

forms of injustice and discrimination. In this way the experience of the TRC forms part of a learning curve of value not only for South Africa but for a host of countries, not least on the African continent, who are finding their way toward "a second wave of democracy."

As is well documented, a central dimension of the TRC was its religious, spiritual, and moral character. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose thinking guided the TRC process, was influential in framing the TRC dynamic in a faith discourse. He was able to provide, at least to the religious community, a language through which to understand the difficult step of fostering a genuinely democratic culture in South Africa that would in turn sustain a genuine peace. The considerable significance of this achievement is found in the fact that the vast majority of South Africans are actively affiliated to one or another religious denomination. Research shows that more than half of South Africans worship at least weekly, if not more, and this means that for the majority of South Africans their interpretation of public discourse is powerfully religious. Accordingly, the fact that much of the TRC's discourse was couched in accessible religious language and imagery enhanced the possibility of a greater popular buy-in regarding the reconciliation and peace process.¹

Beyond South Africa, then, Catholic peacebuilders working in societies with a strong religious identity might have a greater chance of engaging ordinary people if they cast the challenge and the discourse of peacebuilding in religious language and explore the relevance of religious imagery. Thus the question is: If such a reading of the TRC has the ring of truth, what might this tell us about the enterprise of faith-based peacebuilding in general, and Catholic/catholic peacebuilding more specifically?

In order to pursue this question, I have divided the following discussion into four interrelated parts. First, in order to understand something of the scale and shape of the monumental task confronting the TRC (and, for that matter, any efforts at truth telling, reconciliation, and building a culture of democracy and peace in societies coming out of sustained trauma), a comment on the enduring legacy of violence and political oppression is in order. In their pivotal work *The Things That Make for Peace*, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference stated quite clearly that the starting point of their work for peace lies in an understanding of the pathologies of the past and the experience of the people's suffering. They state: "It is impossible to work effectively for peace and social harmony, unless one first examines what causes injustice, conflict and violence and so finds out what blocks the establishment of peace."²

Second, we must scrutinize the response of the TRC not only to the specific, horrendous violence of apartheid itself, but to the enveloping culture of violence that this historical legacy of violent discrimination established in South Africa. The TRC's focus on human rights and democratic processes was central to its response and crucial for pointing a way forward beyond the quagmire of violence and discrimination. The bishops were clear in their 1993 pastoral letter, *Towards a Democratic Future*, that the peace

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Pursuing Truth, Reconciliation, and Human Dignity in South Africa

Lessons for Catholic Peacebuilding

PETER-JOHN PEARSON

Historical enemies succeeded in negotiating a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy exactly because we were prepared to accept the inherent capacity for goodness in the other. My wish is that South Africans never give up on the belief in goodness, that they cherish that faith in human beings as a cornerstone of our democracy.

—NELSON MANDELA

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa, which completed its work in October 1998, has become (certainly in the popular imagination) one of the powerful reminders of South Africa's perverse past, it has also created a potent space in which to foster hope and reconciliation. Through the attempt to create a moral consensus, the TRC also made a lasting peace a realistic possibility.

In what follows I suggest that the use we make of the lessons learned from the TRC constitutes a source of hope for the future. Indeed, the themes that emerged from and ran through the work of the commission serve as a potential foundation for the renewal of the soul of South Africa and the reconstruction of the nation's political culture and institutions. The hope offered by the TRC, in short, is that a renewed South Africa will affirm democracy, nurture reconciliation, and thus contribute to a culture of peace. Such an outcome would be a fitting homage to the resolute battles of so many against the horrors of apartheid and its roots in colonialism. A close examination of the concerns and processes of the TRC, in fact, holds important clues to peacebuilding in other societies emerging from systemic

they envisaged for a post-apartheid South Africa would have a human rights culture as a foundation to that peace. They state as the first principle for a democratic society: "respect for and protection of human rights like the right to life, education, to liberty, freedom of conscience, expression."³

Third, the person of Tutu himself was important, and perhaps decisive, to the outcome. How did he embody the virtues he sought to evoke and instill in his countrymen and their political institutions? Tutu's theology, shaped decisively by an older ecumenical—indeed interfaith—heritage and forged in the vortex of struggle, helped give specificity to themes such as forgiveness, hope and reconciliation, thereby adding to the wealth of theological insight available to the broader peace discourse.

Finally, what have Tutu and the TRC to do with faith-based, "catholic" methods of reconstructing a society torn by violence and political oppression? Although there has been extensive coverage of the TRC and a vast body of literature has emerged, there has been minimal analysis of the nexus between the TRC's processes and content and the dynamics of the broader peace discourse emerging in Africa. Likewise there has been a paucity of analysis of the stark similarities between the reflections of the South African bishops over many years and hence their understanding of the application of Catholic social teachings to the liberation from apartheid, on the one hand, and the way forward to the envisaged justice, peace, and reconciliation, on the other. Let us begin by drawing the contours of this under-analyzed connection.

The Legacy of Violence and Political Oppression

Let me state the blindingly obvious: violence has characterized the entire history of South Africa and shaped or misshaped its history. Our understanding and acknowledgment of the past is a prerequisite for constructing a different type of future.

The warning of the eminent Roman Catholic theologian, Bavarian-born Johann Baptist Metz—"never again to do theology in such a way that its construction remains unaffected, or could remain unaffected, by Auschwitz"—also rings true for South Africa.⁴ The fact is that we cannot do theology in South Africa, or pray or grow in discipleship, or even be respectful toward each other, without acknowledging the centuries of violence, brutality, and dehumanization that have marked our history.

South Africa has its own litany of names that function similarly to Auschwitz's. For Metz, keeping this litany alive in our awareness is an "interruption" of the factual into the quotidian, a narrating of stories of suffering, a cry for God in view of the injustice of the world. Indeed, this is what the TRC process sought to capture in South Africa: an in-breaking of the fact of brutality, of the stories of suffering, of injustice—and, as all this, it is a cry to God. I cannot hear that phrase without remembering the powerful, haunting image of the "cry to God" captured in the moments of pain during

the testimonies at the TRC hearings. On the first day of the public hearings, for example, Mrs. Nomonde Calata, describing the death of her husband at the police's hands, broke down, uttering a piercing wail. As Tutu said, that cry became the defining sound of the TRC and an indication that the TRC was a place where people could come to cry, to open their hearts, and to expose their anguish.⁵

Metz also holds to the biblical-apocalyptic horizon of a strictly limited time. He chooses this conception over the evolutionist's assumption of an endless time in which everything is indifferent and no justice necessarily comes to the victims. Again, the theological vision is an appropriate caution for the South African process, especially as the saga of reparations for past abuses becomes more and more a political challenge for the future. The theological tradition of Metz, of Auschwitz, of Soweto that takes seriously the shadow side of history also challenges disciples of Christ to take responsibility for the direction of history. There are names in South Africa—every bit as evocative and emotional as Auschwitz is for Metz—that recall the massacres and violence that have so regularly defined South Africa's past; Bulhoek, Bondelswarts, Sharpeville and Langa, Boipatong and Soweto stand out in this sad litany as places of terrible violence but also of monumental courage and defiance.

In a profound way the TRC has come to be the symbol of both the grappling with that pain-filled experience and the hope that despite the complex social and economic challenges wrought by the terrible past, something new and life-giving will emerge for South Africa and its people. South Africa, indeed, is a land somewhere between pain and hope. That is also generally the location of peacebuilders, who work with the painful, disfigured past and seek from within that past to find and build hope for a better future.

Unfortunately, many saw the apartheid tyranny as a sort of passive discrimination that was never really a crime against humanity, that it was not comparable to the gulags or Nazi Germany and was no worse than the kinds of discrimination encountered in most societies. To some, the apartheid past belonged to the class of minor irritations that could easily be escaped, endured, or reversed by a bit of patience and goodwill. In some quarters revisionist histories are being contemplated that deny the barbarity of apartheid. To think in this way, however, is to distort and trivialize the degree of suffering and hardship caused by apartheid in its many ramifications. The facts that emerged during the TRC simply silence those denials and that distorted understanding of history. "Unless there is first honest and often painful—recognition of the deep-seated causes of violence in South Africa, there can be no progress towards peace," the bishops acknowledge. "Without that recognition and acceptance of what is wrong, it is feared that any attempt at peacemaking will only be superficial and be likely to lead to further conflict later."⁶ TRC Commissioner Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela echoed this truth.⁷

Understanding the past is the starting point for establishing truth and for any strategies for effective peacebuilding. The violence inherited from the

past is an overwhelming South African reality and a major source of the present tension, crime, and violence in South Africa. It is most certainly the vortex out of which we have been challenged to craft a new political culture and new types of institutions. This history of violence is also the background to some of the significant theological tasks now facing us. With violence writ so large on the nation's landscape and in its psyche, it was wholly appropriate that an investigation into the violence implicit in the gross violation of human rights committed between 1960 and 1994 was the key task of the TRC. In that sense it was recognized almost as a sign of the time, as the defining feature that would ultimately provide a frame of reference for understanding a particular society at a particular moment.⁸ The kind of violence that the TRC recorded continues today. It remains a critical sign of the times, as do poverty, HIV/AIDS, and rampant corruption. There is a continuum that manifests itself in the staggering crime statistics, but also very worryingly in violence against the most vulnerable groups in South African society, especially women and children.⁹

Violence has been a feature of life from the initial conquest of South Africa through slavery, from forced labor for the farms and later the mines to the violent acts of repression that quelled political protest and the violence implicit in the "banal" everyday experience of apartheid. In his monumental work on the history of inequality in South Africa, Samir Terreblanche shows how violence was used in the quest for labor by the colonial settlers and thus shaped the economic and social relationships. "The demand for labor from the early 18th century onwards was met by reducing many indigenous people—especially Khoisan—to serfdom," he writes. "Although the Khoisan resisted their enslavement ferociously, the fire power of the farmer commandos was too powerful." In order to make new land available for occupation by mainly British settlers and gain control over additional black labor, "it became necessary for the British to defeat the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape." This proved to be quite difficult, Terreblanche explains, requiring three bloody frontier wars from 1834 to 1853. "War and violence also defined the politics of the turn of the last century and especially the civil war of 1899 to 1902." The repression of laborers in South Africa was unusually harsh and applied relentlessly. An estimated twenty-two thousand British soldiers died, over thirty thousand farmsteads in the republics and northern Cape were destroyed, and twenty-six thousand Boer women and children and fourteen thousand Africans died in concentration camps. The memories of this violence and destruction framed the history of white South Africans for generations.¹⁰

This trajectory continued unabated and by the time the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 the South African legal system was characterized by discrimination and repression. Don Foster pointed out that "the Nationalist Party inherited a legal system which R. F. A. Hoernle had criticised by suggesting that, already by 1948, white domination is firmly entrenched in the law."¹¹

One of the key systemic uses of violence was the torture applied to opponents of apartheid. The TRC report contains testimonies of such gross violations in police custody. A typical example: "They undressed me and opened a drawer and shoved my breast into the drawer when I shot him in the head. Then I burned his body. . . . I drugged his coffee then I shot him in the head. Then I burned his body. Whilst we were doing this, watching his body burn, we were enjoying a barbeque on the other side."¹² Extreme violence thus marked the process of conquest by the colonial powers, and it was implicit in the various apartheid policies as a critical method of social control and also the chief means of repressing opposition to apartheid.

It is necessary to point not only to the gross human rights violations—which was the mandate of the TRC—but also the everyday violations of human dignity. Such systemic violence and suffering were not within the ambit of the definition of gross human rights violations, but, as Mahmood Mamdani observes, it was in every way as demeaning, dehumanizing, and cruel. Between 1960 and 1982, for example, an estimated 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes, their communities shattered, their families dispossessed, and their livelihoods destroyed. "These were not inert outcomes of socioeconomic processes, but outcomes of active violence by state agents," he notes.¹³

Nonetheless, as John de Gruchy observes, "The painful dissecting of apartheid during the hearings of the TRC has helped us not only understand better what crimes against humanity means, but it has also given us vivid intimations of the kind of society we should strive for, a society that cares, cares about truth, cares about justice, cares about the victims, cares about healing its wounds and the flourishing of human life." Whatever our eventual conclusions about the TRC's achievements, we can surely agree with de Gruchy that "it has opened up a debate that has reinforced our awareness of the urgent need to build a moral culture and strive for a moral consensus for the sake of the future." Indeed, the point of truth telling was to reconstruct South Africa on a moral foundation. "The TRC's purpose for seeking the truth through an analysis of past violence was, in large part, to build a just, caring reconciling society. This was the moral justification for seeking to know the truth," de Gruchy rightly insists. "It is only this kind of truth telling that sets us free to be truly human, that lays the foundation for a truly reconciled nation. If we are to build a moral culture, we need to know the truth about our past, that is, about ourselves, because without such knowledge we remain a captive to that past. But what we do with that truth is the real moral test."¹⁴

In short, chronic and permanent violence has defined South Africa's national history, dehumanized its relationships, and manifested itself in gross violations of human rights. Furthermore, it has been a major means of social and political control, and in turn given rise to a plethora of new pathologies that continue seriously to disempower and traumatize people in the country.¹⁵

What initial lesson can we derive from this reflection on a history of violence? Already at this point one of the threads of continuity between the work of the TRC and the ongoing work of peacebuilding is that the emerging political culture and the emphasis of its policies must continue to show that same moral commitment to victims, to the excluded, and to the defenseless. In 2004 the bishops' conference's Justice and Peace Commission underlined the ongoing need to affirm in the new South Africa an analysis that took the option for the poor seriously as a starting point. In various statements and publications the commission emphasized that the end of the apartheid political system still left a divided country—a system of economic apartheid. With unemployment near 40 percent and, in some areas, double that, efforts were made to give the poor a greater voice in government decision-making. The commission advocated for increases in the child-support grant and actively campaigned for a national basic income grant. It also undertook a major program to work with local communities to engage more effectively with local governments and hold them accountable for serving the needs of the poor.¹⁶

The TRC Response: Dignity and Human Rights at the Center

The challenge to establish a culture of dignity and human rights, which the TRC pointed to, lies at the heart of reconciliation and peace. As the peace literature attests, the work of peace must be about securing rights, basic goods, and the kinds of relationships that allow people to live together as harmoniously as possible.

Accordingly, the findings of the TRC, William Everett has noted, were to be used "to formulate government policy and even constitutional changes to prevent such future horrors."¹⁷ Thus, the TRC, understood as a creature of compromise between those of the old regime who sought blanket amnesty or official amnesia and those who sought Nuremberg-type trials for the perpetrators of gross human rights violations, served not only to enable the process of political negotiations and compromise to move ahead in 1992–93 but, arguably, also served to strengthen and refine the constitutional republic that emerged from those historical negotiations and elections. Having striven to close the chapter on the painful past, the TRC also outlined the shape of a new country, which must move beyond the repressive and undemocratic culture condemned by the likes of Judge Richard Goldstone, and promote vigorously the justice and reconciliation of which de Gruchy speaks. "Having looked the beast of the past in the eye," as Tutu exclaimed, "let us shut the door on the past."

In pursuit of this ambitious goal, the dominant discourse in the TRC centered on the critical notion of human rights. Tutu believed that knowledge of the past was sufficient to begin construction of a new society. No one wanted to see a repetition of such ghastly days. The acknowledged al-

ternative to such an abuse of human dignity and a culture of repression, according to the foundational legislation, is a society solidly based on the recognition of human rights and accountability. The essentially religious idea of the transcendent, God-given dignity of each individual—a conviction central to Tutu's self-understanding as a minister of God—served as the moral, cultural, and philosophical foundation of the TRC's privileging of human rights discourse. The TRC not only endorsed the building of a new political culture on a foundation of human rights, but also saw itself as one of the key drivers of this process. In this conviction Tutu was not alone; his sentiments were echoed by other key faith community leaders. Roman Catholic Archbishop Thagale commented on this recently:

Basic human rights are part of our basic human dignity, given by God. God creates us all equal and creates us all for community. God does not have borders. Jesus, the Son of God, broke all social conventions by showing God's love to all. No one has the right to remove our God-given dignity and our human rights, as we have shown in the battle against apartheid.¹⁸

In this vein the TRC offered the chance for public ownership of the transition away from apartheid, which is arguably a key aspect of democratization as well as peacebuilding. In particular, as TRC commissioner Charles Villa-Vicencio notes, it was the human rights violations hearings that made the TRC most accessible to the average South African. TRC representatives traveled throughout South Africa to take statements from victims of gross human rights violations. Of the 21,400 victims who came forward, approximately 2,000 were invited to testify in public hearings.¹⁹ In addition, the TRC sought to understand the history of South Africa through the personal testimonies of perpetrators, some of whom took responsibility for their deeds; in this way the concept of individual responsibility for actions entered political discourse. To a new, emerging political culture the TRC thereby bequeathed a discourse of human rights, personal responsibility for actions, ownership of the democratic project, and accountability.²⁰

This new South African discourse incorporated elements proposed by some authors as necessary components for making peace effective. The type of reconciliation envisaged and supported by the state, for example, went beyond the notion of personal reconciliation and also included types of institutions and public processes that could foster reconciliation, including the development of a culture that is respectful of human rights for all people. This model is generally known as the national unity model. The intentional presence of other democratic institutions alongside the TRC indicates that it was structurally a hybrid of what the literature calls the interpersonal model and the national unity model. That is, the TRC combined an emphasis on both interpersonal relations and structural support external to the TRC as necessary ingredients for the national reconciliation and peace process.

In short, the TRC was part of a much more complex, overarching process of democratization and nation-building. The commission made a basic contribution to exposing and healing the deep divisions in South African society and indicated the vast amount of work yet to be done. An important part of that work—some of it already realized, other aspects still to be achieved—is to put in place institutions, structures, and educational processes that can sustain the democratic gains made and ensure that such events as apartheid never happen again.

From very early on, even before the demise of formal apartheid, the bishops pointed out that the restoration of dignity and the cultivation of peace would require more than the cessation of apartheid and its attendant violence and deprivation. They pointed to the need for integrated, synchronized work in the areas of economic justice; constitutional, legal, and judicial protection; and family life; and for redressing wrongs in the aftermath of racism and the indignities suffered by the oppressed. They understood these aspects of our social life to be the content of a just society and, therefore, of peacebuilding.²¹

And so the bishops proposed something more than personal reconciliation, just as many authors point out that in peacebuilding something more than personal peacemaking is called for, something that has a more communal and structural resonance and that encompasses national institutions and processes. Everett spells out the nature of these structures and institutions that have to be put in place and the democratic motivation for nurturing them:

In putting the public discovery of truth at the centre of its work, the TRC tried to concentrate on the task of building the bases for a new public and democratic culture. While limited amnesty through individual case proceedings and reparations based on individual victimage are important, these are cast within the wider task of building a political culture and society where such enormities are less likely to happen. The TRC therefore can be seen as a crucial means for developing the fundamental political principles of public life and constitutionalism. From the standpoint of constitutional development the TRC's work has heightened popular awareness that all governance must exist within a higher frame of justice to which all are directly responsible. The TRC has sought to do this not through retribution but through fostering public truth telling. The TRC has thus been part of the necessary process of establishing trustworthy publics and a sense of accountability to a higher law.²²

After years of an elitist parliamentary sovereignty with its history of racial preference and discrimination, and with no appeal to an objective higher authority for securing either justice or release from the determinations of parliament, it is paramount that South Africa's politics and political culture be answerable to the provisions of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights—

which have been drawn up precisely to deter a return to such a situation. This new foundation for governance is one of the major political gains flowing from the new dispensation in South Africa and determining a new political culture in South Africa.²³

By its structure and through a particular reading of its foundational documentation the TRC sought to restore to the public domain the art and the responsibility of public conversation. This was important and innovative in a society that had hitherto been characterized by an elitist, racist, sexist public discourse supporting a culture of repression and concealment. The apartheid regime made no provision for any critical public discussion, and public debate on political issues was basically forbidden. Reversing this legacy, the TRC established the precedent for government engagement with the public in the ongoing quest for a workable, participatory democracy.

In early 1990, soon after the announcement of a new dispensation for South Africa, the Catholic bishops threw themselves enthusiastically behind the idea of negotiations rather than an attempt to either continue apartheid under a new guise or end it through armed struggle. Quoting the prophet Jeremiah (21:8) they taught, "The way of life lies in realistic negotiations leading to the dismantling of apartheid and justice for all."²⁴

The notion of resolving intractable problems, enduring conflicts, and insoluble historical antagonisms through discussion and dialogue was innovative on a continent where conflict has always been resolved through the barrel of the gun and often also through the suspension of democratic practices.

The discourse of human rights is the hallmark of the post-1994 culture, with human rights understood as the *sine qua non* for citizenship and the guarantor of legitimacy for the institutions that foster it. This discourse of human rights is entirely new in South Africa, and it has framed the policy debate in the public domain. By seeking to legitimize the upholders of the human rights tradition, the discourse strives to institutionalize key democratic political values such as tolerance and the right of all voices in the public domain to be heard. Human rights are given clear prominence in the Constitution. They feature in the Preamble, with its stated intention of establishing "a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights."

In the first chapter human rights appear in the first of the Founding Provisions of the Republic of South Africa: "Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms." Spelled out in detail, they occupy thirty-five sections of chapter 2. Among the rights stipulated are those of equality, freedom of expression and association, political and property rights, housing, health care, education, access to information, and access to courts. And all are taken extremely seriously by the citizens of the country. There must be few places in the world where constitutional rights feature as much in public as well as private discourse, and there has been no hesitation in testing the provisions and implications of the Bill of Rights in the Constitutional Court. Some of the more unusually

progressive and deeply contested rights have been included, such as the unqualified "right to life" and the inclusion of sexual orientation as one of the grounds upon which discrimination is forbidden. Any limitation of rights must be "reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society" and must take several factors into consideration. And although chapter 2 also acknowledges the possible need to derogate certain rights under states of emergency, it lists a number of non-derogable rights. The remaining three Founding Provisions of the Constitution—non-racialism, non-sexism, and the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law—reaffirm South Africa's determination to build on an unshakable foundation of equality, law, and democracy.²⁵

There is a clear synergy here between the new TRC-inspired human rights discourse and laws of South Africa, on the one hand, and recent Catholic teaching on peace, on the other. Both insist that the centrality of a strong human rights tradition is the key requirement of peace. As John Paul II put it in the 2004 World Day of Peace Message: "Respect for human rights [is] the real secret of peace."²⁶

Many writers have argued that just as the TRC process sought to encourage respect for human rights in South Africa, it also implicitly sought support for the institutions charged with the protection of these human rights. If South Africans fail to extend legitimacy to the institutions of majority rule and to the protection of human rights, it would be difficult indeed to consider them reconciled with the newly implemented democratic system. To extend these institutions' legitimacy is to accept South Africa's new system of democratic rule at an elemental level. The legislation concerning the TRC does not explicitly refer to questions about legitimacy of political institutions as a form of reconciliation, but the TRC report does.²⁷

This acceptance of human rights as the normative basis for local and international justice and peace has serious implications for the structures of governance. It implies the legitimacy of the Constitution, Parliament, and the courts, for example, and even more important, a respect for them—even when they do not act in accordance with the church's belief system or short-term interests. A culture of human rights provides the space for these institutions of democratic governance to create and interpret policies according to the human rights tradition, which is more overarching than our parochial interests.

It is important to investigate the institutions that serve as the backbone of South Africa's new democracy. As noted earlier, liberal democracy is both a set of formal institutions and a set of cultural values. For instance, South Africans must come to tolerate one another and be willing to counterbalance the expression of displeasing political ideas. But they must also come to support institutions that have the authoritative means of enforcing political tolerance as effective public policy. The consolidation of political change in South Africa requires that majority rule and respect for minority rights—the parliament and the Constitutional Court—be granted legitimacy by their constituents, the South African people. A South African who is

politically reconciled is one who extends legitimacy to the democratic institutions of the new South Africa, including the parliament and the Constitutional Court. If South Africa's democracy is to prosper, then South Africans must extend legitimacy even to those institutions that do not necessarily advance their short-term interests. For an institution to be legitimate, support must not be contingent upon the satisfaction of policy demands and preferences.²⁸

The need to establish consensus on a normative basis for international justice and peace without suppressing the legitimate differences within regions and social systems led both the UN and the church to a human rights focus. Significantly, Catholic social thought, South African human rights discourse, and the United Nations all adopted human rights as a normative framework for a pluralistic world. "Human rights have become the moral parameter within which a society must be ordered," write leading authorities on Catholic social ethics and human rights. "There can be many legitimate ways of organizing a government and a society, but all of them have to recognize and respect human rights."²⁹

The human rights tradition has in fact been consciously applied in several sectors of South African society, not least the area of foreign policy. Key policy formulations are largely based on considerations of human rights, anti-imperialist sentiments, and constitutional democratic values. Upon taking office in 1994 Nelson Mandela announced that "human rights will be the light that guides our foreign policy."³⁰ This has led South Africa to take stands with regard to vulnerable women and children and human trafficking in the international arena. It has prompted a commitment by the South African Defense Force to peacekeeping missions in conflict-ridden areas. This moral commitment to human rights has also haunted South Africa, as when the government continued to support leaders in Sudan and Zimbabwe, where human rights have been severely curtailed and abused.

The Significance of Archbishop Tutu

The contours of Tutu's life and the vicissitudes of the TRC have a similar history. Both have been a locus of suffering and have etched on their souls the same marks that afflicted the greater community; both have been the object of rejection born of the suspicion that each served "the forces of darkness"; both have ultimately known their hour of vindication and created a space that presaged a model of reconciliation. To the degree that the TRC acts as lens for understanding South Africa, Tutu is also a lens for a religious understanding of the TRC and the broader process of reconciliation in South Africa. Tutu's belief in the goodness of the human person still stands as a challenge, and sometimes a reproach, to the thinking about critical issues such as forgiveness, reconciliation, and the "rainbow people" that have emerged in the post-apartheid era.

Despite the acknowledgment of past wrongs in South African history, Tutu holds to an optimism grounded in a theology that refuses to put limits on God's grace and is therefore constantly open to being surprised by the power of that grace. Such optimism holds out hope, expecting the unpredictable to materialize. This refusal to place limits on God's grace seemed to gain greater depth in Tutu's theology during the TRC and was directly related to a fundamental, unshakable belief in human goodness, as evidenced in Tutu's appreciation of the victims' capacity to forgive and to refuse to be consumed by hatred and bitterness.³¹

Tutu was not alone in believing that the innate goodness of a critical number of people was sufficient to hold the country together and to form a base for constructing a radically new social edifice. In a speech to parliament, President Nelson Mandela remarked:

There are many theoretical debates about the meaning of democracy that I am not qualified to enter into. A guiding principle in our search for and establishment of a non-racial inclusive democracy in our country has been that there are good men and women to be found in all groups and from all sectors of society; and that in an open and free society those South Africans will come together to jointly and co-operatively realise the common good.³²

Tutu's theology of the prodigality of grace and the saving power of human goodness, especially as manifested in the magnanimous forgiveness by victims of gross human rights violations, gave him the platform to appeal to the perpetrators of abuses. He urged them to allow grace to work its transformation in them. To that end Tutu refused to give up on the possibility of any individual's conversion.³³

Tutu's theology and his understanding that the forgiveness of the victim offers hope and healing to the perpetrator were reflected in the TRC's character as a victim-centered process in which victims held the key through their generosity of spirit to humanize the perpetrators. In this Tutu comes close to the understanding of liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, who reminds us that the victims represent the project of humanity—the quest for the new in self, society, and history. The poor and the victims represent the universal solidarity of all humanity in the historical project of the quest for new ways of becoming.³⁴ Tutu frequently linked forgiveness with the future and saw it as a means for becoming human (again) and thus being open and available for constructing a new future. Without forgiveness, he explained, we have lost the future.

Tutu's discourse of hope is grounded in his theology of the rainbow nation, with its emphasis on relationships (*ubuntu*) as a primary way of nation building. *Ubuntu* is the traditional African understanding of the role of community in the process of making one human. In Tutu's formulation *ubuntu* orients one to look at one's torturers, to realize that they need help, and to stand ready to enable them to regain their humanity. Such a philosophy

scandalizes the world. Yet, extraordinarily, it empowers the survivors of torture, for it enables them to take control of their lives, to take initiatives instead of remaining trapped in victimhood, waiting helplessly for the perpetrators to act. But *ubuntu* does not allow perpetrators to escape the necessity of confessing and making restitution to survivors, because it places the needs of society—the restoration of relationships—at the heart of reconciliation.³⁵

Tutu was especially concerned that the voices of the survivors—and, indeed, the voices of all South Africans whose experiences and interests had been eclipsed by apartheid—be given a hearing in the new South Africa. A challenge that emerged within this new environment of openness and accessibility was to allow the submerged voices to be heard also at the level of theological reflection. In this way they could contribute from the resources of the faith tradition to the shaping of the new South Africa and to the theological discourses that would support the project of restoring dignity and giving hope in a culture that has been defined by large measures of despair, exclusion, and anger. This was surely one of the exciting theological developments in a situation where people are more confidently finding their voices—and not only in the public domain. Because they have battled for recognition in public life, they are also impatient to claim it and exercise it in other places, not least in the area of faith and religious praxis.

Accordingly, incipient theologies are now being recognized throughout the country, theologies that give voice to hitherto excluded people in the articulation of their faith experiences. These are theologies carried in the hearts and minds of ordinary people who seek to merge their life's experiences, almost entirely experiences of pain and hardship, suffering and marginalization, with the tenets of faith as they understand it. Studies by scholar Gerald West among diverse grassroots groups of workers with church connections, such as the Young Christian Workers, the African Independent Churches, and some local parishes in Kwa Zulu/Natal, substantiate the fact that these expressions of faith speak to peoples' lives and hearts far more than the church theology, which they often receive in the institutional settings.³⁶ Such incipient theologies, usually incomplete and unarticulated, are being celebrated for their own sake, as a sign of empowerment and confidence, by ordinary people who have demystified theology and claimed it not only as an area of reflection in their situations, but also as a tool for their further liberation. Theology, which has functioned often as an area of specialized knowledge and which has exercised a powerful controlling mechanism in so many areas of life, has now also become a resource in the liberation of these more intimate areas of people's lives, enabling them to craft more life-giving synergies for themselves.

The incipient theologies also represent an advance in what the formerly excluded people are able to contribute critically in the service of the new South Africa. These local groups, such as the Institute for the Study of the Bible, the Ujamaa Project, and the Bible and Worker Ministry Project, raise and engage the real issues that people on the ground are dealing with. They

have their own understandings of symbols, texts, and rituals that enhance or challenge the participants' spiritual lives and their thinking around the issues that affect them. This development, in short, offers new and creative ways of understanding and engaging faith so that it is ultimately empowering. This investing of symbols, stories, and texts has a long and a proud history in South Africa, where it was used powerfully in the struggle against apartheid. It also poses a challenge to contemporary public life. By telling the stories, by remembering and by constructing an alternate history to the dominant models, by opening experiences up for public scrutiny, the often unknown survivors have begun to weave a narrative theology through "remembering and retelling their history as they remembered and experienced it or had it passed down to them."³⁷ This process has helped people to come to terms with their histories and to find inspiration and courage to continue long-term struggles for a better life.³⁸

It is quite clear that under Tutu's leadership the TRC testimonies functioned in much the same way, not only contributing to our understanding by publicizing submerged truths but also by acknowledging the validity of excluded experiences and the validity of the identities shaped by that suffering.

A Lesson for Catholic Peacebuilding

A close reading of the TRC concerns and processes as well as the literature of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference on the peace and reconciliation that the bishops espoused as the goal of the political transition to a post-apartheid society highlights themes common to a discourse of sustainable peace in societies wracked by a history of injustice and division.

First, both assert that without a thorough knowledge of the past and the fault lines that fragmented and destabilized society, any attempt at peacebuilding would be superficial, misguided, and thus self-defeating. Closely linked was the challenge of transcending the multiple understandings of history and forging a common understanding of the past and a common framework for the future that can call forth people's common loyalty. The bishops understood this as the "creation of community."

Cardinal Wilfred Napier summed up the episcopal conference's understanding of the need for community in order to sustain peace and reconciliation in the following words:

To our way of thinking building community is a crucial step to repairing the devastating effects of apartheid. We need community in order to experience in a positive way the enriching variety of our diverse cultures and traditions. We need community in order to remedy the inequalities of the past. We need community in order to build up the new society in which every one will be accepted, respected and loved as a brother and sister equal in dignity and worth. We need community in

order to become one nation committed to a common vision of what we are and what we want to become.³⁹

Second, the TRC and the Catholic bishops both acknowledged that peace is not sustainable in societies where the social pathologies are linked to deprivation, exploitation, and discrimination, unless there is a material component or remedy included in the conceptualization and delivery of the peace process. The notion of peace as merely the cessation and delivery of the peace stood as inadequate and shortsighted. Thus, the struggle for peace cannot be separated from the struggle for the realization of fundamental human rights and especially the realization of third-generation rights. The struggle for peace is thus also a struggle for empowerment of the oppressed that in turn advances the agenda and processes for claiming those rights. A failure to address the material component of justice will keep the possibility of violence at the fore.

Third, both parties agree that peace is constructed and sustained through processes of dialogue with the greatest levels of participation by all players in the process but especially by those whose voices had previously been excluded or marginalized. *The empowerment of the excluded should be one of the key projects of the faith community in the process of promoting peace.* The bishops sought to open up the space for this empowerment of the marginalized to take place, precisely so that they could bring to the table "in their tongue" their needs, aspirations, and wisdom.⁴⁰ Key tenets of Catholic social teaching, such as the option for the poor, solidarity, respect for human rights, and indeed subsidiarity, were critical components of the peace discourse espoused by the bishops' conference.

While the lessons of South Africa are available for other societies coming out of a history of systematic repression and deadly conflict, it is also true that the South African experience of coming out of apartheid, in part through the agency of the TRC, was in several ways unique. In this sense the South African experience is not readily or completely transferable to other cultural and political contexts. For example, there were clear winners in the political struggle in South Africa—the opponents of apartheid—whereas in other settings (one thinks of Northern Ireland), a fragile peace accord could be undermined by a formal truth and reconciliation process.

Still, scholars such as Adebayo Adedeji have argued that strong similarities underline conflicts across the African continent. These include the absence of democracy, the denial of human rights, and the lack of empowerment of the people. To the extent that this is true, the responses of one country to these pathologies hold important lessons for other countries.⁴¹ Certainly, coming to grips with a legacy of violence and repression, a challenge in many current African nations, is the sine qua non for moving toward a more just and humane society. Similarly, there seems now to be a consensus that a vibrant legal regime of human rights, reinforced by respect for the rule of law at every level of society, is essential to good governance. Finally, without defining democracy according to any one particular national

model, we can say nonetheless that political self-determination by the people and a strong civil society are among the strongest safeguards against the rise of totalitarian, dictatorial, and violent regimes.

Yet the question remains, both for religiously fluent cultures like South Africa and for other African settings: What can faith-based peacebuilders contribute to the fostering of these necessary social and political structural conditions? As this volume notes, and tries in part to address, the cornerstones of Catholic social teaching do not address "peacebuilding" comprehensively. Nonetheless, they serve as a foundation for theological reflection on building cultures of peace, democracy, and inclusion "from the ground up." Certainly the principles of solidarity, the common good, and the option for the poor and marginalized, among others, lay the groundwork for such an enterprise.

The social revolution in South Africa, led in part by the leaders of the faith community such as Anglican Archbishop Tutu, Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley, Alan Boesak, and others demonstrates the point. The incipient theologies inspired by these leaders and the TRC, among other agents of liberation, are nothing less than bridges between the concepts of inclusion and the common good, on the one hand, and the building of a culture of peace, on the other.

A fundamental lesson for Catholic peacebuilders taken from the South African experience may be generally stated as follows: *The art and process of peacebuilding, as it unfolds in a society, require greater and greater levels of open communication and participation by all the sectors of a society, lest they remain the prerogative of the powerful elites and thus carry the fissures of the past in ways that threaten any future peace processes.* Religious actors are well positioned to expand the circle of participants and hold them accountable to standards of truth and human dignity and thus enhance the peace praxis. This general claim can be unpacked in three stages.

First, truth telling and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing processes. In societies beset by deadly conflict, systemic violence, and other forms of oppression, constructive relations among people can be sustained only if all voices and perspectives on the truth are heard and honored in some fashion. Only in this way can a culture of openness, transparency, accountability, and reconciliation—in short, a culture of peace—even be imagined, much less realized.

Second, in societies whose culture and political attitudes are shaped in part by religious and spiritual values, religions and religious actors are instrumental to this processes of expanding the circle of participants in political self-determination, truth telling, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Religious actors excel in honoring victims as well as respecting the inherent dignity of even the vilest perpetrators and in calling the society, from the center of the public square, to aspire to the highest ideals—the transcendent truths—of its history and culture. Indeed, this was Tutu's gift to South Africa. (While many criticisms of the TRC and Tutu himself have been made,

I have chosen to highlight here the aspirational deeds and language through which the TRC and Tutu called South Africa to its highest *ubuntu* values.)

Third, a powerful way of expanding the circle of testimony and truth telling, and of empowering the previously marginalized, is through the building of theological discourses and other faith-inspired narratives that locate people within the national story and also transform that story into one of recovery and redemption. Catholic and other Christian peacebuilders should be particularly gifted in stimulating the emergence of these local theologies and are called to do so.

U.S. theologian Rebecca Chopp has charted the path of liberation and peace through theological empowerment. She quotes Richard Kearney, who has observed that our identity—whether national or communal—is inextricably linked to our memory. Questioning which memories we recall and which we repress is how both black and feminist theologies have functioned in the public domain, enlarging and expanding our narrative identity.⁴² "The narrative identity of society and Christianity takes on a new shape, one gained through remembering what the others have lost, forgotten, denied or ignored," Chopp notes. She adds, "but the point is that feminist theologies—like black theologies—functioned as markers for fields of experience, opening up multiple voices, contestation, difference. In these texts and many others, narrative identity is shaped and reshaped through interlacing rhythms of remembering, of telling, of suffering, of ideology critique, of new voices, experiences, expressions."⁴³

As the TRC experience has shown, this process of narrative creation has allowed for the emergence in public life of a rich pluralism and also the knowledge of hidden epics of resistance. The experience in South Africa, as the public domain has become more accepting of and accessible to marginalized voices, has meant that, for example, black, rural women (probably the most marginalized and poorest of all groups) have begun to bring their voices into conversation with those who formulate laws and construct theology to ensure that their suffering becomes part of the new order. It also has allowed the hidden, submerged struggles of especially poor women to emerge and the strategies of survival to become part of the public record of South Africa and part of the rich tapestry of the past. It has allowed a tradition of resistance and survival that has had to remain hidden but which nonetheless shaped successive generations in the art of resisting apartheid and shaping an alternate culture to come to the fore. The emergence of this hitherto submerged praxis indicated the extent of the loss, the terrible impoverishment that apartheid wrought by keeping people apart and by forcing people to keep their lives and strategies for survival matters of deep secrecy.

Gayatri Spivak's understanding of "unlearning one's privilege as one's loss" powerfully articulates the challenge to interrogate one's past lessons, instincts, and history, so that one can deconstruct them and ascertain where one has blocked off or deadened the sensitivities to new creative possibilities

and knowledge. Herein also lies the loss—that one's own privilege conceals rich possibilities mostly because they are located outside of one's usual intellectual or spiritual habitat. This is a critical lesson for any individual who desires to be part of peace processes, especially one who speaks and works on behalf of the victims of violence and war, as well as a lesson for any society emerging from a culture of domination and secrecy. Beverly Haddad, who for a long period conducted a bible study for poor, rural women in the township of Nxamalala in Kwa Zulu/Natal, spells it out: "I have argued elsewhere that poor and marginalized women experience extreme forms of oppression through concerted surveillance on their lives. Because of this their acts of resistance are not always obvious or understood. This I believe is true for many millions of women on our continent where most would be deeply involved in their church." For these women, she continues, the church

is both a site of struggle and a place of transformative power as they create safe spaces for themselves in for instance their "manyano" groups. It is these safe spaces such as we experienced in the Nxamalala Bible study group that become sites of potential transformative power. These covert forms of resistance are what James Scott would call infra-political responses to domination. When domination is severe, oppressed groups will seek a politics of disguise in order to shield their anonymity. For most South African women it is this form of resistance that they adopted in order to survive.⁴⁴

The hermeneutic of making pain and suffering visible, while pointing to broad policy strokes that will eliminate the reality of both, was a part of the TRC's legacy. If the TRC, as the custodian of the nation's record of violence and dehumanizing actions, is indeed an interlocutor for understanding South Africa, then it surely is of great significance that it brought to the fore, brought out of concealment and secrecy, the acknowledgment of the agency of the poor and excluded, the survival strategies of the silenced, and the inspiration offered by a recognition of incipient theologies. This process of foregrounding the submerged voices has been a moment of empowerment for a hitherto unacknowledged populace and a conferral of recognition of those considered to be hitherto invisible.

In this empowerment of the excluded and marginalized, Catholic peacebuilders find a path to social healing, a prerequisite to the building of a culture of peace. Faith-based and faith-sensitive agents of peace can advance such a process in conflict settings and societies crippled by decades of oppression, exclusion, and systemic violence.

One place to start is the promotion of a culture of openness. In South Africa an enormous effect on the political culture has been the fact that the style and structure of the TRC was open, accessible, and thus allowed for hitherto subjugated voices to be heard. Tutu, in his introduction to the final TRC report, underlined the culture of lies and secrecy at the heart of the apartheid regime.⁴⁵

In contrast to the apartheid regime, the TRC was a strikingly participatory process. As such, it set an example for the conduct of other political institutions in their quest to deepen participation in public life and political processes in order to ensure that our policies are in line with our ethics and that we have in place the structures that ensure that we never create such a nightmare (as apartheid was) again. The process was open at a number of different levels, especially at the level of ensuring the widest range of public participation, where it had a deliberate policy of wide dissemination. As noted, the commission traveled the length and breadth of the country collecting information and listening to nearly twenty-two thousand testimonies. (In similar commissions elsewhere in the world proceedings were usually held in private and the results made public only at the end of the process.) The very process of finalizing the short list of TRC commissioners was public and widely representative of the cross-section of the population and political landscape. Not only was the attempt to capture data widespread, both geographically and ideologically, and across the spectrum of race, class, and age, but the work of the commission was also public in the sense of having coverage of its activities in all the areas of the media, including community-based mechanisms for the dissemination of information about the work of the commission. There is thus no doubt that everyone who sought access to the commission had access as the case required. Procedurally, it thus was accessible, transparent, and open. The commission deliberated in the glare of full publicity. This set the precedent for the government's way of engaging with the public.

To underline the importance of the values of transparency, participation, and accountability as a way of conducting public life, it is worth noting that the history of the Constitution of South Africa is also one of wide consultation and openness. The Constituent Assembly invited suggestions for the making of the Constitution and received tens of thousands of suggestions. It traveled to many parts of South Africa hearing comments and explaining procedures.

This practice of consultation, conversation, and consensus-seeking also applies, structurally, especially to parliament and the way in which it does business. The practice of taking parliament to the people is a sign of this. Periodically, parliament as a whole and more often its specific committees do their work in venues other than the legislature, conducting hearings and committee meetings around the country. The committee meetings, which are the key places for engaging legislation, are routinely open to the public and to public participation. Thus, for example, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference has established a Parliamentary Liaison Office specifically to allow the conference to participate in discussions with political parties, to participate formally in the parliamentary process around legislation and policies that it feels it should comment on, and to be part of the forming of consciences of those involved in public life.

The TRC thus holds implications for both the rationale and the ways in which public institutions create spaces for dialogue with others in civil society

and with policymakers and with the poor and marginalized. Truth telling in one area opened the opportunity for truth telling in other concealed areas.

The foregrounding and validating of concealed or marginalized voices thus have a particular relevance also for the public-policy domain. The voices of the poor and the marginalized, the victims and the disempowered, and the validity of their experiences as markers in the prevailing culture (or as data for understanding society) and in shaping the foundational discourses for South Africa also need to be heard in the places where policy and legislation are formulated. This allows public utterance and public authority—which has been a white, male, Christian prerogative—to be deconstructed and its political sanction removed. The public voice must become more pluralist, more devolved, and more democratic. This is true for peace processes and for policy formulation. This means that ways have to be found to bring the poor and the victims and those who are excluded to the legislature, and to take the legislature to the margins of society. It also means assisting and mentoring the marginalized to bring their own voices into public debate and to the business of shaping their own realities. The primacy of their experiences and their needs must find a place in the public domain and shape the various legislative discourses. It is incumbent on religious peacebuilders to ensure that policies are pro poor, pro justice, and pro life in its broadest sense.

In addition, truth telling was more than the call to find out information, to know the facts. Rather, it gave sanction to speak the truth in other areas that have traditionally been veiled in secrecy, especially sexuality and gender. This has added immeasurably to a sense of liberation and honesty, giving emphasis especially to the voices of women and vulnerable groups. In short, the challenge of "breaking the silence" has become a serious political campaign at many levels and in many spheres of public life. It has indeed become a sign of liberation from the secrecy, lies, censorship, and silence that marked the apartheid culture.⁴⁶

Narrative theologies of reconciliation are needed to complement the narratives and theologies of resistance. John Paul Lederach has reminded us of the need for reconciliation programs to be part of a genuine engagement in the public sphere. The challenge in providing such programs, comments Tristan Borer, lies at the level of institutions and organized public spaces. As Lederach hypothesizes, Borer notes, there is a connection between institutional change and authenticity, "particularly between public governance service organizations and the public they serve, both in terms of how the public is involved and how institutions respond to the public."⁴⁷ Hence the strengthening of civil society organizations and complementary institutions is critical in the maintenance of a democratic culture open to reconciliation. In South Africa the desire to deepen democratic values further and to give permanent expression to them has led to establishing the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Commission, the Independent Electoral Commission, and various bodies set up under chapter 9 of the Constitution.

Underlying the institutions of politics and civil society is a particular discourse; in post-apartheid South Africa, that political discourse has centered on the experience of suffering and pain of millions. But any discourse on pain, at least in the faith traditions, must be complemented or challenged by a reflection on healing. Indeed, "healing" was one of the most frequently used words in the religious response to the TRC. It is obvious that the very nature of building peace implies that the cessation of violence is not enough; it must be accompanied by a process of healing if it is going to bring about real transformation. It is worth noting that at the same time the TRC did its work and occasioned discussion, the country was also liberating on the phenomenal rise in the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its devastating consequences in personal lives, in the well-being of communities, on the economy, on family life, and in the religious community. Again, as with the TRC, the religious community was challenged to develop an ethic of healing. Prior to the TRC and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the discourse centered on personal, physical healing, whereas the discourse of social healing was impoverished.

In South Africa there has always been a strong emphasis both in traditional cultures and in the various Pentecostal traditions—and in more recent years also in the mainstream churches in South Africa—on the personal healing of all types of sicknesses. The literature on healing has dealt mainly with physical sickness in the individual. Gerrit Huizer began to break this mold by placing healing in the social perspective at the center of his healing paradigm. The church is called to be a healing community, he writes, "preserving or bringing wholeness to the disharmonious community as well as to the sick person." He argues for the church to become a healing agent in a broken Western society, since this sick society extends its influence into every other society on earth. Such a healing ministry needs to be concerned with the modes of production in society and their effects on the well-being of people. Health is intimately linked to the sociopolitical realities of people's lives, and any authentic healing ministry needs to recognize this social dimension. "Consequently," he argues, "any kind of emphasis on personal healing mitigating against an involvement in society must be questioned."⁴⁸

Clearly, this much more complex healing ministry of the church has hardly begun.⁴⁹ It is the work of the faith communities (as the final TRC report mentions, in its recommendations for the faith community) to explore the contours of healing in the context of its pastoral ministry. One influential direction for such ministries was indicated by the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Russell Botman of the SACC noted that the SACC's resident theologian, Wolfram Kirstner, understands that the Pauline word *reconciliation* indicates "wholeness" and "healing," and is therefore close to the Hebrew word *shalom*. At the time of Paul the word *reconciliation* was used mostly to describe the acts of humanity to restore community and communication between enemies. The crux of the matter, according to Kirstner, is that the centrality of the notion of reconciliation in the church

implies that the church is an alternative society obliged to struggle against all structures and practices of irreconcilability in its own life as well as in society.

The chief task of the church in dealing with truth, he says, is the task of "healing the wounds and the creation of community."³⁰ Churches should therefore devote great care toward facilitating opportunities for encounter and fellowship between the perpetrators and the victims of oppression during the apartheid regime, and assist them to exchange their stories and experiences and fears with a view to a process of mutual forgiveness and acceptance. In addition, the society or the religious or ideological or cultural group that has contributed to shaping the mind of the offender shares in the responsibility for the offense and is in need of repentance on its part and forgiveness on the part of God and the victims with a view to facilitating a process of healing and taking precaution against a repetition of the offense.³⁰

Similarly, Smangaliso Mkhathshwa has noted that there are four ways in which the church can be a locus for healing, reconciliation, and the repair of relationships. The church must commit itself to a preferential option for the poor, become an agent of peace initiatives, become more fully a local church (which celebrates healing and reconciliation proper to its cultural and social context), and take specific initiatives to reconcile people, where metanoia, repentance, and justice are its preconditions. The challenge of healing and reconciliation here, then, is not so much about how to create a place where one can forgive and forget, "but rather it is the deeper challenge to create a place where whole communities and individuals can remember and change."³¹

Conclusion

Much like history itself, the story of South Africa after apartheid is ambiguous. On the one hand, several fault lines still threaten the social fabric of the young democracy and profound vigilance is necessary. On the other hand, modest victories have also been scored. Tutu has pointed to one such victory: "The greatest gift that the TRC has given to our people is a single history of what happened during the apartheid years in the area of serious human rights violations. Without the TRC there would have undoubtedly been roughly speaking two major histories, . . . a black history which would have been approximately the truth, because the victims know what happened to them, and . . . a white history which would have been based on fabricated denials. . . . The TRC put an end to those denials."³²

There are other marks of progress. If one bears in mind A. R. Mohammed's comment that social existence was defined by fear and violence, if one bears in mind that Judge Goldstone tells us that the reality of South Africa at that time was the result of a nation formed in repression and unconstitutional-ity, then it is to South Africa's credit that, however fragile the institutions, there is the foundation in place of a human rights culture and that there are democratic institutions that hold and nurture that culture. The culture itself

testifies to the recovery through many experiences of the intrinsic dignity of every human being and, with that, the agency that allows people literally to speak for themselves and fashion a future for themselves. In short, the influence of these TRC values in the public domain has helped foster a political environment that is democratic, participatory, and free. This is a most marked difference from what went before.

To ensure democracy and a human rights culture South Africa needs to heed the reflection of Patricia Valdez. A truth commission as its name implies plays a specific role in establishing the truth in relation to crimes that were committed in the past. But they can only be efficacious if, in the long term, they see themselves as merely a step in or a component of a much broader process. Such a process must involve the reestablishment of the rule of law, wherein the role of justice is fundamental. . . . The absence of a culture of accountability both in public office and public institutions, combined with the weakness of control agencies, reflects a deep seated injustice which affects the quality of democracy. The exercise of searching for truth and disclosing truth is the first step in a large process that needs to address the state's responsibility regarding the enforcement of justice and the compensation to victims of severe abuses. This is the healthiest way of engaging the process which starts with the transition from an illegitimate regime but has to continue towards the establishment of a public policy that aims to defend the rights of all its citizens at all levels. Elements of social memory combined with a widening of the citizenship base as people begin to exercise their rights are what bring about democracy in our societies and strengthen a democracy's level of institutionalism.⁵³

Catholic peacebuilders would do well to take to heart this commission to respond to the cry for the healing of memory. Why must we remember injustices? "We must remember," writes Paul Ricoeur, "because remembering is a moral duty. We owe a debt to the victims. And the truest way of paying our debt is to tell and retell what happened to them."⁵⁴ Luc Huyse suggests that memory constitutes the ultimate form of justice. It needs, however, to be a rich and inclusive memory—a "thick memory" that captures the gradations of responsibility for the past. He also suggests that in keeping these memories alive, the "mental foundation" for future abuses is destroyed.⁵⁵

South Africa has learned to its cost that no single institution, such as the parliament in the old regime, can alone be responsible for the political life and culture of a democratic nation. That task needs to be carried out by a range of institutions and needs to have a range of guarantees to ensure that it is held accountable to the spirit of the Constitution. There is an independent judiciary, enabling the Constitutional Court to act within its mandate; there is a public protector, full-time ombudsmen who monitor and investigate

possible human rights violations; there is proper supervision of multiparty elections; and a civilian-controlled defense secretariat to oversee the functioning of the military and intelligence services.³⁶ Patricia Valdez reminds us that the TRC processes can only be efficacious if, in the long term, they see themselves as merely a step in or a component of a much broader process. "Such a process," she writes, "must involve the reestablishment of the rule of law, wherein the role of justice is fundamental."³⁷

Religious actors have been, and must remain, key players in that broader process. Institutions such as the TRC (among other remarkable events and institutions) can only be efficacious if they deliver on the material aspects of liberation, the nurturing of a human rights culture, and the protection of the rule of law. These must be the more tangible, reckonable, and critical components of the new political culture, to which we must hold, among other role players, the government and its institutions accountable. These are also part of the benchmarks for judging the degree of success of a TRC-type process. Catholic peacebuilders, precisely by contributing to the empowerment of all voices, to the evocation of the people's stories, and to their contextualization within a theological as well as a national narrative, are poised to contribute decisively to the broader process of social reconstruction.

Notes

- 1 J. Olivier, "Where Does the Christian Stand?" *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 126 (November 2006): 86.
- 2 Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *The Things That Make for Peace* (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1985), 19.
- 3 Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Towards a Democratic Future* (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1993), 8.
- 4 Quoted in John K. Downey, *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 48.
- 5 Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (London: Rider Books, 1999), 114.
- 6 Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Towards a Democratic Future*, 19.
- 7 Pointing to the enormity of violence in South Africa's past, Gobodo-Madikizela said: "My experience on South Africa's TRC has been the most profound moment in my life. The days, weeks and months of journeying with victims and survivors' pain and trauma, and of encounters with perpetrators—their terror, depravity and sometimes their brokenness because of the horrendous crimes they committed—confront us more closely with the complexity of the human condition. At the end of the many hours and days spent on the TRC, I came out with this one lesson, that there can be no adequate reparation for the horrors we have witnessed on the public stage of the TRC." Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, "Trauma, Forgiveness, and the Witnessing Dance: Making Public Spaces Intimate," conference paper, Society of Analytical Psychology, 2008. The words of the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) come to mind:

"To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics" (no. 4). Within the framework of *Gaudium et Spes*, the TRC could be seen as a project of hope and a way of understanding the world of South Africa. Equally, it should be acknowledged that *Gaudium et Spes* also confirms the approach of the bishops in insisting on a social analysis as the starting point of any peace praxis. Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975), 905.

⁸ William Everett says: "The TRC's official purposes have been to promote 'national unity' and 'reconciliation.' The foundational legislation prescribed that the Commission was to do this through uncovering the truth about gross human rights violations under apartheid and deciding on amnesty and reparations for individuals." William Johnson Everett, "Going Public, Building Covenants: Linking the TRC to Theology and the Church," in *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, ed. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Steven Martin (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 156.

⁹ A survey in three provinces showed that 26.8 percent of women in the Eastern Cape, 28.4 percent of women in Mpumalanga, and 19.1 percent of women in the Northern Province had been physically abused in their lifetime by a partner or former partner. Interfund, *Working with Men to End Gender-Based Violence* (Johannesburg), 3–4; available on the www.sarpn.org.za website. At present, Rape Crisis, an organization established to counsel rape victims, confirms that at least 147 women are raped in South Africa every day. It is also acknowledged that rape is the least reported crime and thus these are conservative figures. Nikki Naylor, *Prohibiting the Ongoing Sexual Harassment of and Sexual Violence against Learners in Schools* (Education Rights Project, September 2002); available on the www.erp.org.za website. It is estimated that in the province of Gauteng one woman is killed by her male partner every six days. Estelle Ellis, "Dying at the Hands of Their Lovers," *Cape Argus*, June 28, 2004.

¹⁰ Solomon Johannes Terreblanche, *A History of Inequality of South Africa, 1652–2002* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2002), 197.

¹¹ Don Foster, *Detention and Torture in South Africa: Psychological, Legal, and Historical Studies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 12.

¹² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vol. 1 (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 1998), 21.

¹³ Mahmood Mamdani, "A Diminished Truth," in *After the TRC: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, ed. Wilmot James and Linda van de Vijver (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000), 60.

¹⁴ One of the key factors that led to the establishment of the TRC was a concern for the victims of apartheid. The struggle against apartheid was motivated by a moral commitment to its victims, which was continually strengthened by moral outrage at acts of victimization and state terror. John de Gruchy, "The TRC and the Building of a Moral Culture," in James and van de Vijver, *After the TRC*, 167.

¹⁵ Thus, Mohammed correctly asserts: "The nature of the traumatic experiences in South Africa during the apartheid years were of this nature—constant, repeated, unpredictable and chronic." He goes on to say: "The social atmosphere

that defined daily existence was one of violence and oppression which fostered fear and therefore served as a means of social control." Ahmed Riaz Mohammed, "The Memory of the Past and the Struggle with the Present: An Investigation into the Restorative Possibilities of Providing Public Testimony at South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, April 2007), 9. Mohammed sadly points out that "the post trauma context in which the victims found themselves was one of continued deprivation, poverty, unemployment, lack of skills and lack of, or incomplete education." *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶ For an overview of the commission's work on these issues, see *Justice and Peace Annual Report 2003-2004* (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, Justice and Peace Department, 2004); Elroy E. Paulus, *Masikusumeni! A Guide to Local Community Advocacy for Social and Economic Justice*, ed. Billy Maseti (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, Justice and Peace Department, 2004).

¹⁷ Everett, "Going Public, Building Covenants," 156.

¹⁸ Burt Tilghage, as quoted in Fr. Philippe, "Archbishop Condemns New Apartheid and Asks Forgiveness," *Catholic Church in St. Thomas in Lenasia News*, May 18, 2008; available on the www.stthomaslenz.org website.

¹⁹ The South African TRC is commonly held to be the most transparent, best endowed commission, both financially and personnel wise.

²⁰ Archbishop Tutu understood this ethic of responsibility coupled with forgiveness to be at the heart of the TRC. Allen writes: "Tutu advocated an explicitly Christian model of achieving reconciliation, involving three separate successive trans-actions. Two of them required action from the perpetrators or beneficiaries of apartheid and the third involved a generous response from the victims. Preaching at a gathering at Rustenburg he said that 'for reconciliation to happen those responsible for apartheid first had to confess their sin. Those who have wronged must be ready to say: "we have hurt you by this injustice, by uprooting you from your homes. . . . We are sorry; forgive us." In the second transaction said Tutu 'the victims were under a Gospel imperative to forgive. In the third those who had committed wrongs had to make restitution: If I have stolen your pen, I can't really be contrite when I say please forgive me if at the same time I still keep your pen.'" John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace* (London: Rider Books 2006), 342; Tutu's model of a TRC thus strongly followed on what the literature calls the interpersonal model, whereas David Crocker says a "shared comprehensive vision, mutual healing and restoration or mutual forgiveness is at the heart of the process." Richard Wilson notes that the elements of this model of reconciliation include confession, forgiveness, sacrifice, and redemption. Tristan Anne Borer, "Truth-Telling as a Peace-Building Activity," in *Telling the Truths*, ed. Tristan Anne Borer (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 32. Although this model varies according to individual emphasis, certain concepts are strongly identified with it, including healing, apology, forgiveness, confession, and remorse. In this model individual reconciliation can foster sustainable peace if the parties follow the steps in a, broadly speaking, restorative justice-type process.

²¹ Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *The Things That Make for Peace*, 119ff.

²² Everett, "Going Public, Building Covenants," 156.

²³ Borer quotes Wilson, who says that "in the reconciliation process the state should create a culture of rights based upon an inclusive and democratic notion of

citizenship." Borer, *Telling the Truths*, 33. Barney Pitsoana makes the same point telling: "I have come to believe that as a society evolves, it is vital that the organising principle be set, as it does in South Africa, through a constitutional principle." Tanya Farber, "Pitsoana Stands behind Mbeki on Zuma," *The Saturday Star*, December 14, 2006. Also, Everett states: "By publicity I simply mean the activity of fostering and continually nurturing public life. It means the work of enabling people to move from a life of fear, secrecy, hidings, denial, and lies to one in which they can speak the truth as they understand it, among others, who can then argue with them in their search for common agreement. This means that a public has to exist within the framework of nonviolence and the capacity for persuasion. It necessarily presumes a plurality of voices, each contesting for his or her own understanding about the common good as well as their minimal needs to participate in it." Everett, "Going Public, Building Covenants," 157.

²⁴ Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, "Discussion Booklet on Negotiations" (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1990), 5.

²⁵ There are, of course, provisions that lay down the country's underlying democratic philosophy by stipulating "universal adult suffrage, a national common voter roll, regular elections and a multiparty system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness." There are powerful echoes of the TRC mandate in this summary, and it shows the desire to ensure that the same values and democratic praxis inform all the foundational documents and institutions of the democratic South Africa.

²⁶ John Paul II, "An Ever Timely Commitment: Teaching Peace," Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace (January 1, 2004).

²⁷ The TRC report, however, raises the question of legitimacy several times. Gibson says: "For instance the Report discusses the illegitimacy of the apartheid state as well as the necessity of establishing legitimacy in the new South Africa for a culture respectful of human rights. Moreover some scholars have pursued the proposition that reconciliation involves the creation of legitimacy for South Africa's new institutions." Quoted in Borer, *Telling the Truths*, 33. Richard Wilson says, "Truth commissions have become one of the main mechanisms by which transitional regimes seek to create legitimacy for state institutions still tainted by the legacy of authoritarian rule." Quoted in James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004), 290.

²⁸ Borer, *Telling the Truths*, 42.

²⁹ Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes, *The Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 63.

³⁰ As quoted on www.africa.upenn.edu website.

³¹ Thus, several times over the years, Tutu would single out witnesses who embraced forgiveness and made their stories his leitmotif, as his biographer John Allen has observed. Tutu remains true to an understanding of the idea of the transformative power of suffering. Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 353.

³² Available on the www.southafrica.info website.

³³ Biographer John Allen notes that Tutu resolutely resisted declaring that those responsible for atrocities were beyond redemption: "Yes, indeed, these people were guilty of monstrous even diabolical deeds [but] that did not turn them into monsters or demons. To have done so would mean that they could not be held morally responsible for their dastardly deeds. Monsters have no moral responsibility." Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 355. Antje Krog, a well-known journalist covering the TRC would call Tutu "the compass of the TRC." Although his theology and its

impact on the commission would be deeply contested by both the political and religious left and right, part of being called the commission's compass was linked to the fact that he deliberately sought to use the process of truth telling to foment changes in behavior, in outlook and values, and so created the space, through the commission, for victims and perpetrators to meet, for stories to be reconciled, for knowledge to be gained, and to begin a journey of engagement and through that to move towards at least a measure of inner peace and increase the prospects for reconciliation. Quoted in Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 370.

³⁵ Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering* (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 61. Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 396. But, it must be noted, the bulk of the writing in this regard, while acknowledging the importance of relationships in the work of restoring hope and the critical task of nation-building, resorts to a wider understanding of both hope and reconciliation. Faced, for example, with the realities of poverty and exclusion, it is interesting to note that especially some black theologians have constructed a different discourse around reconciliation using Marxist thought.

³⁶ Gerald West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*, 2nd ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), 174–200.

³⁷ Rebecca Chopp, “Reimagining Public Discourse,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 103 (March 1999): 36.

³⁸ What is happening in South Africa has already happened elsewhere and in other areas of exploration. There are interesting lessons to be learnt. Rebecca Chopp, speaking of the genesis of black and feminist theologians, says: “These theologians created new narrative identities based on alternative memories and experiences not yet represented in the public as real. Central to both the ideological critique and the new sources for narrative identity in both black and feminist theology—is the memory of suffering. It is suffering and oppression in multiple layers that provide the impetus both for ideology critique and for the speaking and hearing of voices forgotten or silenced” (*ibid.*).

³⁹ Wilfred Fox Napier, “South Africa in Transition: A Catholic Response,” Archbishop Naidoo Memorial Lecture (Cape Town, 1991), 8.

⁴⁰ Cardinal Napier underlined this in 1991 in the Archbishop Naidoo Memorial Lecture: “Currently the Bishops’ Conference is involved in a number of important projects in the area of action to bring about rapprochement between those who have been driven apart. There is the field of community development—projects aimed at empowering people to rise above their poverty and helplessness. There is the field of negotiations—publications, programs, proposals to draw Catholics into the process under the guiding light of the Church’s social teaching. There is the field of youth—the Joint Enrichment Program for marginalized youth to regain their sense of belonging and worth. There is the field of work, the field of refugees and exiles.” He goes on to say that “one of the important qualities required for an appropriate response is the ability to empathize with those who need our help and support to empower them to select the best way for them to work out the solution suited to their needs” (*ibid.*, 10).

⁴¹ Adebayo Adedeji, ed., *Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts: The Search for Sustainable Peace and Good Governance* (London: Zed Publications, 1999), 7.

⁴² James Cone’s *Black Theology and Black Power*, which interrogates the narrative identity of the public and explores the memory and expression of oppression

and suffering, is the classic example. His insistence on remembering and telling the story of suffering was striking and upsetting to the “real” of the narrative identity of the white male American public discourse. It sounded angry—and uncomfortable—and so it was!

⁴³ Chopp, “Reimagining Public Discourse,” 37.

⁴⁴ Beverley Haddad, “Engendering Theological Education for Transformation,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 116 (July 2003): 77–79.

⁴⁵ Talking of the admissions by various state officials, he said: “The lies and deceptions that were at the heart of apartheid—which were indeed its very essence—were frequently laid bare.” Catholic Archbishop Buti Thlagale, pointing to the culture of secrecy in which human rights abuses could take place without accountability, and usually accompanied by lies, compares it unflatteringly with the same cultures under other regimes: “And yet the horrors of the apartheid system, its pathological tendencies and its callous disregard for moral norms compels one to see apartheid in the light of the politically criminal systems of Hitler and Stalin.” Buti Thlagale and Itumeleng Mosala, eds., *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986), 265.

⁴⁶ Deborah Posel suggests that one reading of “post” in “post-apartheid” South Africa is a coming out of hiding and more declarative ways of being. It also, from a policy perspective, explains the priority and insistence given to passing legislation around domestic violence, the abuse of women and children, and rape, areas that hitherto had been regarded as having to be unspoken and concealed. Deborah Posel, in a panel discussion on the TRC and the unfinished business of healing, quoted in Charles Villa-Vicencio and Fanie du Toit, eds., *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Ten Years On* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2006), 87.

⁴⁷ Borer, *Telling the Truths*, 37.

⁴⁸ Gerrit Huizer, quoted in Stuart Bates, *Inculturation and Healing* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), 175. Huizer’s comments echo the earlier analysis of Hollenweger, who, coming from the Pentecostal tradition himself, confesses its weakness in this regard: “We must look beyond the gifts of the Spirit which are manifested in the Pentecostal movement to find modern gifts of the Spirit: the gifts of service to society and science.” He goes on to say that “we need gifts that will help us better understand our sick world of politics, economics, and science and contribute to the task of healing it” (Bates, 176).

⁴⁹ Nevertheless it is interesting to note the Durban Christian social agency, Diakonia, an ecumenical agency primarily involved in the church’s role in society, chose as its theme (in 1991) “Heal, Build, Reconcile” with precisely this social emphasis. The popular Anglican Cathedral of St. George the Martyr, which for many decades was an important site of resistance against apartheid and offered a home for activists, has understood its ministry “as a place of hope and healing” in the city center.

⁵⁰ I am attracted to the use of storytelling in pastoral action. In this regard I am in accord with KIRSTNER’S suggestion. This is a most challenging project that also empowers the victims. See Russel Botman and Robin Petersen, *To Remember and To Heal* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1996), 158. This paradigm presents the ministry of healing as a microcosm of the broader TRC process centering on encounter, storytelling, and restoration of relationships.

⁵¹ Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, “Reconciling and Restoring a Divided Church,” in *Reconciliation and Construction*, ed. W. S. Vorster (Pretoria: UNISA [University of South Africa], 1986), 65.

⁵² Desmond Tutu, as quoted in Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 370.

⁵³ James and van de Vijver, *After the TRC*, 56.

⁵⁴ Paul Ricoeur, "The Memory of Sufferings," *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 290.

⁵⁵ Luc Huyse, quoted in Nigel Biggar, *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice after Civil Conflict* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 243.

⁵⁶ Graeme Simpson takes up this refrain and suggests that the TRC could only in the grand scheme of things make a limited contribution to "the restoration of humanity." But more should be done. He points to the work of the other institutions of good governance: "Few of apartheid's evils can be undone and not all of them could be addressed by the TRC. Full social justice depends on the establishment and functioning of the Human Rights Commission to deal with the full spectrum of human rights denials; the Gender Commission to deal with the legacy of gender inequality; the Land Commission to deal with the history of dispossession; the Youth Commission to deal with the ongoing marginalization of young people which the shift from confrontation to negotiation obviously compounded." Graeme Simpson, "Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories," in *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, ed. Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002), 225; see also James and van de Vijver, *After the TRC*, 56.

⁵⁷ Patricia Valdez, "The Right to Truth," in James and van de Vijver, *After the TRC*, 55.

The Catholic Social Imaginary and Peacebuilding

Ritual, Sacrament, and Spirituality

ROBERT J. SCHREITER

The Catholic Social Imaginary

The capacity to imagine peace, that is, to think differently about the conflict situation in order to come to new possibilities that might end the conflict, is now being recognized as one of the most important qualities of a peacebuilder.¹ Such thinking focuses upon the creative, risk-taking dimensions of changing social relationships rather than directly upon the strategic aspects that most people associate with the peacebuilding enterprise. While imagining peace is not enough to bring about peace by itself, it is increasingly being seen as a key component in making things change in peacebuilding. It recognizes the nonlinear and often "messy" dynamics of peacebuilding practices.

Key to understanding how imagination might work in such circumstances is understanding the *imaginary* of the actors in the process. The imaginary is the mental realm in which the juxtaposing of new possibilities takes place. As such, it is not just random mental activity. The imaginary is framed by certain assumptions about the world and certain rules of connection and communication, and it is filled with certain values, images, and practices. A social imaginary is the imaginary of a group that shares these certain beliefs, values, and practices, set within rules for their elaboration and communication.²

A number of authors have suggested, in one way or another, that there is a distinctively Catholic imaginary or Catholic imagination.³ While authors do not agree entirely on the assumptions that would govern such an imaginary, a number of ideas do recur in the various versions of it: