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Number 144

Biographical Notes of Authors

Theology as Politics in Afrikaner Nationalism and Black Consciousness. A Close Reading of F. J. M. Potgieter and Steve Biko.
Hans Engdaal

‘Creating’ a Pilgrimage?
George Euvrard

Milbank on Protestantism: A Critical Analysis
Nico Vorster

Is Love Enough? – Towards a Theological Ethic of Nonviolence in South Africa
Wessel Bentley

A Theological Model of Healing to Inform an Authentic Healing Ministry
Stuart C. Bate OMI

Parishioners’ Attitudes towards Clergywomen: A South African Case Study
Petronella Jonck, Anda le Roux & Lysette Hoffman

Reflections on Recent Developments in Liturgical Studies in the Light of Experiences from the Research Field and the Lecture Room
Cas Wepener

Between Vanity and Sanity: Review Essay on Klaus Nürnberger’s “Regaining Sanity for the Earth”
Ernst Conradie

Editorial Board 2012

Index to JTSA Issues 142-144, 2012

November 2012

2

4

26

34

53

69

92

109

126

144

147
merely a higher transcendent reality in the same order as us. The question is: Why then does Milbank describe God as a God of gift, charity and love. If God is not capable of suffering why would God be capable of love? Is it not love that enables us to suffer for the sake of others?

Final Remarks

Milbank's criticism of Protestantism is not totally unwarranted. Unfortunately, his rather crude depiction of Protestantism which, at times, lacks historical accuracy and balance, combined with his closed fideistic, theological meta-narrative, makes constructive dialogue difficult. In general, I am skeptical of whether the Milbankian meta-narrative, which attempts to establish the hegemony of theology and allows no space for the secular, will be able to engage with secular humanity or be able to replace the dominance of the modernist secular meta-narrative. Milbank's contribution, in my view, does not consist in the ambitious counter-narrative that he proposes, but in his critique of modern thought which induces us to self-reflection.

95 Cf Milbank, The Word Made Strange, 422.

Is Love Enough? – Towards a Theological Ethic of Nonviolence in South Africa

Wessel Bentley

ABSTRACT

The great majority of the South African population profess to belong to the Christian faith and, as everybody knows, Christianity has as its basis the teaching of love of God and of one's neighbour. Yet, it is in this context that we find a community victimised by violent crime, and in response to these acts of violence, is growing in its vigilante sentiment. Indeed, South Africans seem to have a reputation for crime, xenophobia and public protests that often translate into acts of violence. This paper explores the Christian teaching of love and asks whether this can translate into an ethic of nonviolence within the South African context. It does so with reference to the pacifism of Stanley Hauerwas and John H. Yoder.

Introduction

During the past five years, as a South African I have witnessed and experienced many different forms of violence and crime, either committed against my own household, or friends and relatives. In this time we have experienced eight acts of trespassing on our property, three break-ins, one family member murdered during an armed robbery, one shot during a break-in and my wife and children narrowly evading an armed robbery at a local shop. To be a Christian and to live a life of love, forgiveness, and, for me, pacifism, is becoming increasingly challenging. Love, forgiveness and pacifism, when no longer treated as mere notions or theories, are difficult to put into practice when one is exposed to so many different forms of personal violence and violation. This leads to the question: "Is Christian love and forgiveness in the form of pacifism a viable option for the people of South Africa?" Is it possible to live a life of nonviolence in a society that is becoming desensitised to acts of invasion, violence and suffering? The views expressed in this paper are based on a personal struggle to find the reasons why we, as Christians, should follow the path of nonviolence when the odds seem to be very much stacked against such a form of living. The structure of the argument will be as follows. First, I will refer to violence as a theme in South Africa's history.

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This will be followed by teachings on pacifism, where I will focus specifically on the theologians Stanley Hauerwas and John H. Yoder. The discussion will also include thoughts on the Just War theory. Last, the meaning of Christian love will be explored and proposed as a better alternative to acts of violence.

Violence and South Africa

South Africa comes from a violent and divided past. This past is not only encapsulated in the relatively recent history of the Apartheid dispensation but, as with histories of other colonised countries, South Africa is the tale of a nation in conflict. In South Africa, violent interaction in the past was set against the backdrop of the desire for the ownership of land and people’s quest to dominate population groups that did not conform to the desires of those who found themselves in power. This is true of both the history of South Africa’s colonisation and the rise of the Apartheid regime. Unfortunately, there is no denying the fact that as much as we celebrate the peaceful transition from the former regime of oppression to the new democratic South Africa, we are a people born of violence and as such, a people who carry residual evidence from our past. In short, South Africans are violent. Reflecting on the past fifty years, we can speak of things such as the legitimisation of racial inequalities, uprisings, buckshot, stones, conscription, necklacing and exile. These terms are familiar to South Africans and are not far-off notions that lie in the realms of fantasy or geographic distance. The incidences of violence in South African history are well documented and will not be discussed here in detail.

Despite this violent history, change has come. Or has it? Having come from a violent past, the question is whether South Africa is moving towards becoming a society that is more peaceful in its relationships or whether it is spiralling down into an abyss of inhuman attitudes and acts of violence. From a Christian perspective, noting that the great majority of the South African population professes to adhere to the Christian faith, one may ask whether nonviolence is used as the normative relational ethic when it comes to situations of divergence and/or conflict. Admittedly this assumes that Christians accept and adhere to the doctrine of nonviolence, an assumption challenged by Christian proponents of the Just War theory. This theory will be discussed later in this paper. According to the Christian belief in nonviolence, this notion offers both a way in which unity should be striven after and is the most productive way in which Christians in South Africa can work towards the creation of a truly united country. It would seem, however, that pacifism is not as widely adopted in the South African population as one might expect.

As long ago as 1987, Walter Wink asked the question whether a nonviolent transition would be possible in South Africa. After leading several workshops in this country during that year, he discovered that South Africans generally do not choose nonviolence as a means by which to achieve a resolution to conflict and, indeed, displayed a reluctance to adopt any ethic of nonviolence in society. The relatively peaceful democratic transition in South Africa may call his observations into question, as the world applauded the lack of violence in the process of shifting political power between two bases which were believed and experienced to be diametrically opposed to one another. As such as the political transition is a miraculous testimony of the case for nonviolence, it needs to be asked whether South African society has become less violent after this historic turning point in its history.

In fairness, violence needs to be categorised and cannot be spoken of in generic terms. For the sake of this article, I propose the following as the acts of violence most experienced in South African society as categorised by the South African Police Service report on crime for the years 2010/2011:

- Contact crime – this includes armed murder, attempted murder, sexual offences, assault and robbery.
- Contact-related crime – this describes arson and malicious damage to property.
- Property-related crime – this accounts for incidences of burglary and theft.
- Other serious crime – mainly commercial crime.
- Crime detected as a result of police action.

Out of the above categories, it was found that 638 468 cases were reported under ‘Contact crime’, which amounts to 30.8% of all serious crimes reported. To speak of violence in terms of these classifications may lead one to believe that the only solution to true unity within the South African context would be the eradication of these different forms of violence; in other words, hoping to ‘sweep the slate clean’ as it were, by means of an authoritarian application of the law. This has been, by and large, the approach used by the South African Police Service and the South African government in trying to build better communities.

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3 Wink, Violence and Nonviolence, 4-5.
But then we are reminded that “violence is not an absolute evil to be avoided at all costs. It is not even the main problem, but only the presenting symptom of an unjust society. And peace is not the highest good; it is rather the outcome of a just social order.” In the same breath: “Positive peace will only exist as a social reality when the sources of violence – alienation, humiliation, shame, inequality, poverty, racism, sexism, and so on – are no longer present.” To this list, we may add the problems in South Africa which hamper the progress of this nation. These are problems such as corruption, poor leadership and governance, lack of employment opportunities, a growing attitude of entitlement, the endorsement of self-enrichment at the expense of others, and the lack of a decisive voice speaking for a moral and just life.

Memory has informed us as a community that in order to resolve conflicts, some forms of violence need to be used in order to attain a certain goal. To the early Afrikaner population, this meant war against the British Empire; to the Freedom Fighters, it translated into an armed struggle. The example of nonviolent interaction is not our natural, innate response. This is clearly demonstrated in the many acts of violent crime and in the incidences of public violence that occur on a frequent basis in South African society (e.g. during protests and strikes action). Why, in a predominantly Christian country, is violence so common and nonviolence not explored?

When it comes to the lack of application of nonviolence as part of the Christ faith, Wink tries to explain the situation by saying: “'Nonviolence' is identified... with the 'white' gospel that taught them [blacks] that they must always be submissive before the authorities (read 'white' authorities). Romans 13:1-7 was interpreted as an absolute injunction to obey the government whatever it does.” Among black and white, even today, pacifism is broadly interpreted to mean passivism— which means to sit back and do nothing.

Pacifism, and especially Christian pacifism, means so much more and is a stance that certainly cannot be associated with apathy or a non-committal to engage the forces which seek to tear our society apart. Is Christian pacifism and a commitment to nonviolence even a viable option for South African society? Let us first explore the meaning of a Christian understanding of nonviolence before we seek to address this question. In doing so, I refer in brief to two proponents of nonviolence: John H. Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas.

Understandings of Nonviolence: Yoder and Hauerwas

To John H. Yoder, the notion of nonviolence should be a natural expression of the Christian faith. Christians owe their allegiance to Christ who, for Yoder, is the prime example of what it means for human beings to respond to situations of threat and violence in a nonviolent manner. In his book, The Original Revolution, Yoder deduces an understanding of nonviolence by examining the possible options available to Jesus while he was constantly confronted by those who asserted their power, often in the form of violence. The people largely consisted of the authorities and proponents of the Roman Empire. First of all, Jesus could have adopted the perspective of realism. Hereby, as promoted in the teachings of Niebuhr, Jesus would have engaged on His own agenda of promoting the Kingdom of God while hoping for the best possible outcome. Second, Jesus could have considered forming part of a violent revolution. His proximity to the Zealots would have certainly allowed Him to do so. Third, Jesus could have chosen the desert, withdrawing from society and establishing a secluded community of people who could live in relative peace. Instead of choosing one of these paths, Jesus chose the model of establishing a covenanted community, a community committed to the ideals of the Kingdom of God and striving towards being the presence of the Kingdom in a world filled with violence.

The covenanted community was tasked by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to use love as a reactive tool to displace violence. By choosing to love one's neighbour, even when threatened with violence, Jesus' followers sought to eliminate the harshness of violence, especially public violence, by taking possible offenders aside into a place where they could recognise the invalidity of their threats, put aside their violent ways and be made aware that they are in relationship with those whom they sought to harm. Admittedly, this is a very philosophical and ambitious reading of the Gospel and makes considerable assumptions about people's ability to recognise the 'sobering' act of nonviolence through the gift of love. Does this mean that there will never be any justification for violence, even in self-defence?

This is a point Barth argued by stating that the divine Commandment “You shall not kill” is better understood when the word “kill” is translated as “murder”. Yoder protested against Barth's interpretation, arguing that that it made the Command too ambiguous. This argument certainly seemed to create a contradiction in Barth's views on pacifism. To this kind of argument, Barth already had an answer. Although Barth maintained that war was almost always

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6 Wink, Violence and Nonviolence, 66-67.
8 Wink, Violence and Nonviolence, 3.
9 Wink, Violence and Nonviolence, 5.
unjustifiable, the rejection of the notion that God could not command violence, especially in the form of war, would impinge on God's freedom. In his article, "The Pacifism of Absolute Principle", Yoder argues that when it comes to the Command "You shall not kill", the sanctity of human life should be held as the overarching principle in its interpretation, therefore denying any possible exceptions and thus subjecting Barth's view to problematic scrutiny.

One of these problems is: how does one decide when Barth's alternative interpretation of the Command comes into play? Yoder argues that if one does not hold nonviolence as an absolute principle, one immediately sways to another absolute; claiming the authority and ability to make the distinction between the necessity for violence or nonviolence. This is the position, according to Yoder, of proponents of the Just War theory. Yoder is cynical of this approach, maintaining that justifications for violence and war are derived mostly from imagined situations, hypothetical scenarios or loose references to historic events.

Yoder, admittedly speaking from the 'moral high ground', instead seeks a justification for nonviolence by appealing to a 'real' Christian 'love for neighbour'. He puts forward the argument that although pacifism is subject to the same questions as those posed to justify violence, by virtue of depending on its own sets of absolutes, the route of non-violence is still "...immeasurably more humane, more personalistic, more genuinely responsible than the competitive absolute, 'Thou shalt not let Uncle Sam down' or 'Thou shalt fight for freedom' or 'Never give up the ship'.'

In a similar vein, Stanley Hauerwas also cites Jesus as an example for the promotion of nonviolence, but from a slightly different perspective. First of all, Jesus is not only the revelation of God, but is the prime example of what it means to engage life in God's expected way. Salvation is therefore not limited to avoiding hell and being promised heaven, but translates into the living transformation of people who seek to live out the Kingdom of God in their daily contexts. "What is interesting is that they thought that their belief in God as they had encountered Him in Jesus required the formation of a community distinct from the world exactly because of the kind of God he was."

This means being committed to the promise of peace and reconciliation in the hope which Christ brings. "The essential Christian witness is neither to personal experience, nor to what Christianity means to 'me', but the truth that this world is the creation of a good God who is known through the people of Israel and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ... A 'truth' that must use violence to secure its existence cannot be the truth." The community of believers, whom Hauerwas (and less frequently Yoder) refers to as the Church, ushered in a new reality which creates the possibility of engaging the evils and suffering of this world through the vehicle of God's love.

As a result, the Church does not promote a social ethic: it is a social ethic, with love and nonviolence as part of its calling. To Hauerwas, "nonviolence is the hallmark of Christian ethics, not a minority option among other possibilities," and therefore "...the Christian commitment to the protection of life is an eschatological commitment." This does not mean that the Church lives in denial. It simply lives in a new history. Thus, as a history within and among a history of violence, it needs to acknowledge that it will always exist in "...an unresolved tension between justice and nonviolence."

The difference Christians make is that the Christian history has the power to be transformative of history in its entirety, precisely because it is the story of a community which has learned to love its enemies. This transformation, according to Hauerwas, is only possible through the power of love. "This love that is characteristic of God's Kingdom is possible only for a forgiven people - a people who have learned not to fear one another. For love is the nonviolent apprehension of the other as other." 24

Responses to the Just War Theory

At this point, it would be a great omission not to address reactions to the Just War theory. According to the classic tenets of Just War theory, there are certain criteria that need to be met before war can be waged. The first is the moral right to fight (jus ad bellum) and the second, the right way to fight (jus in bello). In turn, both


14 Yoder, "The Pacifism of Absolute Principle", 158.

15 Yoder, "The Pacifism of Absolute Principle", 158.

16 Yoder, "The Pacifism of Absolute Principle", 158.


19 Dorrion, Social Ethics in the Making, 477.

20 Dorrion, Social Ethics in the Making, 481.

21 Hauerwas, The Peaceable Kingdom, 88.


23 Hauerwas, Against the Nations, 196.

24 Hauerwas, The Peaceable Kingdom, 90.

25 Dorrion, Social Ethics in the Making, 471.
through violence.⁵⁰ Although these arguments for the place of violence may be well argued and philosophically sound, the proponents of the Just War theory are always quick to add that violence only becomes an option when the criteria for Just War theory have been met.

To this, Yoder asks the question, “Has any war ever met all the criteria set out by the Just War theory?” To compound the problem, Hauerwas states: “At the heart of the Just War tradition in theory and practice is a Christian contradiction. On one hand, the tradition’s ‘realist’ defenders maintain that peace is not possible in our fallen, sinful world; on the other hand, they promote war as the only way to defend/achieve a just peace, freedom, democracy, or whatever. Every major war is presented as the ‘war to end all wars.’”³⁰

As much as the Just War tradition does not hold out any hope that pacifism will guarantee lasting peace, the theory itself faces exactly the same dilemma. If proponents of war cannot convincingly argue the question Yoder poses pertaining to any imminent act of violence, then the legitimacy of the Just War theory falls flat at this point. However, neither Yoder nor Hauerwas focus on the debate between pacifism and the Just War theory to validate their positions. To both, the commitment to the teaching and example of Christ should lead the Christian community to enacting its own future in the present.³¹ Even if its commitment to nonviolence cannot guarantee a peaceful outcome in the present, the community knows that its efforts will not leave the violent tendencies of the world unchallenged. Because of the community’s nonviolence, the world must change and become a better place. Nonviolence is therefore an act of faith.

Unfortunately, in the context of this paper, the problem with all these arguments for or against pacifism is that they refer almost exclusively to the incidents of violence as contained in war. One may argue that personal acts of violence are only on a smaller scale, but this position is hard to defend. The questions pertaining to personal acts of violence or violence in the community as a result of crime include: “How far can the law go to protect the innocent?”, “What are the rights of the individual in terms of self-protection?”, “Can I inflict harm in order to avoid it?” The Just War theory cannot address these questions on this level, but the teachings of nonviolence do. On the one hand, if one were to weigh up pacifism and the Just War theory against each other, it would seem as if pacifism argues exclusively for peace while the Just War theory argues for justice— as if ‘justice’

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²⁹ Dornier, Social Ethics in the Making, 471.
³¹ Hauerwas, The Case for Abolition of War, 27.
is the antithesis of peace. Pacifism does not adopt this view. Pacifism and the Just War theory need to be each other’s conscience, each other’s strongest critic, because inevitably they argue from their own respective sets of absolutes. Is there space for Just War theory in pacifism and vice versa? Hollenbach\(^2\) certainly seems to suggest exactly this, in that the matter at heart for both of these viewpoints is justice. Their points of difference are found in the way in which justice and peace are promoted, defended and ensured. Hauerwas argues in turn that the motives for the application of violence through the Just War theory may not always be to serve justice, but to serve human purposes. In this Hauerwas suggests that war is unlikely ever to comply to the rules of the Just War theory, even if it uses this theory to justify itself.

**What Determines a Christian Theology of Nonviolence?**

Along with Yoder and Hauerwas, I contend that the Christian understanding of morality has as its basis the example set by the life and teachings of Jesus. As far as His teaching is concerned, the Sermon on the Mount is perhaps the most pertinent to our discussion here.\(^3\) It is from the perspective of the Sermon on the Mount that we can see that Jesus’ emphasis in the interaction between people is always on love, and never on hate. The primary driver for justice in society, according to Jesus, should be the person’s ability to engage any form of violence or oppression with the gift of love. Love, to Jesus, seems to have been the only appropriate response to any form of violence. Let us take, for example, the teachings found in Matthew 5:38-41. This text is not a call to become a doormat for violence and oppression as it may be interpreted, but is Jesus’ description of militant nonviolence, where nonviolent methods are used to retain dignity, show up injustice and make the perpetrator painfully aware of their own part in perpetuating oppression in either overt or implied violence.

As long as people choose to see each other and engage with one another under the understanding that they are on opposite sides, violence will continue to be perpetuated and the solution to violence will never be found. By this not only are the participants deprived of the opportunities for creative reconciliation, but their own inability to reconcile becomes the fuel which drives the segregation and victimisation of the broader community. Violence and hate divide. In short, according to this reading of the life and teaching of Jesus, violence is the lack of love for neighbour and, for Christians, shows that they are lacking in love for God. For Christians to speak of a peaceful society and their participation in nonviolence, they have to look at the potential of what can be in the future and not stare themselves blank at violent opposition in the present reality. “Christian pacifism is ultimately rooted in Christian hope. Absolute love of neighbour as embodied in the life of the Son of God is possible only because ‘...He first loved us…” (1 John 4:19) enough to die for us and be resurrected for us.”\(^4\)

This commitment by the Christian to oppose any form of break in relationship between themselves and those who threaten or enact positions of violence is named by Wink as ‘The Third Way’. This is the creative way which seeks reconciliation when the only other options are either to retaliate with acts of violence or simply to give in to what is taking place. “...Jesus’ Third Way is not a perfectionist avoidance of violence but a creative struggle to restore the humanity of all in a dispute...”\(^5\)

The aim with this approach is never simply to avoid conflict or violence, but to also focus on the potential for reconciliation, when the “...human quality of the opponent must be continually affirmed.”\(^6\) Nonviolence focuses on relationships. If, as Christians, we believe that God created all beings and that all beings (and certainly human beings), therefore bear within themselves the image of God, then all people are created with the potential to be in relationship with each other. This relational bond becomes the starting point for the exercise of Christian love for neighbour and leads to the predetermined decision to act or respond to another human being in such a way that their *Imago Dei* is revealed. This requires us to choose love.

**The Role of Love in Christian Nonviolence**

To live a life of nonviolence in modern society seems unnatural. It may even be implied that nonviolence is nothing but a dream on the part of those who aspire to establish some sort of unrealistic utopia. If nonviolence is the Christian norm, then “Christians, however, were to be a peculiar people who lived not by violence but by love.”\(^7\) In contemporary society the notion of ‘love’ is debased and conjures up fluffy toys, huggable teddy bears and rose petals scattered on the lawn. This sort of slushy sentiment (loosely connected with *eros*), is decidedly not the Christian focus. Instead, in Christianity, when we speak about the role of love in nonviolence, our focus is on *phileo* and *agape*, brotherly and sisterly love, and a selfless love.

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\(^5\) Wink, *Violence and Nonviolence*, 36.


\(^7\) Craig M. Watts, “Campbell’s Pacifism and Relations with the State”, *Encounter* 66, no. 2 (2005), 167-128.
Love is not so much a feeling as it is a lifestyle, a decision, an action. It is the attitude that colours the way in which we look at ourselves, those around us, creation and God. Love, in this manner, directs the way in which we conduct ourselves, interact with others and engage with our world. “In a world of no love, unrestricted selfishness would create havoc. Love encourages people to care for other persons and makes possible human societies.” If nonviolence is in keeping with Jesus’ teaching, then love becomes the anchor which binds us to this divine directive. But what does this love then entail? What does it look like? What does it hope to achieve?

Love means crossing boundaries

The life of Jesus is the perfect example of how boundaries become surmountable objects. We take as examples the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4), His contact with lepers (Matthew 8:1-4), His eating with sinners and tax collectors (Matthew 9:10), and His open association with women (John 4:7-27). These were all acts of crossing over the social and cultural boundaries that existed in His day. Even in choosing His disciples, it is Jesus who calls people together who probably never would have thought of interacting with those in their company. Peter, the fisherman-peasant, for instance, shares his journey with Matthew, the tax collector. If Jesus’ life was a call to His followers to emulate His example, then they were charged to be people who had the capacity of crossing boundaries themselves. This ability does not happen overnight, and certainly does not come about as a result of ‘warm, fuzzy feelings’ inside us. Indeed, our own being may violently object when confronted with such behaviour or decisions. It is only the choice to love which encourages and equips the Christ-follower to cross to the other side when everything else says that one should not. So, yes, there is an aspect of this nonviolent lifestyle which is unnatural, for this lifestyle does not appeal to human society; forgiving one’s enemy, feeding the hungry and giving a drink to those who thirst are not our natural priorities.

The Christian mandate is to be agents of love in the work of breaking through traditional boundaries. This means that part of living the Gospel is to follow a Christ who showed what it means to cross conventional boundaries which may have been deemed to form part of human nature. Let us ask these questions: Was Jesus a classist? Was He a racist? Was He a religious pietist? Jesus’ interaction with those whom His peers would have thought twice about before engaging with them are coloured by scenes of “…forgiveness, redemption, a new sense of dignity and lovability.” On the other side, “in the case of pathways to violence, these are connected to values that support, reinforce and reproduce compulsive or extreme forms of individualism, a lack of genuine empathy for other people and a heightened or exaggerated fear of the ‘other’.”

South Africa has its own examples of ‘crossing the boundaries’. The most prominent examples can be seen in the breaking down of dividing barriers during major events such as the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. There are currently signs of people actively engaging across specifically racial barriers, as is evident in many of South Africa’s schools, universities and other community institutions. It seems as if the youth of South Africa, at least in parts of South Africa, see race as less of a dividing factor. What can be done through the attitude of ability of people to move across boundaries of race, economics or any other divisive system? On reflecting on the Christian’s role in the formation of a peaceful society in South Africa, de Villiers asserts:

The Christian notion of peace is a comprehensive one that encompasses harmony based on justice in all dimensions of life. From this point of view strategies to obtain peace should always be characterised by creative efforts to break out of existing spirals of conflict and violence. The aim should first of all be to overcome enmity, not the enemy.

James Nash offers the following points regarding Christian love in interpersonal relations:

1. Christian love is beneficence, looking not only at one’s own interests, but also the interests of others.
2. Christian love is other-esteem, valuing, honouring and respecting the integrity of others and the systems that sustain them.
3. Christian love is receptivity.
4. Christian love is humility.
5. Christian love is understanding.
6. Christian love is communion, which ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony’.

If this is a description of what Christian love can do in society, then it would be fair to say that the task of reconciliation between the perpetrators and victims

40 Barak, Violence and Nonviolence, 302.

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of violence rests largely on the shoulders of the Church. Why? What can the Church offer? De Gruchy answers by saying "...the very nature and calling of the Church in South Africa today: is its ability [sic] to be the agent of God's reconciliation, a sign of the unity of humanity, a community which anticipates the coming of the kingdom."

It is the teaching of the love of neighbour which is entrenched in the Church's being. By only referring to, for example, the two Sacraments of the Protestant tradition, it is through baptism that the unifying love of God is celebrated. Furthermore, it is around the Table of the Lord's Supper that we recognise and stand amazed at the miracle that God works by creating unity out of diversity, order out of chaos. The Christian Gospel is, in essence, a message of crossing over boundaries, but no such crossing can exist without us engaging honestly with each other in the work of justice. Christian love and justice are organically bound together. This leads us to the second point.

Love is truthfulness

There can be no justice without engaging truthfully and there can be no honesty without the commitment to love while striving towards reconciliation. "Truth is only half without love because my truth is right and your truth is also right. Love allows an individual to take into account another person's truth." It means that honest interactions between people are essential in the expression of Christian love. The Church is perfectly positioned to become facilitators of such conversations between perpetrators and victims of violence. The Christian testimony is not one which focuses solely on the individual's capacity to respond in faith to the grace of God, but believes in the capacity of truth to set the person free.

In its preaching, teaching, worship and pastoral care of all the people, the church has to enable people to accept each other as God accepts us, to overcome fears and hatred, and to live creatively through the crises that inevitably accompany the birth pangs of a new society, though always from the position of commitment to the struggle and thus pointing towards the kingdom.

Perhaps one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the continuance of different forms of violence lies in the fact that there are so few platforms where honest conversation can take place on matters which are key to the experiences of violence as listed before. Where is the conversation on racial diversity taking place in South Africa today? Where is crime engaged through meaningful dialogue? Where are the women's and children's voices heard as they tell their stories of oppression and violence? Why is the Church unable to facilitate this process?

As long as the discourses between different races, socioeconomic classes and socio-political policy-makers hinge on the avoidance of active and honest engagement, violence in society in its different forms will be perpetuated. Healing under these conditions cannot take place and neither is it possible for society to find creative ways of stemming the causes of violence or of pre-empting existing practices and attitudes. It is not that this aspect of the healing process has not been used by the South African authorities: a good example of my point here is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The work of the Commission is well documented. The Commission played a vital role in the process of initiating the beginning stages of reconciliation in South Africa. The jury is still out on whether the Truth and Reconciliation Commission accomplished much by means of reconciliation and restitution. Nevertheless, it takes love to make oneself available to both listening and to expressing one's hurt, experiences and memories. "There is no future without forgiveness", and there can be no forgiveness without honest engaging. Nor can there be honest, nonviolent confrontation without the commitment to love. This brings us to the last point.

Love is interconnectivity

According to Gandhi's teaching, which is very similar to the Christian definition of love, "to do evil to another human being is to violate the love we should have for all human beings because of the soul force that we all possess." Richard Quinney is quoted as saying "a love that not only allows us to identify ourselves with others, but allows us to know that we are one with another, that we are one with each other. Such love makes a different world, a world without crime."

We also need to remember Jesus' teaching on mutual servanthood: "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). Such Christian love implies that we are connected, one to another, not one above another. "Violent struggles are necessarily hierarchical." If we were to recognise each other as equals and at the same time avail ourselves to be both servants of and to be served by the same neighbours, the option for violence

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43 Wink. Violence and Nonviolence, 55-56.
45 White. Making a Just Peace, 117.
46 Harris. "Gandhi's Concept of Love", 185.
48 Harris, "Gandhi's Concept of Love", 187.
51 Wink. Violence and Nonviolence. 56.
becomes dramatically minimised.

It may sound like a cliché, but this teaching is familiar to us as a people of Africa. The notion of Ubuntu places my identity in the existence of my interaction with the community. Violence seeks domination, and thrives on individualism and exclusivity. Love is the opposite. It is enhanced by mutuality and emphasised by the expression of and commitment to community. The challenge to Christians is to live this life of interconnectivity and not just to talk about it. Failure to set the example will nullify the Christian witness and hope for peace. “The churches will not be able to speak to the world convincingly about ethical issues, about unification, reconciliation and sharing if they do not give the example themselves.”

Conclusion

Is love enough? Theoretically, as an expression of the Christian faith, it should be more than enough. If love is our intentional crossing of boundaries, willingness to engage honestly and openly for the sake of justice, and appreciate each other as a vital part of our own humanness, then it must be the recipe for the growth of nonviolence in our communities.

The Church, as the custodian and witness of the Christian Gospel therefore plays a vital role in implementing and achieving this calling. In South Africa, the Church has the ability to play a role in the formation of nonviolence in the growth of its members. Can one imagine what a difference it would make to society if the Church actively taught all those who form part of it to have the courage to break through the places and spaces which are defined by social norms as being ‘off-limits’? If Christians spoke openly and engaged those who are the instruments of violence, then violence would not hold the power of a silent threat over those who seek healing. Furthermore, in our connectedness, the Church could and should also serve as an agent of accountability, so that no perpetrator may exercise their form of violence and so assert their self-imposed dominance over another.

As a Christian, this teaching is challenging, for it asks of me to seek Wink’s ‘Third Way’ when I experience another trespassing on our property or discover another act of theft within the space which we call ‘home’. And so this paper is both a personal confession, but also a declaration of faith, which I believe speaks of a hope which is founded on our Christian faith in a Christ who engaged His world with a theology of nonviolence.

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A Theological Model of Healing to Inform an Authentic Healing Ministry

Stuart C. Bate OMI

ABSTRACT

Healing was an important part of the mission of Jesus and the apostles. This ministry continued throughout the history of the Church, taking many forms. Plagues, pandemics and incurable diseases have always been a challenge to it. This challenge has been renewed within the context of HIV and AIDS. This article focuses on the development of a contextual theological model which can inform the healing ministry within Southern Africa. The narrative is constructed in terms of seven challenges which must be met to ensure this goal is reached. Three of the challenges respond to issues emerging from a social analysis of the context, including the conflict between those Christians who claim miraculous cures and those who believe primarily in medical procedures. The other four challenges respond to issues emerging from a theological analysis of the context. An assessment is made of the theological merits of diverse healing procedures.

Introduction

The importance of constructing contextual theological models that inform ministry cannot be overemphasised. Such models are essential for the methodology of pastoral and practical theologies. Theological models need to bring together disciplined analysis of the context, faithfulness to the Christian tradition, and innovation in developing contextual theological categories to inform ministry. The healing ministry is an important area for such construction.

We must recognise the importance of healing in the ministry of Jesus as attested by the evangelists. He also established a band of followers whom he commissioned to pursue the ministry of healing as he had done (Matthew 10). Healing thus seems central to Christianity and indeed many forms of healing ministry have existed throughout the history of the Church.

2 Church is capitalised when it refers to expression of the one Church such as in Church teaching, history of the Church etc. It is also capitalised when referring to the name of individual church traditions such as the Catholic Church etc. It is also capitalised when acronyms such as AIC are

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