, *The Crucified God* (Moltmann 1974) Moltmann corrects the false optimism of the future promise discussed in his earlier work by showing that Christ identifies himself 'utterly with man oppressed, destituted, and abandoned. His cross marks therefore the bankruptcy of political and religious power, indeed of God conceived as a protective assurance against destitution and death' (Bonino 1975:145). Moltmann intends to become concrete in the description of the identification of Christ in the vicious circles of death suffered by humans (Moltmann 1974:329-334) and sees this as a political theology of the cross whose function is to liberate the state from political idolatry and free humankind from alienation and

powerlessness. Bonino's problem is that Moltmann's analysis hovers 'between theological normative assertions and historical statements of fact' (Bonino 1975:146). In other words Bonino wants to see the possibilities for concrete action. What is needed he believes is a coherent and all 'embracing method of socio-political analysis' (Bonino 1975:147).

So when it comes to the role of the Church in political conflict or class struggle Bonino sees the Church identifying with the oppressed in a concrete fashion deliberately and unambiguously taking sides in a particular context. This was precisely the view of the Kairos Theologians in South Africa in 1985 when they made their call for a response from Christians that unambiguously took a prophetic stand against a tyrannical regime. Although the Document was not prescribing any particular actions from individuals it was an urgent call to unequivocally take sides with the marginalised and disenfranchised masses. On reflection one of the interesting results after the publication of the Document was the various debates over its theology and wording rather than a more in-depth discussion of the crisis toward which the Document was urging a response. This suggests the difficulty that people experienced when opposing what was a wretched system.

18.2.2. A Concrete Example

An example of the stance in which the Church is urged to take sides is seen in the instance just before the 1994 South African general elections when a statement was signed by eighty clergy and lay leaders in the Western Province affirming that political parties were accountable to the values of the Christian gospel and that members of the Church should therefore vote for the African National Congress (Singleton J: Methodist Recorder April 28 1994).

The statement published by the Methodist Recorder in Great Britain declared :
'Although no party was perfect and all had their shortcomings, not all policies were of equal merit some are closer to the values of the Gospel than others and therefore

we as Christians must decide which policies best approximate Christian values... for this reason we shall vote for the African National Congress in this election while continuing critically to assess the implementation of their policies' (Singleton J: Methodist Recorder April 28 1994).

In the article Charles Villa-Vicencio is reported as saying that the clergy had taken the 'unusual step' of openly endorsing one political party because of the urgency of the moment. Villa-Vicencio argues: 'No other party participating in the elections has affirmed the values for which we have struggled in the churches to the extent that the ANC (African National Congress) has,' (Singleton J: Methodist Recorder April 28 1994).

Villa-Vicencio's position stated at the time of the general elections in South Africa is consistent with his revolutionary praxis during the struggle for the defeat of the apartheid regime:

Good theology is, in addition to all else, always iconoclastic in identifying the interest group being served in a particular society. Authentic preaching involves the incessant unmasking of the powers that destroy humanity. The Christian is compelled by the intensity of the times to choose: either to sacralize the existing order -- whether by intent or default -- or to confront that order by providing implicit or explicit support for the revolution. The balanced see-saw option that avoids touching the ground on either side is simply not possible (Villa-Vicencio 1988:46).

Villa-Vicencio finds support for his stand in Karl Barth's understanding of the revolution of God.⁴ In his book *On Reading Karl Barth in South Africa* he argues for a radical theology of revolution that will set in motion permanent political change based on the values of the Kingdom of God and the preferential option for the poor.

⁴Charles Villa-Vicencio made this comment during an interview with him in Cape Town on January 12th 1995.

Villa-Vicencio believes that a re-reading of Barth's traditional theology can facilitate this process.

According to Villa-Vicencio Barth's faith in revolutionary praxis was shattered when the 1918 Russian revolution failed to realise the expectations and hopes of many socialists. In 1919 his Tambach lecture marked a departure from religious socialism. Then in his second edition of *Romans*, published in 1921, he went further writing that 'God's unqualified No is spoken against all human revolution, yet not as a negation of revolution *per se*. Rather, it is the basis for a more radical revolution -- God's revolution' which transcends all human revolutions because of its eschatological character restoring God's original revolution (Villa-Vicencio 1988:48).

It is maintained by Villa-Vicencio that the shift in Barth's theology was not a movement away from political involvement as some thought. This could only be assumed if Barth's theology was read ahistorically. Barth saw 'the infinite qualitative difference between God and humankind. If earlier he had emphasised human effort, he now focused decisively on God. Immanence had given way to a transcendence so radical that to affirm the incarnation was scarcely possible' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:49).⁵

The link between God's transcendence and human politics, Villa-Vicencio points out, is to be found in Barth's concept of analogy. In the words of Paul Lehmann Barth 'was pioneering a metaphorical interpretation of the knowledge and obedience of faith' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:50). For Villa-Vicencio Barth's analysis of analogy in his 1919 Tambach lecture identified the political significance of a great deal of his less obviously political concerns during the so-called quiet period. On the basis of Barth's understanding of the sovereignty of God, radically different from but always in

⁵ On this question of a shift in Karl Barth's theology Charles Villa-Vicencio refers to the work of Hunsinger: Hunsinger, 'Toward a Radical Barth', in Hunsinger, ed., *Barth and Radical Politics*, 193.

relation to history, he held theology and politics in creative tension (Villa-Vicencio 1988:51).

The divine No, so intimately related to God's Yes, means that God's revolution is the limit imposed on all human revolutions as well as the source and inspiration of the ideal of a successful and permanent revolution. 'The revolutionary "stands so strangely near to God" precisely because of his or her rejection of the existing order. Yet, determined to destroy the romantic idealism surrounding revolution, Barth argues that even the revolutionary who "aims at the Revolution by which the Order is to be inaugurated" is invariably trapped in "discontent and hatred and insubordination, of rebellion and demolition"' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:51-52).

So in Barth's analysis of the socio-political role of the Church Villa-Vicencio sees the significance of participation in God's revolution. While no-one can live up to the gospel the Christian is compelled to stand in the way of the forces that are obstructing God's revolution. This cannot be achieved by remaining neutral or vaguely supporting change. It has to be specific and direct and more so in times of urgency. The Church does not have a choice for it is imperative that it takes sides with the revolution of God⁶.

The option of concrete action by the Church particularly in times of urgency by taking sides with a particular political party which most approximates the values of the Kingdom of God has compelling possibilities. While avoiding all the ambiguities and questionableness of neutrality it positively places the Church in the midst of the world where it can make a contribution to the political future of a nation.

18.2.3. A Pastoral Problem

However, a serious pastoral problem arises from this perspective. While this pastoral concern does not deny the cogent argument for taking concrete sides with the poor

⁶ Charles Villa-Vicencio made this comment during an interview with him in Cape Town on January 12th 1995.

and in particular with parties supporting the oppressed, it warrants consideration and reflection by the Church. However, the issue concerns the question whether the Church should support a particular political party.

A practical instance will illuminate the problem. In 1993 the Rev. Mxolisi January, a minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa was stationed at Kwa Makutha in Kwa-Zulu Natal. When Rev. January arrived he found that political violence had reached crisis proportions. An on-going conflict had been raging between supporters of the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party. As is so often the case the Rev. January found that both parties were represented in his congregation. There were a number of violent clashes between members of the two parties among his congregation.

The political conflict between members of his congregation was not Rev. January's only problem. As a Xhosa speaking person from the Eastern Province he was often assumed by Zulu speaking members of the Inkatha Freedom Party to be a supporter of the African National Congress. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that Rev. January's church building was located in the part of the township that was predominantly populated by members of the African National Congress.

These conditions made it difficult for Rev. January to offer pastoral care in his congregation to all parties involved in the conflict and in particular to the members of the Inkatha Freedom Party. The problem might have been more complex had the Rev. January been a card carrying member of the African National Congress, taking sides with that party. Instances such as this probably provoked some churches, for example the Church of the Province, to instruct their ministers or priests not to accept membership of a political party (De Gruchy 1994:22-23).

18.3. THE CHURCH AS MEDIATOR IN POLITICAL CONFLICT

Confronted by the choice for the Church to adopt one of either a neutral or a partisan role in social and political conflict the pertinent question in this study is its role when it is involved in conflict resolution. The reason for the uncertainty is that it is generally assumed that a mediator is someone who is external to the conflict and therefore as neutral party one who can be entrusted with the role of honest broker. But as has been shown in chapter four of this thesis the Church is itself a site of struggle and never far from the scene conflict. This suggests that it is morally, spiritually and politically involved.

Without clarity about the issue of the neutrality or otherwise of mediators there is bound to be some confusion about the role and place of the Church in conflict resolution. A veteran of many labour-management negotiations in the United States of America is quoted as saying:

As a mediator you are always neutral in any dispute. That means that it is up to the parties to decide how to solve the conflict. Your job is merely to facilitate their discussion; what they decide to do is up to the parties (Kraybill 1994).

This point of view is certainly true in terms of mediation process. The question, however, is whether the mediator is personally neutral in any or all disputes that he, she or they facilitate. As has already been cited above Ron Kraybill and Albert Nolan maintain that mediators are not value-free or neutral to all outcomes. They have their own perspectives of the conflict which they will process in their own minds. What they do with their perspectives and beliefs about the situation is another matter.

The problem is more complex than deciding whether or not the mediator is neutral to a conflict situation. There are several categories of intervention that need to be clarified before one is able to form a judgement on the matter. Then further

developments in the understanding of advocacy is necessary. Finally we will observe the approach adopted by Walter Wink in his research.

18.3.1. Intervention Roles

James Laue and Gerald Cormick, two conflict practitioners, develop a similar approach to Nolan. They argue that any social intervention should be guided by core values of freedom, justice and empowerment. Of these criteria, justice is the primary one since freedom and empowerment are actually instrumental values leading to the creation of justice. From this standpoint 'the single ethical question that must be asked of every intervener in community disputes at every decision-making point in the intervention is: Does the intervention contribute to the ability of relatively powerless individuals and groups in the situation to determine their own destinies to the greatest extent consistent with the common good? Every conflict is different and must therefore be approached with circumspection to determine the dynamics at work' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978:205-232).

Since conflicts differ from one another the intervention also varies. For instance Laue and Cormick identify five roles played by persons or groups who intervene in a conflict: activist, advocate, mediator, researcher, and enforcer (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 212 ff). A summary of each will serve to clarify ways in which the Church may view its role in conflict facilitation.

The *activist* works closely with the powerless or non-establishment party in a conflict. He or she is usually either a member of the non-establishment group⁷ or is so closely aligned that he or she 'fully merges his or her identity with the powerless party' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 213). This role compares closely with the prophetic role of the Church.

The *advocate* plays a similar role to the activist in the sense that he or she promotes the interests of a particular side. But the advocate functions from a more detached

⁷Establishment groups also have people who play a role in counterpart to that of activists. Laue and Cormick designate them as 're-activists.'

standpoint, serving as an advisor or consultant to the group rather than identifying personally with the group he or she serves. 'The typical advocate for the establishment party is the management consultant, while the community organiser is the most frequent type of out-party advocate. A negotiator representing any of the parties also exemplifies this role type' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 213). A church body may be called upon to provide moral consultations with social organisations or political groups and so fulfil an activist role.

Mediators 'do not have their base in any of the disputing parties and thus have a more general, less party-parochial view of the conflict.' The mediator is also 'acceptable at some level of confidence to all of the disputing parties' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 214). This is a role that the Church could fulfil in some conflict situations such as the conflict between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Party in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The *researcher* may be a 'social scientist, a policy analyst, a media representative, or a trained lay observer, who provides an independent evaluation of a given conflict situation. The researcher perceives the conflict in its broadest context and is able to empathise with all positions' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 214).

The *enforcer* brings formal coercive power to the conflict. The enforcer is often 'a formal agency of social control in the larger system within which the conflict is set - the police or the courts, or perhaps ... a funding agency or an arbitrator.' Although elements of this role appear in many conflicts, one rarely sees it in pure form. 'The web of issues and parties usually is so complex that no single person or agency has an appropriate base to command allegiance to an imposed solution ...' (Bermand, Kelman and Warwick 1978: 215).

From this analysis of Laue and Cormick it becomes clear that an intervener should not assume that mediation is the only constructive response to conflict situations.

The intervener must first analyse the conflict in its context, and then choose an appropriate response. So, as Kraybill rightly argues: 'The question interveners in conflict situations should be asking themselves is not: how can we mediate in this situation? Rather it is this: what roles are most needed to move this situation towards a just resolution acquired through free choice and empowerment of those involved?' (Kraybill R. 1994:2). Mediation will sometimes be the appropriate role, but there are situations in which greater need exists for an activist or advocate. Laue and Cormick observe that people performing other roles often call themselves 'mediators' thus perpetuating the widespread misperception that mediation is the only useful intervention role. They also believe that sometimes mediators can combine several roles. For instance functioning as advocates while mediating to ensure that the real issues at the root of a conflict are addressed. In any case as Kraybill asserts 'we are advocates of something all of the time, whether we are conscious of it or not. The question is not if we are advocates but rather of what' (Kraybill 1992:14).

18.3.2. Advocacy An Alternative To Neutrality

Kraybill, develops the role of advocate further when he shows that advocacy is an alternative to neutrality. Four types of advocates are recognised: A *party advocate* takes the side of one party and presses loyally for its advantage. An example of this advocacy is the one who says: 'My country/my party/my friends - right or wrong.' An *outcome advocate* works for an outcome he or she deems desirable, without regard as to who happens to benefit from this outcome. A *process advocate* promotes neither party nor outcome, but rather a particular way of deciding things or getting things done. A *values advocate* champions concepts or principles: democracy, fair play, the rule of law, human rights, etc. thus peacemakers are able to choose forms of advocacy that enable them to define a clear perspective without falling into the partisanship of party advocacy (Kraybill 1992:14).

This discussion clarifies the range of possibilities for the Church's role in conflict. It also offers a critique of the perspectives of both neutrality and partisanship. Every

conflict situation needs to be addressed in a specific way so that the appropriate intervention may be made. At the same time it is accepted that the role of negotiation or mediation as a prophetic witness does not have the purpose of limiting, discouraging, or neutralising the conflict. Rather it aims at openly confronting the issues involved and facilitating the conflict in the interests of justice and peace.

18.3.3. Walter Wink's Third Way

One attempt to understand the role of the Church in conflict situations was Walter Wink's research into the political struggle in South Africa in 1986. During his visit to South Africa his aim was to discover whether non-violent direct action could make a contribution to political change in this country. The importance of Wink's research is the contribution it makes to conflict resolution as a theological response to the Church's role in social change.

Wink's book, *Jesus' Third Way* which contains the results of his visit and research should not be confused with Balcomb's interpretation of third way theology as it is quite dissimilar. But as Nolan observes Wink's choice of the title 'Jesus' Third Way' was unfortunate as it was bound to cause confusion about the role of Jesus in the struggle as in South Africa the third way was the path of compromise and middle-of-the-road positioning (Nolan 1988: 218).

In his research Wink shows that the Church in South Africa misunderstood the nature of the conflict and how Christians ought to be involved in the struggle. He argued that while most Christians wanted non-violence they were 'not talking about a non-violent struggle for justice. They meant the absence of conflict. They would like the system to change without having to be involved in changing it' (Wink 1987:6). He found that when attempts were made by the Church to mediate between two sides without identifying with the oppressed it gave the impression that it wanted to remain outside of the conflict.

Wink also found that the concept of 'reconciliation' had been misused. His problem was that many Church leaders were attempting to preach reconciliation without having 'unequivocally committed themselves to struggle on the side of the oppressed for justice' (Wink 1987:7). Neutrality in a situation of oppression, he maintained, always ended up supporting the status quo.

During his visit in South Africa Wink attempted to formulate a theological response to the conflict in South Africa. Although the analysis in his book was not as rigorous as one would have liked, it nevertheless provided an outsider's perspective at the time. Wink found that there were generally speaking, certain prevailing attitudes to the conflict. For instance there were the approaches which he called 'flight' which meant maintaining a neutral or passive position and 'fight' which referred to resisting repression by violent means.

In his discussion of Jesus' approach Wink shows that Jesus adopted a militant non-violent perspective. An examination of the biblical text (including Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7; and Luke 4:18, 19 for example) reveals that Jesus' stance was one of resistance and his actions and teaching were an attempt to undercut evil and violence. Furthermore Jesus scorned both passive neutrality and violence.

Translated into the South African situation Wink identified tactics that had been most effective during the 1980's. The list included:

labour strikes, slow-downs, sit-downs, stoppages, and stay-aways; bus boycotts, consumer boycotts, and school boycotts; funeral demonstrations; non-cooperation with government-appointed functionaries; non-payment of rent; violation of government bans on peaceful meetings; defiance of segregation orders on beaches and in restaurants, theaters, and hotels; and the shunning of black police and soldiers. This amounts to what is probably the largest grassroots eruption of diverse non-violent strategies in a single struggle in human history! Yet these students, and many others we interviewed, both black and white, failed to identify these tactics as non-violent and even bridled at the word (Wink 1987:4).

These actions were not calculated to be conflict reducing behaviours. The organisations responsible for these strategies saw them as a demonstration of their rejection of the apartheid policies. It came as a surprise to Wink that many South Africans failed to identify these tactics as non-violent direct action. Without taking anything from Wink's incisive observations we need to note, as Nolan did, that violence had a different meaning in South Africa. For instance it referred to forceful uprising of people whether there were weapons to hand or not. Non-violence on the other hand, tended to mean submission or just more talking.

Wink was particularly concerned to make a case for non-violent direct action in the South African struggle. Although he goes to some length to argue that Jesus used non-violent means to expose evil, one could also claim that Jesus was violent when he angrily turned the tables upside down in the temple with a whip in his hand. However the issue in this study is not whether there are situations which make violence theologically acceptable or not. Without going into a protracted debate on the use of violence two points relating the question of violence to conflict resolution must be made: First, conflict resolution is a process in which there may be a time when a latent conflict needs to be exposed. This can be risky for such actions can precipitate violence either as resistance to the established order or as a reaction to disorderly conduct. Most of the tactics in Wink's list above fall into this category. They are all non-violent means of protest but many of them are acts of civil disobedience and would invite violent reaction from those structures which uphold the system or are affected by the actions of the protesters.

The second point is a reminder of John Burton's concern that evidence of violence is indicative of more serious conflict. They are more serious in their consequences in addition to being deeply rooted (Burton 1987: 3). Burton believes that deep rooted conflict is far more difficult to resolve than what he would call normal conflict. We

can draw from this assertion that violence should not be seen as a way to solve a conflict quickly as it is more likely to make matters far worse.

Returning to Wink's approach his support for such direct action from those resisting apartheid suggests that he rejects a neutral role for the Church in conflict. He is closer to Kraybill's advocacy approach but emphasising a non-violent perspective. His suggestion that a third way option be sought in conflict is not necessarily some middle ground positioning but an alternative to passive neutrality and violent oppression or violent resistance. His understanding of 'third way' options are those that bring about change in the direction of peace and justice. But he wants strategies for change to be grounded in the way of Jesus Christ.

18.4. CONCLUSION

Emerging from this study of the role of the Church in socio-political conflict is the ever present dilemma that the Church experiences. On the one hand the Church's prophetic mission is to proclaim by word and deed the good news of God's grace and love especially for those who suffer through the domination of others. This means that the Church takes sides with the oppressed and needs to be done in specific and practical ways by supporting the actions of the people who rise against the systems, structures and people who oppress them. The long list of non-violent direct action shown by Walter Wink are examples of situations that the Church may support. According to Wink this support

'seeks out the conflict, elicits conflict, exacerbates conflict, in order to bring it out into the open and lance its poisonous sores. It is not idealist or sentimental about evil; it does not coddle or cajole aggressors, but moves against perceived injustice proactively, with the same alacrity as the most hawkish militarist' (Wink 1992:192).

On the other hand the Church may be called upon to intervene in a community conflict. An example may be a school boycott where the students protest against the

educational system and rise up against the teaching staff and the parents association. During the 1980s the Church was one of the few organisations that could be trusted by demonstrators as well as the parties which might be representative of the structures to facilitate this kind of conflict. In these circumstances the mediators do not take sides but remain impartial. This does not mean that the Church facilitators abdicate their prophetic responsibilities. But in line with Kraybill's analysis above the Church mediators are process advocates promoting neither party nor outcome, but rather a particular way of deciding how the problem may be solved.

It is at this point that the skills of the three conflict resolution facilitators researched above are relevant. The Church took a long time recognising the need to be trained in the facilitation of conflict. It was only in 1987 during the first visit of Dudley Weeks that training of Church leaders and others was contemplated. Then with the emergence of the Peace Committees in 1991 the Church became more involved developing people skilled in conflict facilitation.

Each of the three leading facilitators researched in part three above support the concept of process advocacy. Although they do not specifically introduce the principle of advocacy they each nevertheless emphasise the importance of process. Burton suggests ground rules for a process in which he includes certain phases in the mediation process in order to reconcile differences. Fisher and Ury offer a circular process which is rather more analytical than the other two to move beyond polarisation. Weeks emphasises a process based on facilitation skills so that the relationship of the parties provides opportunities and resources to move the parties forward. In each case their approaches support the principle that all parties to a conflict need to be empowered to discover a path and a relationship that develops the needs and interests of all concerned.

THE PASTORAL MINISTRY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This research has established a theology of conflict resolution on the basis that it is part of the process of reconciliation. At the same time a theology of mediation/negotiation has been explored and further developed by examining the role of the Church as mediator in socio-political conflict. In this final chapter some practical implications of conflict resolution for the pastoral ministry will be examined.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to propose another process that emulates those of specialists such as John Burton, Roger Fisher and William Ury and Dudley Weeks. Instead some of the theological principles that support whatever process of conflict resolution is used will be proposed for pastoral ministry. It will be noticed that Dudley Weeks' conflict partnership approach receives more favourable attention than others. The reason for this tendency is that Weeks' approach is more appropriate to the context of the pastoral practice. This is mainly due to its openness and its flexibility, that is, it is less structured than the others and has more scope for development in different situations. This does not mean the others are discounted. Creative elements of Burton and Fisher's process could be included in any process.

It must be kept in mind that there are several different contexts where the practice of conflict resolution when facilitated by the Church might take place. The context may be located in the wider Church at national or international levels, in the local church or congregation, and in society outside church structures. Notwithstanding the general context for the development of negotiating skills the underlying assumption is that the congregation or base community is the place where conflict resolution as a theological option and a skill is learned. The congregation will therefore be the focus or context of this final section.

First some significant theological presuppositions of conflict resolution will be proposed. These theological assumptions may be used to evaluate any conflict resolution strategy devised by persons who facilitate a conflict. Since conflict resolution skills need to be supported in the local churches by pro-active conflict resolution strategies will be considered. Finally traditional forms of ministry will be modelled in terms of their and significance for conflict resolution and congregational growth.

19.1. THEOLOGICAL PRIORITIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The conflict resolution strategies of John Burton, Roger Fisher and William Ury and Dudley Weeks which were examined above cannot be expected to meet any theological standards as they have not been devised by theologians for the specific purpose of church work. Nonetheless they are processes and skills based on principles of conflict resolution which have been used to resolve many conflicts.

It has been suggested, above, that church facilitators could make use of the insights and processes of theorists examined in part three of this dissertation to develop their own negotiation and mediation strategies. In order to assist in this exercise some important theological presuppositions or priorities for a conflict resolution process are suggested as a guide. The fundamental theological principle undergirding conflict resolution is *reconciliation*. The process towards reconciliation including confrontation, confession-repentance, forgiveness and restitution are clearly theological priorities that will influence church facilitators in negotiation and mediation. These priorities have been examined above and shown to be significant for conflict resolution.

Five further theological priorities are proposed though there are others that could be considered depending on the context of a conflict. For instance when the Massachusetts Council of Churches proposed certain guidelines for good practice in

ecumenical dialogue and *conflictunity* was considered a key theological principle and goal (Mid-stream 1996: 222). Those selected below are considered significant as they reflect theological principles which may undergird the development of conflict resolution strategies. They are suggested here as supportive of the predominant theological priority, namely, reconciliation.

19.1.1. Human Dignity And Worth

Christian theology asserts the principle of human value. In his earlier inquiry into the theological and social relation of the Christian community in *sanctorum Communio* Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw that the Christian concept of the person is related to the concept of community and also to the concept of God (Bonhoeffer 1963: 22). He saw that the value of persons was not fundamentally related to reason (Aristotle), in relation to higher ethical obligations (Stoicism), or to epistemological concepts (Descartes and Kant). Instead Bonhoeffer arrives at the thesis that 'The Christian concept of the person may now be defined as constitutive of, and presupposed in, the concept of Christian community' (Bonhoeffer 1963: 28).

This is not the place to debate Bonhoeffer's notion of the Christian community but his understanding of the relation between the person and the community is relevant. According to Bonhoeffer the Christian view of person is bound up with the concept of the Christian community and therefore with Christ. The Christian person therefore comes into his or her own in relation to the community.

This notion of the value of persons is presupposed in the theology of the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. It is clear that humankind is of such worth that God was prepared not only to dwell amongst humans but to die for humankind. This is not the place to examine the doctrine of the Incarnation but to recognise that as it has centrality in the gospel the truth it points to needs also to be acknowledged in the method or process of conflict resolution.

This leads us to the contention that the process of conflict resolution which is about human relations must uphold the value of human dignity. Not only should the facilitator take seriously the feelings, the point of view, the perceptions of the

persons involved in conflict, but must also help the parties to recognise their need to respect the human needs and aspirations of each other. This does not mean that all actions of the other person or parties must have the same respect, but that the parties approach each other in good faith.

Roger Fisher referred to this principle when he argued that conflicting parties needed to come up with a 'well crafted commitment'.⁸ By this he meant that the negotiated agreement should be one that is fair to all concerned and which had the enduring support of each party. This is a reference to the moral implications of negotiation. Implicit in this moral demand is the principle that parties need to be treated with respect by each other as well as mediators. Dudley Weeks takes it further when he emphasises mutual respect for one another is needed before the parties will be in a position to reach some understanding between them (Weeks 1992: 34).

19.1.2. Transformation

The third theological priority for a conflict resolution process is that it creates the environment and opportunity for conflict parties to change. In many conflict situations conflict parties make demands on each other which they know will not be accepted. These demands are statements indicating that parties will not change willingly. There are traditional negotiation approaches in which both sides place their demands on the table which they realise will not be acceptable, while at the same time they are equipped with bottom-line conditions. This it has been argued is natural as people will compete for their self-interest.

The gospel calls for a conversion (Mark 1.15). It requires the willingness to be changed through the power of the Spirit of God. It is an all-embracing, holistic call as it takes hold of people and the conditions under which they suffer. The call to conversion leads people into the discipleship of Jesus Christ and through him to the liberation of the poor and the suffering ones.

⁸ In an interview with T.F. Cunningham

The change in the human condition includes turning from darkness to light, from violence to justice, from isolation to community, from death to life (Moltmann 1990: 102). This conversion is characterised by a transformation of persons, structures and society.

It is not expected of the conflict resolution process that a dramatic spiritual conversion should take place in order for a constructive agreement to be reached. But it does mean that the process needs to be structured in a way that helps parties to change. Parties need to see the situation beyond their own limitations and perceptions. As the negotiations evolve the method should help the parties experience a change of heart and become open not only to their own needs (rather than their desires), as well as those of the other party.

19.1.3. Empowerment Of Persons And Groups

The fourth theological priority for a conflict resolution process is that it empower persons or groups represented in the conflict parties. Theologically the power of God is not a power by force, but by the Cross. The Cross is a constant reminder that the power of God is not power over, but power with and for others. Moltmann is helpful when he says:

He [Jesus] did not redeem his people through powerful signs and wonders of liberation. He redeemed them, if at all, through suffering and through hope. He liberated and gathered God's people, not by driving out the Romans, but in a way hitherto unknown and unpredicted (Moltmann 1990: 164).

In conflict resolution strategy the aim is not to abdicate power but to use it positively. It is through positive power that parties are empowered. The conflict resolution process therefore must enable the parties to make this paradigm shift. Parties in conflict need to discover that it is through their shared power that their conflict can be resolved. So long as the parties concerned try to use power in order to overcome the other the conflict will become destructive.

This is perhaps the most important reason why negotiations that use lists of demands that must be met find it extremely difficult to find a resolution to the conflict. The three theorists, Burton, Fisher and Weeks all agree with this principle though each deal with it differently in practice. Fisher for instance, observes that conflict parties often see themselves as adversaries and focus on positions. 'Positional bargaining puts relationship and substance in conflict.' (Fisher 1981: 21)

The conflict process itself must therefore be instrumental in helping parties adopt positive power relations. All parties to a conflict therefore need to feel empowered through the process. This is particularly important if one of the parties is for some reason weaker and has been unjustly treated.

Skills such as generating options suggested by Weeks and Fisher are helpful. Weeks is particularly aware of the negative and positive aspects of power and uses positive power in his process in terms of shared needs, encouraging parties to discover meaningful 'doables' that can be achieved by all involved.

19.1.4. The Truth

Dudley Weeks makes a poignant statement when he says:

Some change movements have severely wounded their efforts by engaging in methods that contradict the values and ethics they espouse for the new system and relationship patterns. History has shown that new systems, once instituted, often maintain and govern by the same methods used to bring about the new system. If, for example, change individuals and groups espouse a new system of justice and non-violence yet use violence and reverse injustice to attain the new system, it will be difficult to keep injustice and violence from becoming the patterns of the new system.⁹

It is precisely this principle of Weeks that encourages us to seek methods of conflict resolution that uphold creative values for all involved.

⁹Weeks D. in an undated, and unpublished paper.

The theological priority that is asserted in this case is the concern for the ultimate values of the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom of God is a new order and has a prior claim upon all Christians. as Moltmann has it:

The messianic message about the coming rule of God is not a reduction of human freedom. It actually makes freedom possible... (Moltmann 1990: 96)

and,

Anyone who stresses the *lordship of God* means the rule of God in the present. Anyone who stresses *the kingdom of God* means the dimension and new order of all things according to God's precepts, and is talking about the future of this kingdom (Moltmann 1990: 97).

Stressing this theological priority means that the process needs to emphasise that none has the monopoly of the truth. Put in another way: the truth is more than the sum of its parts. The method should therefore move the parties beyond their own self-interest towards exploring possibilities that will institute new and more creative conditions for all parties involved.

19.1.5. Creative Wisdom

A creative conflict resolution process is a powerful instrument for new creation. The process therefore needs to be an open one. If facilitators are themselves ready for the unexpected and for imaginative possibilities then there is more likelihood of positive development in parties and structures which might be binding them to rigid patterns of behaviour. Dudley Weeks' work is an example of this endeavour to be creative in the resolution of conflict. He emphasises a process that demands skills which help conflict partners to discover new ways of dealing with their problem.

In the pastoral ministry, therefore, we need to undergird the practice of conflict resolution with a theology that will support creative development of persons and church structures. For this purpose a theology of creation will provide fertile images for creative methods of conflict resolution..

Jurgen Moltmann's suggestion of a theology of creation that is an open system offers a helpful direction for a theological perspective that urges the search for new possibilities in our relationship patterns. In his book, *The Future of Creation* he writes

it is perfectible, not perfect, for it is open for the history of both disaster and salvation, for both destruction and consummation. If we understand creation individually and as a whole as *an open system*, then its beginning is at the same time the condition for its history and its completion (Moltmann 1979: 120).

Of course this notion of creation as an open system implies that there are both constructive and destructive possibilities. There is an element of risk when creative energy is allowed to explore its field and this includes creative conflict resolution processes. Nonetheless it is this theological insight that needs to be incorporated into conflict resolution strategy for every conflict situation is an instance of creation groaning in pain needing creative wisdom to set it free (Romans 8:22-23).

More recently Michael Welker kindled the creation debate in his rereading of Genesis 1 and 2. He raises the enduring questions: 'are we to understand "creation" as creation out of nothing, or as "creation" out of absolute or relative chaos? Second, are we to conceive "creation" as a one-time act or as a continuous event?' (Welker 1991: 58).

The first question focuses on the issue of change. Is creation an act from nothing to something? In this view creation was established and set at the beginning. The act of

creation is therefore a qualitative leap from a situation that offers no basis from which things can take shape or change. Alternatively the act of creation is a process of producing out of chaos. In other words is it a transformative process of generating higher conditions out of an absence of structure or lack of structure? (Welker 1991: 58).

Much work has been done on these questions over the years. Welker, for instance mentions such eminent theologians as Ferdinand Christian Baur of the nineteenth century and Karl Barth. Using the work of these and other theologians as guiding conceptions Welker wishes to reread Genesis 1 and 2. Without going into detail we note that the first surprising observation of Welker is that with the exception of a few instances God's creative action does not correspond to the pattern of causation and production. Rather they describe 'God intervening in that which is already created, intervening for the purpose of further specification' (Welker 1991: 60). For instance, God intervenes in the activity of naming (Genesis 1:5a, 8a, 10a) and in the act of separating (Genesis 1:4b, 7b). In the creation stories 'God sees, names, separates, and reacts in a differentiated way to the situation and behaviour of the human being. What a world lies between this important characteristic of divine creating in the classical creation texts and the concept of unconditioned production and causation!' (Welker 1991: 61). Basically Welker's proposal is that God creates by bringing different realms of life into fruitful associations of interdependent relations that promote life.

These reflections of Welker present a perspective of conflict resolution that suggest the notion that God's act of creation is continuous enabling the association of persons to interact in such a way that new life is being promoted. This continuous stream of creation implicates humankind as well as the rest of creation. In other words God invites the interaction of creation so that there emerges co-creation of structures and patterns of relationships.

Introducing the notion of chaos offers another view of God's creative act which has implications for conflict resolution. Although the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* has been an integral part of Christian dogma certainly from the end of the second century onward (McGrath 1994: 234), there are grounds for the notion that God did not 'create out of nothing' but out of chaos.

In some traditions chaos has been described as -primeval disordered matter that preceded ordered cosmos (Hanlon: 1979: 706). G Von Rad takes this understanding further when he states that

... this second verse speaks not only of a reality that once existed in a primeval period but also of a possibility that always exists. Man has always suspected that behind all creation lies the abyss of formlessness, further, that all creation is always ready to sink into the abyss of the formless, that the chaos, therefore, signifies simply the threat to everything created (Von Rad: 48-49).

It emerges from this understanding that chaos should not be thought of only as a primeval entity, but that it has the possibility of present existence. M K Wakeman supports Von Rad when he writes 'Chaos is a state of utter confusion, totally lacking in organization or predictability. It is the antithesis of cosmos' (Wakeman 1976: 143). Furthermore he identifies two ways in which chaos manifests itself: as unyielding, undifferentiated energy which is resistant to change; and secondly, dissipated, undifferentiated energy which is resistant to patterning. The ordering of chaos which constitutes creation is thus described by Wakeman as 'the establishment of free yet regulated movement' (Wakeman 1976: 143).

In his discussion of chaos in the creation stories of Genesis Roger Scholtz finds a problem with Wakeman's definition when chaos is described as 'the antithesis of cosmos' consisting of undifferentiated mass and undifferentiated energy. He asserts that the picture of chaos which is evoked here is of an abstract, far-removed entity. However, in some of the Old Testament traditions chaos is graphically portrayed with vivid imagery of monsters and dragons. Scholtz argues that from this

perspective at least, Wakeman's clinically abstract 'undifferentiated mass/energy' falls short of the mark (Scholtz 1996: 3). The suggestion is that N J Girardot's definition of chaos is preferable:

... the horribly confused state, muddled matrix, vacuous condition, or monstrous creature preceding the foundation of an organized world system. By extension, the idea of chaos ... may also apply to any anomalous condition, event, or entity outside conventionally sanctioned codes or order (Girardot 1987: 213).

The relevance of the chaos tradition for a theology and practice of conflict resolution is clearly evident. Conflict so often descends into the abyss of confused, disorganised and purposeless energy and if permitted to continue without creative intervention can become, to use John Burton's term, deep-rooted conflict. Similarly Moltmann points out that creation out of chaos is at the same time the field of both constructive and destructive possibilities (Moltmann 1979: 120). But in the wisdom of God chaos becomes an instrument or agent (Scholtz 1996: 4) of creative change open to new and positive structure or order.

19.2. PRO-ACTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE CHURCH

The principles of conflict resolution generally apply to situations which need problem solving. As the focus of conflict resolution has largely been on its usefulness as a rescue device it is not always recognised that an important component of conflict resolution is in fact the prevention of conflict. A more positive way to explain this principle is to recognise that conflict resolution processes can be used pro-actively. Three approaches to pro-active conflict resolution are suggested below. Each of them involves a skill or skills which will either prevent destructive conflict or help individuals and groups to resolve their conflicts before the situation becomes intolerable.

19.2.1. Pro-Active Facilitation

The first skill or method to be focused upon is located in the facilitation of a conflict. Pro-active facilitation takes place before the parties meet each other, or at least before they directly engage each in the mediation of their conflict.

Dudley Weeks explains this approach in the following way:

Pro-active facilitation, in contrast to the rescue-squad pattern of *reactive* negotiation, actively seeks out conflict parties in an attempt to help them empower themselves with effective processes and skills. The facilitator first works with each party separately, facilitating and encouraging the learning of whatever parts of the **conflict partnership** process seem most appropriate to the given situation. When the facilitator then brings the parties together in conflict sessions, all come equipped with an effective and shared process (Weeks 1988: 13).

Weeks' point is: If conflict partners are provided with skills both to understand their conflict as well as negotiate with one another, then successful conflict resolution is possible before it becomes destructive.

19.2.2. Training In Conflict Resolution

Members of Church congregations (as well as other organisations) should be trained in conflict resolution as this in itself is a pro-active strategy. The scope for training a congregation is a broad one. It includes training in family conflict, involving husband-wife and parents-children conflicts; minister/priest and lay leadership and inter-group conflict. Then there are community conflicts arising out of the changes that have taken place in South Africa such as the following examples:

Property dispute: There have been incidents where people have sold homes to fellow members of the congregation and then refused to vacate them on grounds that it is a family home and the children are heirs to the property. This has caused conflict not only between the families concerned but also within the congregation.

Church boundaries: Informal settlements spring up in suburban areas and conflicts occur over the rights access of congregation in those settlements. In this case it is clear that training in conflict resolution could also take place among church groups in informal settlements as well as the congregations.

There is a conflict among young people and their role in the congregation. In patriarchal society children are marginalised and placed on the fringes of life by the congregation. On the other hand, children of 12 to 16 years have been known to force a minister out of his/her home and congregation due to a dispute.

In some churches there is conflict between uniformed and non-uniformed organisations within the church. Conflict resolution training in particular groups of the congregation would offer skills in communication with one another.

Each of the above situations represents contexts in which conflict resolution training could be effective. People learn not only to deal with potential conflict but also to negotiate creative social change. The community is able through training in conflict resolution to recognise the possibility of working for change by learning to create a structure to deal with their differences.

19.2.3. Decision-Making

Pro-active conflict resolution not only refers to the facilitation of a conflict but includes the way decisions are made. Ineffective or inadequate decision-making process is the cause of many conflicts within organisations. Ron Kraybill emphasised this principle with an example in an address at an international conference on conflict resolution in Pretoria in 1991:

The first lesson is simple, yet it is so routinely ignored that it deserves to be highlighted. *Process matters more than outcome.* We have witnessed in recent weeks an illustration in South Africa of this point. In July of this year, there was an

effort to convene a conference on the violence which has destroyed so many lives recently. All the key parties were invited to attend to discuss a problem widely agreed to be a very serious one. The conference failed as an effort to establish negotiation - key parties refused to attend. Yet a few weeks later a similar effort was launched with a similar purpose. This effort has been resoundingly successful, and shows every sign of gaining momentum. The intended outcome for both efforts was the same; one succeeded, the other failed. Why? The difference is good process. The first effort was announced publicly by one party to the conflict, the government, without consultation with the other parties. Bad process prevented people from supporting a good outcome (Kraybill 1991: 56).

Effective decision-making is crucial for the prevention of serious conflict. The skill to be learned by church leaders and others is to 'think process' when important decisions have to be made. Many times people will reject almost any outcome - even a wise and fair one - which they feel is the result of bad process.

John Burton, for instance, looks at decision-making from this point of view and suggests three sets of models. He recognises those that 'make puzzles out of problems.' By this he refers to those that are interactive but still in a power framework. In other words while there may be consultation with relevant persons or groups but decision-making is in the hands of the authority or power figures who abuse their position by using high handed methods or maintain control in their own hands in running the meetings. Second, there are those that recognise the need to satisfy legitimate aspirations, but at the same time rest finally on power or compromise that reflects relative power. Third are those that are problem solving in the sense that they rest on analysis and seek outcomes that are positive-sum, satisfying the values of all parties.

The third model above leads to a consideration of problem solving as a process in its own right, and the institutional forms it may take. Problem-solving has several distinct characteristics. First, the solution is never in a final product. It is in itself

another set of relationships that contains its own set of problems. It is this kind of decision-making that may be seen as pro-active conflict resolution. The principle being that constructive and participative decision-making has a chance to pre-empt destructive conflict. It does not avoid conflict or confrontation but enables more fruitful possibilities for ensuring that conflict is worked through more productively from the point of view of organisational goals as well as human relations (Burton 1984: 134).

19.3. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PASTORAL MINISTRY

Paul Avis makes most insightful comments when he refers to conflict as both inescapable and also indispensable. As such it may cause irreparable damage by polarising individuals or groups in a way that that may take years to overcome. Yet it can also, in the words of Paul Avis

...give vitality to an institution. It allows internal interest groups to pursue their aims, which may be for the overall benefit of the system. It opens up the system to its environment as fresh energies are drawn in to replace those energies consumed in internal conflicts. It clarifies the true interests of the organisation, corrects imbalances, and stimulates reform and renewal (Avis 1992: 120).

Conflict is therefore not to be contained but harnessed. This, Avis maintains is the role of leadership in the Church. The question is then: how does the ministry of a church channel conflict so that it neither exhausts the members or paralyses the institution?

The ordained ministry has a particular role in the Church. Although the role of the minister or priest as the leader who goes ahead of the congregation has been challenged on grounds that it fosters clericalism. But the concern about clericalism should not prevent the ordained ministry from rediscovering a calling as Christian leaders providing theological direction for the mission of the community of faith in

the world. At the same time the laity shares with the ordained ministry a common task of building up the People of God and participating in the duty of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

There are three forms of ministry which constitute the fundamental tasks of ministry (this includes the laity) namely, the pastor, prophet and priest. Each one of these roles fulfils a function and yet at the same time each one is linked to the other two. All of them in some way have a role in the conflicts that take place within the congregation and in society.

19.3.1. The Ministry Of The Prophet

The role of the prophets, at least in Pauline-type congregations, was not that of social criticism but of witness to Jesus Christ within the body in order that the church could discern

the mind of Christ' and be built up in faith, hope and love. They were, in fact, those leaders within the congregation who sought to articulate the tradition of Jesus in new contexts so that the word of the living Lord could be heard. The apostolic tradition and faith to be proclaimed throughout the whole world, and the prophetic Word in the Spirit to be proclaimed in a particular historical context belonged together (De Gruchy 1981: 68).

Proclaiming the 'mind of Christ' in a situation the prophet is a disturber of the peace for the sake of peace. In this role the prophets confront the Church and society based on the testimony of Jesus Christ, (discussed in chapter three), and call for change. In this role the prophet either speaks into a conflict or if a conflict has been suppressed or avoided the prophet confronts the situation to bring it to the surface.

A concern of Ronald Preston needs to be echoed here. It is his fear that particular 'positions of the prophet will be absolutised as "the will of God" for us.' This is a

timely reminder of the risks involved in the prophetic ministry. Preston elaborates further:

The old Testament prophets provided dangerous models of black and white denunciations which can hinder Christians from perceiving the ambiguities and ambivalences involved in moral discernment in relation to detailed situations and policies. The inevitable uncertainties at this level mean that the changing details must not be identified too simply with God's Word (Preston 1981: 45).

Certainly the prophetic ministry is a responsible one. The responsibility is assumed in the way Gordon Harris shows that the prophetic ministry is first and foremost a listening ministry. The prophet's ears are tuned to the sounds of the world. At the same time reflecting deeply on the Word that God calls him or her to speak.

19.3.2. The Ministry Of The Pastor

While the prophetic ministry is more inclined to illuminate, even provoke conflict, the pastoral ministry attempts to bring healing. The pastor is the one who walks closely with the people listening to their suffering, washing their wounds, and healing their pain in the name of Jesus Christ.

Although the pastoral ministry is concerned with activities such as care, counselling and spiritual well-being it is intimately linked to conflict issues. People share with the pastor their internal conflicts, their relational conflicts as well as their political crises.

As John De Gruchy rightly asserts pastoral care is not much help if by healing wounds it simply reinforces the values of a social milieu (De Gruchy 1981: 159). The point that De Gruchy makes is that the pastor's role is not to protect persons from the prophetic challenges of the gospel, or concerning the present discussion, from conflict. If the pastor does this the problems and conflicts may only be exacerbated.

A relevant pastoral ministry is concerned about confronting. Howard Clinebell maintains, for instance, that when listening to a client the pastor may need to confront the person in such a way that the person confronts him/herself. This arouses what Clinebell calls 'appropriate guilt'. (Clinebell 1984: 143) He goes on to say:

Confrontation is most likely to result in self-confrontation when it includes two aspects. These are expressed well in New Testament language as 'speaking the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15, referred to earlier as the 'growth formula'). (Clinebell 1984: 144)

This leads to the consideration that pastoral ministry is not only concerned with personal problems as important as this is but it is also involved in the transformation of society. As the pastor helps people make peace with themselves and with God in Jesus Christ people need to discover that they also participate in the healing and transformation of the community. To the extent that the pastoral ministry is able to include healing of community it is linked to the prophetic ministry. Thus the pastor should take care that the people of God are able to respond positively to conflict and not reject it.

19.3.3. The Priestly Ministry

In this dissertation it has been maintained that conflict, both destructive and creative, both overwhelming and manageable, is woven into the fabric of human life. As conflict has the ingredients both for destructive outgrowths as well as productive possibilities for human life we need the spiritual resources that can sustain us amidst diversity and energise us in the midst of it. Norman Shawchuck and Robert Heuser explored the significance of the multi-cultural congregation where the building of bridges among people 'who live outside the mainstream due to the color of their skin, their accents, or their gender' (Shawchuck and Heuser 1993: 238). Referring to the place of worship Shawchuck and Heuser write:

The debris of broken lives and alienated communities and nations in the history of humanity will not have the final word regarding the destiny of humankind. The final word is

reconciliation among people of different races and cultures!
And that reconciliation is best implemented in the midst of a
worshiping congregation (Shawchuck and Heuser 1993: 238).

Some time ago Ross Snyder also discovered that reconciliation could be found in the midst of worship. He wrote about the need to celebrate joys as well as the crises of life. Snyder found that people were being dehumanised, marginalised and individualised by lifeless worship in the Church. We live in a precarious and permanently ambiguous world in which there is no assurance that humankind will not destroy humankind. There is thus a cry for worship that can speak into the situation of life and awaken people as never before. So for Snyder 'To *voice the human cries of our time*; and to *enter into the significant future that might come through them* could be done in celebrative worship' (Snyder 1971: 22). He used to teach his students the art of celebration as a communal event so that 'we must *find peace in becoming and within struggle*' (Snyder 1971: 15). Celebration as a communal experience did not ignore the conflicts within and around the community. It re-experienced the agony of division and offered it to a transforming God who cared enough to become involved.

The most important role of the priest as celebrant is to help a people or a congregation to celebrate in spite of struggle and chaos. Snyder maintained that "to celebrate" is a much more accurate, potent, and historic word than "to worship". A "service of worship" seems to be a long-time anachronism' (Snyder 1971: 40).

The priest is the one who ushers the people before God and helps them celebrate. The congregation comes before God aware of conflicts within and without and in need of reconciliation with God and with one another. Liturgically the priest as celebrant is *mediator* guiding the congregation through the process of reconciliation, from confrontation through confession, forgiveness, repentance, restitution and thanksgiving.

A community of faith is enriched by liturgies that help its members celebrate the joys, become sustained in the tragedies of life and harness the conflicts that it experiences. Time and again liturgies that lead the people of God to seek transformation of their life through the conflicts that they face are a spiritual necessity. Douglass Lewis puts it so well when he says:

A liturgy of conflict management reminds us again and again of those things that bestow creativity rather than bondage, growth rather than destructiveness (Lewis 1981: 72).

The Holy Communion Service is in itself a celebration of reconciliation. A thanksgiving for Jesus Christ the Mediator who reconciles all humankind to God. Reconciled to God and fellow human beings, Christians desire to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ as a symbol of the recognition of his sacrifice for them and their willingness to take his life into theirs for the sake of others. It is the command of Jesus that no one should come to the altar with a heart unreconciled to another Christian. If this command applies to all worship, indeed, to every prayer we offer, then it applies all the more to receiving the sacrament. Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw the Lord's Supper as a celebrative occasion in which Christians sought to find each other, confess to each other and seek forgiveness from one another and from God. In his little book *Life Together* he writes:

The day of the Lord's Supper is a joyous occasion for the Christian community. Reconciled in their hearts with God and one another, the community of faith receives the gift of Jesus Christ's body and blood, therein receiving forgiveness, new life, and salvation. New community with God and one another is given to it. The community of the holy Lord's Supper is above all the fulfilment of Christian community. Just as the members of the community of faith are united in body and blood at the table of the Lord, so they will be together in eternity. Here the community has reached its goal. Here joy in Christ and Christ's community is complete. The life together of Christians under the Word has reached its fulfilment in the sacrament (Kelly 1996: 118).

So the priestly ministry which helps the congregation to prepare liturgies that celebrate the conflicts of life enables the people to be spiritually fortified through times of conflict. It is therefore fitting that this thesis ends on a celebrative note with a short litany adapted from a liturgy by Douglass Lewis: (Lewis: 1981: 72):

LITANY OF RECONCILIATION

Thanksgiving

We are an intentional people created by God with goals and a purpose. We live in a world with other intentional persons created by God.

Confession

We seek the fulfilment of our goals, even at the cost of the well-being of others and myself. Forgive us Lord..

Absolution

God affirms and loves us in spite of the destructiveness of our will and actions. Jesus Christ forgives those who sincerely ask for forgiveness.

Intercession

Because we experience affirmation and transformation, we are open to and care for the needs and goals of others.

Service

We will invest our creative energy in the midst of conflict to search for alternatives that lead to the fulfilment and wholeness of all persons.

CONCLUSION

This research in conflict resolution as a role of the Church in socio-ecclesial and political conflict has opened up possibilities for conflict resolution to be recognised as a role of the Church. Hitherto conflict resolution has been assumed to be a political, management or secular function. Theologians such as Brunner have acknowledged the Church's role as reconciler in the name of Jesus Christ the Mediator. However, conflict resolution has not been fully thought of as a theological concept, rather it has been perceived as a skill and science that belongs outside the province of the Church. The fact that conflict resolution generally, has not been considered as a ministry or service of the Church has resulted in less than satisfactory ways of dealing with conflict by the institution. The goal of the research has therefore been to investigate how or if conflict resolution may be understood theologically.

20.1. CONFLICT AS LIFE EXPERIENCE

The investigation into conflict resolution has required an inquiry into the nature and theology of conflict. Several important concerns in this regard enabled a more precise exploration of conflict resolution as a role of the Church to emerge.

Conflict is a common experience of humanity. This is not a new idea, it has been realised for a long time. But as conflict has so often been seen as a negative experience, or zero-sum, and theologically it has been generally regarded as a sin. However, examining the relationship between conflict and sin has shown that conflict is experienced under a condition of finiteness or humanness, which makes it possible either to create disorder, imbalance, injustice and alienation or through creative tension with fellow human beings to harness conflict and promote growth.

This insight has helped us to discover a more creative approach to conflict resolution. For instance it has encouraged persons to seek more creative outcomes in conflict situations.

The research takes cognisance of the psychology of conflict. For instance in Freud's contribution is the fact that psycho-social conflict is considered to be due to a biological selfishness. In contrast, Jung's view is that the biological factor is only incidental.

For the latter, in pursuing selfhood one does not eliminate conflict, the conscious and the unconscious remain opposed. They are, however, two conflicting poles of personality set in juxtaposition and communication with each other. So in contrast to other personological models, Jung defines the self as a conglomerate of conscious and unconscious experience.

From the theological analysis conflict from the perspective of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross it was found that the Church has a dual role. On the one hand the Church has the task of reconciling opposing groups by facilitating an analysis of definitions of truth; while on the other hand the prophetic voice of the Church declares the it's option for those who have been unjustly treated, marginalised, or become victims of political violence, in terms of the testimony of Jesus. It also becomes clear that the Church also has the role to enable underlying conflicts in a political situation to emerge. The Church does this through its prophetic role by uncovering the sinful acts of humanity in terms of the demands of the Gospel. The church does this in spite of the fact that such actions may cause conflict.

20.2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

A significant finding of this thesis is that conflict resolution has a meaningful place in the service of the Church and that as a healing ministry it is theologically based in the process of reconciliation. Conflict resolution is an important step in the process of

reconciliation. It facilitates confrontation between individuals or groups and contributes towards change in relationships where there is conflict. Without constructive conflict resolution reconciliation is at risk of becoming spurious.

At the same time it is also important to note the finding that conflict resolution as a process in social and political conflict may stand on its own. Parties in conflict may work towards agreements which are substantive, lasting and which mutually benefit all participants, without following through with reconciliation, that is a complete restoration of relationships in the theological understanding of that term.

20.3. THEOLOGY OF RECONSTRUCTION

A further finding in a theology of reconciliation was the debate surrounding the theology of reconstruction. When reconciliation is followed through as a process there is often a time of transition and transformation. This is usually a period of uncertainty, of flux and sometimes even chaos.

It was found that in conditions such as this that a theology of reconstruction is relevant. There is not a great deal of literature on this development which is surprising considering the stage in which South Africa finds itself in its development towards a non-racial democracy.

Nevertheless it was found that a theology of reconstruction builds on the foundations of reconciliation and resolution. It proclaims a liberative gospel in a time of peace and rebuilding of the nation. Reconstruction theology stands between a critical reflection on the past and the promise of a more fulfilling future for all peoples.

20.4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The research has shown that conflict resolution should be acknowledged as an integral part of the ministry of the Church in the future. This ministry should therefore be recognised as a significant role of the Church particularly in times of political and social unrest. While reconciliation will always be the predominant as the goal of the Church this dissertation has opened the way for the Church to consider conflict resolution as a theologically sound skill to be learned at the local level in the pastoral ministry. Should the Church lack an understanding of conflict resolution and the ability to use a creative process it will discover that reconciliation itself will be relegated to theory.

20.5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODELS

An analysis of the theorists is a contribution of this dissertation. The work of three specialists, John Burton, William Ury and Roger Fisher (their joint work was considered) and Dudley Weeks were for the first time set alongside one another. They revealed an intriguing panoramic view of conflict resolution theory and practice. Each of them produced theory and practice of the highest order. All of them used in this country with varying success.

This dissertation did not investigate a conflict resolution practice that would be specifically developed for resolving Church and/or community conflict such as the *Guidelines for Good Practice* offered by the Massachusetts Council of Churches for ecumenical dialogue (Mid-stream 1996: 223). This might have been a task that this dissertation could have embarked upon. However the method demanded for such a development would have required one or more workshops and thereby taking it beyond the scope of the thesis. Nonetheless the conflict resolution processes produced by specialists in this field such as Burton, Fisher and Ury, and Weeks, were researched as models indicating that they could be by the Church in conflict situations. In order to support this proposal theological priorities which should undergird any conflict resolution process initiated by the Church has been advocated.

This means that for the Church conflict resolution process becomes not simply a problem solving exercise but an exercise in the discernment of the will of God, the mind of Christ, and the prompting of the Spirit.

20.6. ROLE OF CHURCH AS MEDIATOR

In the investigation into the stance of the Church in political conflict it was found that the mediating role was most appropriate even in times of intense strife such as experienced in South Africa during the 1980s. When the concept of conflict resolution was brought into the debate it was discovered that the Church could never be neutral in conflict. Nonetheless taking sides in conflict has its own problems.

It was found that the Church had various mediatory options which needed to be supported theologically. Some of the options included the roles of activist, advocate, mediator and researcher. This discovery was helpful because it meant the Church still had to do its theological work in conflict situations and maintain its convictions while exploring options. Even the above list cannot be claimed to be exhaustive and at any one time any or all of them might be appropriate in conflict situations. The significance of this finding was that the role of conflict resolution and mediation was the catalyst for a clarification of the Church's role.

20.7. BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS RESEARCH

It was made clear in part one that the research would not include conflict in the commercial or industrial sectors as it was also beyond the scope of this research. It is nevertheless an area of research that needs to be undertaken by the Church. Industrial and labour relations is a specialised field and the negotiations that take place are decidedly adversarial and need overhauling. However it was not possible to include this field of research as it would have involved a great deal of investigation and analysis of industrial labour relations legal procedures governing negotiations

between unions and management and possibly the Labour Act as well. Only then could the relationship between the industrial process and the role of the Church be assessed. The decision was taken to limit the research to political and community conflict which included negotiations within the Church itself.

Of equal importance is the question of litigation and arbitration. This issue also was not taken up in the dissertation. This is extremely important in the present social and political climate of South Africa. Again this issue opens up an area of debate and discussion that would have taken the dissertation into another direction. As conflict resolution has been placed within the reconciling ministry of the Church in which a win-win outcome is sought the win-lose bargaining strategy has not been considered as an option. In a recent book on negotiation tactics David Churchman makes the statement that integrative or win-win bargaining is very much the rage though most negotiations are distributive or win-lose (Churchman 1995: 2). Following through with a proposal that includes distributive bargaining would open up a new inquiry. How does the Church deal with litigation against itself? What tactics are necessary to prepare for court action? Are there any guidelines for a win-lose bargaining approach that can be supported theologically? There is little doubt that such an investigation would be worthwhile even necessary.

20.8. PRO-ACTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In order to off-set some of the limitations of this dissertation in regard to the above consideration of litigation an argument for pro-active conflict resolution was proposed. Pro-active conflict resolution it was argued would pre-empt the need for persons or groups to seek any form of arbitration or court action. This simply meant that helpful communication patterns, ensuring open decision making processes were followed and constitutional procedures followed.

20.9. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method adopted in this research allowed for a dialogue between theory and practice to take place. As was bound to occur in an investigation as the present one a three dimensional dialogue took place. First the dialogue between conflict resolution theory and practice, second, the dialogue between theology and practice and third, the dialogue between the theory and practice of conflict resolution on the one hand and the theology and practice of the Church on the other. Generally, the dialogue between these components were not considered separately or in sequence but by means of a constant flow between them.

There was, nevertheless, a section which contained a qualitative research method. This involved five case studies which focused on the Church's performance as negotiators or mediators in political conflict during the apartheid era in South Africa. The case study method adopted in this research was a useful one as it involved an investigative method together with a free flowing analysis and evaluation of processes used by the Church in conflict. It resulted in both positive and negative findings. Though on the whole the case studies showed that the Church was not as equipped in conflict resolution skills as it might have been.

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