JM Vorster

Finding a moral compass for South Africa

Where are we?
Where could we go?

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AOSIS

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Research justification

Many recent empirical studies regarding morality in political and public life in South Africa indicated that the community is in an overall state of moral decay. Hope for a peaceful and prosperous future fades away, especially among the youth and the unemployed. The main thesis of this study is to analyse the moral crisis and to propose a moral compass that can direct the community to become a community of character and hope where people can enjoy a flourishing life. The proposed moral compass is applied to the spheres of life which are the main drivers of moral formation and the forces that impede such formation, for example, dehumanisation, racism, violence, family destruction, economic injustice, poor leadership and lack of moral agency. After studying the recent global research projects about the moral character of decoloniality, human dignity, economic justice, family life, leadership, nation-building and reconciliation, I propose a moral compass that can direct the nation out of its moral decay. This study assumes that Christian ethics, assisted by global ethics, can be beneficial for the design of the moral compass.

This scholarly study is an original literary comparative study because of the use of the most recent sources in social ethics and the results of major national and international empirical studies about the social trends of our time. This book reflects on these new empirical research results in social sciences relating to social awareness, experiences, leadership quality, expectations of the citizenry, violent behaviour and trends of moral decay. The answers I propose to these social trends and conditions are mostly novel propositions to academics in the field of social ethics, with the aim of adding value to the discourse about moral agency in South Africa. This is thus a book written by a scholar in ethics, and the target audience is other scholars interested in studying effective and practical methods of bringing moral renewal to South African society.

Although I, in some cases, refer to some of my previous scholarly publications, this book is not a reworking of old material and is completely new in aim, method, meta-theoretical approach, findings and recommendations. I confirm that there is no plagiarism, and where I engage in affirming, criticising and quoting the viewpoints of other studies in this field, I have included the necessary references in the texts as well as in the reference list.

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Abbreviations and acronyms, and figures appearing in the text and notes

List of abbreviations and acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
AA	affirmative action
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BA	Bachelor of Arts degree; bachelor's degree
BPP	Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEE	black economic empowerment
CD	cadre deployment
CFI	Corporate Finance Institute
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COPE	Congress of the People
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EWC	expropriation without compensation
FC	Freedom Charter
GDP	gross domestic product
GEAR	Growth, Employment, and Redistribution
GFSA	Gun Free South Africa
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICC	International Criminal Court
KNMI	Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute [*Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut*]
LCS	Living Conditions Survey
LoLT	language of learning and teaching
MA	Master of Arts degree; Master's degree
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
NGP	New Growth Path
NP	National Party

NRF	National Research Foundation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWU	North-West University
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy degree; doctorate degree
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RET	radical economic transformation
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcast Corporation
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAP	South African Police (pre-1994)
SAPS	South African Police Service (post-1994)
SOEs	state-owned enterprises
SWAPO	Southwest African People's Organisation
TEI	tertiary education institution
ThD	Doctor of Theology degree
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UBPL	upper-bound poverty line
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Council for Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USA	United States of America
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WWI	First World War
WWII	Second World War

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Biographical note

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Angle of approach

Over the last seven decades, South Africa has featured prominently in the world arena on many occasions. At first, it was because of apartheid, a policy of social engineering adopted in 1948 with the aim of dividing the country along racial lines. The policy was designed to protect the wealth, lifestyle and culture of the white population who migrated to the southern tip of Africa over the course of three centuries, mainly from Europe, and who colonised the land of indigenous people. In other parts of the world where West European powers established colonies, social stratification became part and parcel of the social fibre, leading to deep-rooted inequality between Europeans and the indigenous people. This was also the case with the developing South African community. Over the centuries, the quest for agricultural land, the growth of mining industries, industrialisation and rapid urbanisation reinforced the destructive social stratification with its detrimental effects on the indigenous populations. Many historians testify to this fact in their research about this aspect of South African colonial history. In this regard, the recent works of Thompson (1990), Terreblanche (2002), Giliomee (2003), Giliomee and Mbenga (2007) and Pretorius et al. (2012), all written from different perspectives, come to mind.

In the period 1948–1994, the apartheid government enforced the policies that made up apartheid – a strange branch of the tree of colonialism – to

impose racial separation by law. In the rest of the world, the aftermath of the Second World War (WWII) brought a quest to ensure the dignity of all people, enforce human rights and grow democracy. This inspired growing resentment of systems that thrive on human exploitation and oppression. Apartheid was seen as such a system. Because of this policy, South Africa became a society no longer welcome in a new world in search of global peace. The United Nations (UN) labelled apartheid as a crime against humanity (UN 1994, p. 293). Many other countries with poor human rights records, dictatorships and military regimes faced low-intensity global criticism and action, but the UN realised that the fall of apartheid in South Africa could be an important symbolic event. It could become a beacon of light in the global drive for democracy, freedom and the recognition and political implementation of human rights according to the values of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). The concerted efforts against apartheid in South Africa kept the country in the news for a few decades. The topic featured at the forefront of global politics, and ecumenical church assemblies and civil societies worldwide devised strategies of resistance and action against apartheid.

In 1990, South Africa was again conspicuous in world news, this time eliciting amazement and praise. The apartheid government, under the leadership of FW de Klerk, gave up its political power voluntarily and started negotiating a political settlement. The figurehead of these negotiations was Nelson Mandela, a long-time political prisoner. His views on reconciliation, non-racialism and forgiveness fascinated the world community. He became an icon of peace and a symbol of hope for many oppressed and exploited communities. The negotiations resulted in a constitutional democracy and a general franchise, which was applauded worldwide. The Nobel Peace Prize was conferred on Mandela and De Klerk, and the settlement was appraised by leaders worldwide as an example of what visionary and peaceful dialogue can attain. The interest in the South African form of reconciliation became even more potent with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) under the wise leadership of another Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The eventual report became a further commendation for South Africans. The TRC process was an attempt to deal with the atrocities of the past in a truthful, reconciliatory and peaceful way, with the aim of promoting reconciliation and justice (see TRC 1998). The TRC inspired several similar processes in other troubled spots across the world (see Kritz 1995).

The third surge in global interest after the post-1994 euphoria was on the negative side once again. After 2012, news media began to portray South Africa as a society plagued by violent criminality as crime statistics soured. The pro-socialist policies of the ruling African National Congress (ANC)

party under the former president, Jacob Zuma, failed dismally to solve the growing joblessness and widespread poverty. Although a potent black middle class developed, the divide between rich and poor widened, and the growth of the economy slowed and set off to follow a negative trend. Global investment declined because of increasing distrust against the Zuma administration. Column writers in prominent newspapers began to portray South Africa as a leader in the world – in crime, domestic violence, corruption, racist behaviour and all sorts of other 'bests' – of course, mostly without solid scientific research and proof. But this kind of information created the perception that South Africa is once again a country plagued by social ills and a failing state.

South Africans were left astounded by the pervasive corruption and state capture that occurred under the presidency of Jacob Zuma, revealed by the meticulous investigation of the journalists Pauw (2017) and Myburgh (2017, 2019). The news media and civil society in South Africa uncovered many occasions where government officials and cohorts in the private sector embezzled billions of rands in all kinds of fraudulent ways. The Ramaphosa administration set up a commission to investigate corruption. Testimonies before the judicial commission with the Chief Justice of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Raymond RMM Zondo as chairperson revealed the potent attempts at state capture by foreign businesspeople. According to these testimonies, they acted, with Jacob Zuma's assistance, to steal state funds and co-opt high-ranking officials to be part of this destructive process. Foreign businesspeople even instructed Zuma to appoint ministers according to their wishes so that they could get hold of profitable contracts in a fraudulent way. This corruption in the top echelons of the national administration spilled over to provincial and local administrations. Myburgh (2019, p. 145) blew the whistle on the corruption perpetrated by a former premier of the Free State province, proving with impeccable research how millions of rands destined for the upliftment of the poor by way of a farming project were looted. The aim was to pay for the extravagant marriage ceremony of some of the foreign businesspeople who were connected with Zuma. It was the poor who suffered. Many similar scandals are portrayed in the *Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector Including Organs of State Report*, widely known as the *Zondo Report* (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2022b). The report furthermore revealed frequent and substantive instances of racketeering, nepotism, fraud, money laundering and theft. Whistle-blowers in the civil service were silenced and threatened by implicated officials. Some lost their jobs, and a few paid with their lives under mysterious circumstances. The fall of the once lauded South Africa into scandal and disgrace once again put the country in the headlines of world news.

South Africans inherited the deep-rooted and ongoing ills of colonialism and apartheid; they shared in the euphoria, enthusiasm and hope of the new democracy and the vision of Mandela, only to fall back into the turmoil of moral decay among political leaders and inadequate, deceitful social planning. And the poor once again became the main victims, bearing the brunt of evil officials, exploitation, inadequate social systems, unfulfilled promises and outright lies.

With the dawn of the new era of democracy in 1994, South African society was on the brink of finding a new moral compass after centuries of colonialism and social stratification. The constitutional values of human dignity, equality and freedom set the tone for the development of a community where virtues such as truth-seeking, responsibility, honesty, servitude and compassion could thrive. However, after 28 years, we are compelled to ask: What happened to the moral ideals held high by Mandela, Tutu, De Klerk and the leaders who campaigned for many decades with huge sacrifices to inspire our people? Where are we at this moment in time? Where should we go? How could we discover our personal and social morality and promote sound moral agency? Can we, amid all the distrust in political leadership and economic planning, find a moral compass again – the compass that could lead us to an honest, responsible and humane society where the plight of the poor and the marginalised are successfully and sustainably addressed and where we can bring to bear high moral standards in all spheres of life? Today, we are in dire need of a moral compass that could lead us to mutual trust, respect for each other, a flourishing life and a bright future for our children and the next generations.

In this publication, I venture some answers in our search for a compass to guide us in finding a new culture of morality, decency and respectability in South Africa. My first inclination was to propose ways in which we could achieve moral revival. I considered concepts such as 'regeneration, renewal, restoration, revitalisation, rebirth, recovery' and others, all in pursuit of a recovery of the respectable morality that once defined the South African psyche. But alas, my readings on the history of the country did not guide me to a moral ethos that we can revive and on which we can build a future. We have no example of a moral order that we can fruitfully resuscitate. There is no old moral compass that we can find in the ruins to repair and use again today. Therefore, I refrain from using any 're'-word and opt for a new 'finding' – finding a moral compass for South Africa today to help us in the search for 'newness'. At most, we could acknowledge that we have some fertile seeds of morality that can be discerned in the disastrous contemporary predicament. Those 'seeds' could be beneficial in our search for 'newness'. It will be presumptuous to say that the solutions I present will all be useful or sufficient, but if they can unleash a vigorous debate among

moral role players in leadership to outline a new vision and define the moral agency required to find direction, I will be more than satisfied.

What one sees is determined by where one stands. No researcher can approach a topic of research with complete neutrality and objectivity. I approach the question of a moral compass for South Africa as a Christian who practices theology, especially theological ethics, within the corpus of ethics theory and moral codes proposed by the Reformed traditions since the Reformation. I analyse the moral decay in South Africa from this point of departure, with the aim of defining a suitable moral agency for leadership in all spheres of South African society that could strengthen the moral fibre of the nation and inspire the development and embracing of high moral standards.

The Reformed traditions have a rich history of social concern and the deployment of biblical morality in politics, economic management, culture and other terrains of human life. Reformed theology can, among other things, be defined as a public theology in the sense that the exponents of the Reformation were eager to develop a social critique and to apply the ethics of God's kingdom to the social terrain. Calvin (1509–1564), the father of Reformed theology and the morality it entails, was deeply concerned about the plight of the poor and politics driven by the love of Christ. He wanted this to manifest as respect for the rights of the marginalised by the monarchies of his time. He made a case for respect for the dignity of all people on the foundation of the biblical teaching of the creation of the human person in the image of God (Calvin 2008, *Inst*. III:VII:5:11; I:XV:1:104; I:XV:1:179). His contemporaries had the same sentiment. Theodore Beza (1519–1605) developed the idea of the state as an entity that should be found in a triangular political covenant between God, the people and the rulers with the aim of exerting justice for all (De Bèze 1956, pp. 30, 44). This concept influenced John Locke's idea of the state as a social contract subservient to protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens. The public relevance of Reformed theology was further accentuated and applied to the social domain by Reformed theorists such as Althusius (1563–1638), a Calvinist jurist from Emden. He developed a political philosophy within the Reformed paradigm, which became known as federalism (Althusius 2013, p. xviii, pp. 48–55). His ideas had a huge influence on constitutional development in Europe (Grabill 2006, p. 124). De Groot (1583–1643) used Calvin's idea of natural law to develop international law during the time of Spanish control in the Netherlands (see De Groot 1934, p. 8; 1991).

The social influence of Reformed theology was also driven in England, and John Milton (1608–1674) was an active agent in this regard. Witte (2007) indicates that:

> Milton distilled and instilled many of the best legal and political teachings that Calvin, Beza, Althusius and other reformers had already laid out. These included

teachings about human dignity and the divine image bearing, about natural law and the created order, about natural rights and Christian liberties, about subjective rights and social freedoms, about popular sovereignty and political covenants, about rule and constitutional order, about political tyranny and the right to resist. (p. 272)

Reformed theorists were prominent in the development of democracy and constitutionalism in Western Europe and their colonies worldwide. Remarkable exponents of this line of thought were Groen van Prinsterer (1806–1876), a Dutch politician (see Groen van Prinsterer 1904, p. 14), and the theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) (see Kuyper 1898, p. 126). During a time of turmoil caused by industrialisation and the abuse of labourers, they furthered the cause of human rights and social justice. In the dark days of Fascism, Nazism and Communism in the early 20th century, Reformed theologians professed social change and the development of social institutions that can assure peace and human dignity for all. In this respect, the contributions of the Reformed theologians Barth (1886–1968) (see Barth 1946, p. 172) and Moltmann (1926–) (see Moltmann 1977, p. 31) were and still are highly influential.

What is significant about the tradition of Reformed moral theology? I believe that the confession of the reign of Christ over all spheres of life and the values of the kingdom of God occupies the central stage of Reformed theological ethics. These values can be excavated from the wealth of the revelation of God in the book of nature (natural law) and the written Word. The '*sola scriptura*' dictum of the Reformation does not have a bearing on soteriology only but also on our moral agency in this time and age. These values come to light when scripture is interpreted within the socio-historical context of the emergence of the original texts, the context of the modern reader and, most importantly, the context of the underlying and developing biblical theology in the biblical text. Kelsey (2009, pp. 458–477) refers to the latter as the 'wholeness of scripture'. My hermeneutical approach to the reading of scripture for moral renewal in South Africa today is what I define as a hermeneutic of congruent biblical theology (see Vorster 2020, p. 11). Just as Van der Kooi and Van den Brink (2012, p. 554) demonstrate, the grammatical-historical analysis of the text is complemented by a theological understanding of the message. In this way, I believe the serious Bible reader can avoid both the biblical criticism and the nullification of the moral stance of scripture for today, apparent in modern liberal theology on the one hand and the biblicism of conservative evangelicals who seek to apply biblical morality in an atomist, absolutist and casuist way on the other hand.

When discussing moral renewal in South Africa, many serious issues can come to mind, depending on the stance of the partaker. A member of a minority group in the South African community can pinpoint different

issues than a member of a majority group. Men and women can see problems differently, as would rich and poor, religious and non-religious, white and black, and citizen and foreigner. Differences of opinion will be the order of the day. One cannot define and address moral problems to the satisfaction of all participants and contributors in the quest for moral renewal. However, my attempt is to define the moral issues that could be addressed from the perspective of someone who has studied South African history, the effects of colonialism and the philosophy of the apartheid ideology, and who lived as a privileged white man through the years of apartheid, struggled with a guilty conscience and experienced the liberation of 1994 as a liberation of all people in South Africa. While I can never be so audacious and even arrogant as to put myself in the shoes of black Africans and share their pain under colonialism, my compulsory military training as a conscript in 1965, my work as a student on the trains in Soweto in the late sixties, my work as a church minister in townships and poor villages, my study abroad during the 1976 Soweto uprising and, most importantly, my many discussions and interactions with black students during my academic career gave me some insight into the inherent evil of the apartheid system. Insights into the moral bankruptcy of apartheid theology and the philosophical attempts to clothe the system with so-called Christian nationalism – the philosophy I was trained in as an undergraduate at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in the late 1960s. This background will, of course, influence my viewpoints. However, see it as an honest attempt to look, with others, for a moral compass in the turmoil in which we find ourselves. Having said this, I put forward the following topics for discussion in the search for a new public morality and moral agency that will fit South Africans in the years to come. These are:

- Our colonial heritage. What have people done to each other?
- Our post-1994 heritage. Is the rainbow gone?
- Reconciliation and transformation. What do they mean?
- Poverty and economic justice. A pipedream?
- Family. Where are the fathers?
- Violence, extremism, distrust and hostility. Our daily bread?
- Relation unity and diversities. A bridge too far?
- Moral leadership. Where are the leaders?
- Involvement. Where are the people?
- A future of moral revival and hope? Another pipedream?

Please join me in the following discussion. May we together find something of a moral compass to take us forward and which can give a glimmer of hope to our nation.

Our colonial heritage

◼ Introduction

If we want to understand the roots of South Africa's negative heritage of over 300 years of colonial rule and pinpoint the major concerns from a moral perspective, we should look briefly to the major trends in precolonial and colonial rule. Keep in mind that the focus is on the main moral problems resulting from colonialism, so the possible positive contributions of colonial rule are not discussed and evaluated here. Every story, and especially history, has more than one side. Colonial rule brought Western educational systems, infrastructure, science and industrial know-how to South Africa. These and other contributions cannot be denied, but outlining the positive contributions is not the purpose of this survey. The purpose of the reflection in this chapter is to identify the perennial moral issues that originated from and developed throughout the era of colonisation and apartheid as another form of colonialism. It started South Africa on the contemporary path of moral decay and laid the foundation for difficulties moral agents have with generating moral renewal and finding a guiding moral compass. A brief historical background could shed light on the moral questions at issue in our post-apartheid society.

Thompson (1990, p. 1ff.) rightly drew attention to the fact that the history of South Africa has mainly been written from the perspective of a Western

periodisation of history, which means that the record of African history commences with the journeys of West European explorers. The precolonial history of South Africa has never received the attention it should have. Only recently has historical research endeavoured to understand precolonial history by way of oral traditions and archaeological artefacts. The precolonial inhabitants of South Africa were not literate in the Western sense of the word, but they had a long oral tradition and record of art. However, the archaeological research up to this point in time has exposed only a small part of what is left of human remains, products, cultural symbols and dwelling places. Thompson (1990, p. 5) furthermore warns against periodising African history in terms of the archaeologist's 'arcane' terminology such as 'Stone Age' and 'Iron Age'. In his view, such terms are 'illogical, ahistorical, and inaccurate' because they simply do not correspond with precolonial African history as far as tradition and archaeology reveal up to this point in time. However, Meyer (2012, p. 30) raised valid arguments to the contrary and identified an 'Iron Age' as far back as 800 AD–1600 AD, citing the Mapungubwe World Heritage Terrain as an example. Nonetheless, Thompson's argument makes the important contribution of warning that a historian investigating precolonial South African history should be cautious of approaching this field of study with Western presuppositions. Thompson's concerns can also be raised regarding the paradigmatic distinction of pre-modern, modern and post-modern worldviews. African history cannot be forced into these European patterns of reasoning and this framework for understanding all human history. It could distort the understanding of African historians from the outset. Historical research on precolonial Africa should be aware and cautious of not being misdirected by Western pre-understandings, theories of periodisation and paradigms in the development of worldviews.

In the late 20th century, African historians became active in academic historical research in an attempt to establish their roots and to purify precolonial history from the ways it was sometimes distorted to suit the ideals of colonists and to justify the occupation of so-called *terra nullius* [no man's land]. Because of this research, a picture of the continent's precolonial history is emerging. It offers a way to understand the many perspectives found in written history. As far as archaeologists and historians have been able to establish, the first human inhabitants of southern Africa were the Khoi-Khoi and the San groups. They were nomadic hunters, but some also farmed with domestic sheep and cattle. They had no concept of private ownership of land and lived in communities with a communal approach to the products of nature. Bantu-speaking communities probably moved to southern Africa between 400 AD and 800 AD and settled in the savannah regions in the northern and north-eastern parts of what is now known as South Africa. These groups were farmers who formed tribal kingdoms and traded with the wealthy Swahili traders of East Africa. They

gradually divided into smaller groups which can be classified along linguistic lines as the Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga, Venḓa and Lemba. They formed tribal kingdoms that were relation-orientated communities, each with its own cultural identities and hierarchical socio-political structures. They observed a strict communal way of life and occupied a geographical area owned by the king (or chief) on behalf of the tribal community (Meyer 2012, p. 34). Religion and family structures were important features of their communal tribal lifestyles.

When European settlers moved to South Africa from the early 17th century onwards, the country was inhabited by different indigenous African tribes who occupied the country and lived off the land in different ways. They had established cultures, religions and socio-political systems, and they farmed land according to tribal values and agreements between tribes. There was, therefore, no *terra nullius* in the European sense. Evidence exists of inter-tribal warfare, especially under the reign (1816–1828) of the Zulu king Shaka, who claimed the land of the Ndebele tribes, known as the Zulu Kingdom. The white settlers' occupation of tribal land over the course of two centuries caused many wars and skirmishes between Africans and European migrants, first under Dutch rule and later under British rule. The development of the mining industries and rapid urbanisation of the inhabitants, both black and white, disrupted the population and forced many people into shanties around emerging cities. The *Natives Land Act 27 of 1913*, promulgated by the government of the Union of South Africa, disowned large groups of Africans, and they were moved from traditional ancestral land to reservations. Over the years, the descendants of the Dutch and French settlers of the late-17th century grew into a new ethnic entity, the 'Afrikaners', with their own language and culture and without any bond to their ancestry in Europe (see Giliomee 2003). Eventually, South Africa came to accommodate a diverse group of peoples with different ethnic roots, religions, languages and cultures, all struggling for space to live and observe their own identities. Such an environment is destined to produce distrust, hostility and strife. In 1910, colonial rule was replaced by a white South African government. In 1948, the policy of apartheid was introduced by the white government. This policy remained in place until 1994 when the old Constitution was replaced by a democratic Constitution with general franchise, a bill of human rights and the rule of law.

I was one of the South Africans who believed that the new Constitution and equal political rights would put South Africa on the path to progress, reconciliation, peace and justice for all – especially after the hopeful signs during the administrations of presidents Mandela and Mbeki. However, it soon became clear that political settlements and good laws would not necessarily ensure moral revival and heal the deeply injured common South African psyche. The colonial period, apartheid, tribal warfare and ethnic

conflicts had left behind uprooted people with a syndrome of inferiority – landless, poor and without a moral compass. Despite the immense growth of Christianity in South Africa, the real moral decay was not diagnosed and addressed. The voices and the testimony of churches were largely misdirected. In his interesting research on the negative effects of the migrant labour system linked to the mining industry, Denis (2017, p. 445) put forward a good example of the misplaced moral stance of churches in colonial South Africa. He draws attention to the fact that churches at the beginning of the 20th century lamented the misuse of alcohol and the sexual immorality of male migrant workers in the mining hostels but refrained from addressing the real causes of moral decay, namely, the disastrous system of migrant labour which had destroyed the stable family life of African tribes in rural areas. Peripheral micro-ethics were applied to the hostel way of life based on strict strands of Victorian and Protestant moralism, but the macro-ethical deficiency of the social system reflected in social stratification, dehumanisation of Africans, abuse of the dignity of workers, exploitation with the use of the law and the impoverishment of many were to a very large extent absent from the moral agency of churches.

In the last decades of the 20th century, churches played an indispensable part in the dismantling of apartheid, and the testimony of leaders such as Desmond Tutu, Beyers Naudé and others should be commended, but the moral concern receded with the birth of a new Constitution as if this achievement was the answer to all the moral problems. After nearly three decades of constitutional democracy, general franchise and the protection of human rights, it is clear that the heritage of colonialism, social stratification and dehumanisation is still alive and well in South Africa today. The effects of a long history of dehumanisation and the abuse of the dignity of people cannot be fixed by a new democratic Constitution alone. We are still in need of a moral compass that can direct South Africans to flourishing personhood in a free and peaceable country. If we want to address this need effectively, we must identify and address the still unsolved moral issues at the root of our perennial moral decay with an open mind. I venture to identify the most important and burning inherited moral questions in the rest of this chapter with the assistance of other moral theologians with the same concerns.

■ The injurious effects of the dispossession of land[1]

The dispossession of the land of indigenous peoples in South Africa is one of the core ingredients of the persistent moral decay in the country.

1. This section of the chapter represents a substantial reworking of Vorster (2022).

The loss of land resulted in the uprooting of long-established, stabilised and peaceful societies. For the original inhabitants of South Africa, land undergirded their human personhood and sustained their sense of human dignity, of being somebody, and of enjoyment, peace and hope. Land was the foundation of human flourishing. The loss of land fuelled a destructive process of dehumanisation. Loss of communal land immediately endangered spheres of security such as family structures and the long-existing indigenous social structures and patterns of life together. Having been equals within their own spheres of life, they became inferiors in the colonial sphere. Losing land meant losing dignity. On their land, they were some*body* – on colonised land, they became some*thing*. The landless people had to move to survive and became prone to exploitation. The loss of culture, religion and social cohesion and the necessity of survival unravelled the social fibre of Africans. They changed from farmers on communal land to landless labourers on white-owned farms, and they soon became the poor sector of the developing multi-racial South African nation. The *Natives Land Act 27 of 1913* and the expropriation of land in the apartheid era launched the moral decay into an orbit that is out of the reach of restoration. Bringing back the old patterns would be impossible, and the negative effects of the dispossession have polluted virtually all spheres of South African life. Two prominent features of this depressing and intensely damaging development should be accentuated.

The first feature is the effect of the dispossession of land on the psychopathology of colonised communities. The Martinique psychoanalyst and philosopher Fanon ([1961] 2004, p. 235) put forward a well-argued diagnosis of coloniality and its effects on the psyche and dignity of the colonised. Drawing on the social analysis of Hegel, Marx and Sartre, he draws attention to the destructive and disruptive force of colonialism on the totality of personhood, which entails much more than economic dispossession, political estrangement and victimhood. Colonialism distorts the inner self of the colonised and reduces the some*body* to some*thing* in the eyes of rulers. The thinghood of the colonised and the perceived inferiority are the deepest disparaging and devastating power. It fuels constant aggression on the one hand and a lack of perspective and hope on the other. Fanon ([1961] 2004, p. 7) identifies such a psychopathology in the colonial vocabulary, which is 'full of arrogance, antagonism and anxiety, referring to these [colonised] hysterical masses, their blank faces and vegetative existence' [author's insertion]. Over and against this vocabulary and the colonists' underlying sense of superiority, 'the colonised resort to dreaming, often devoid of a public voice, acting out with reactive vocabulary of violence claiming retributive justice in their psyches' (Fanon [1961] 2004, p. 6). Eventually, they struggle for psycho-affective survival in all-encompassing retributive violence, aiming for total decolonisation – not only of the colonial institutions but also of the colonial mentality, the

colonial grip on the psyche of the colonised, the pathology of superiority and inferiority in culture, art, science, philosophy and religion.

Fanon's thought-provoking book in 1961, *The Wretched of the Earth*, gripped the attention of the colonisers and the colonised in the 1960s and 1970s. Western European politics rejected his ideas and dismissed them as just another anti-democratic Marxist attempt to inspire and romanticise socialist revolutions in the gradually decolonising territories, with the urge to liberate the remaining colonies. His ideas resonated from the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) movement in the USA, the grassroots anti-apartheid activist Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in southern Africa, led under the inspiration of Steve Biko, as well as in struggles for liberation in the Middle East (see Bhabha 2004, p. xxix). Usually, these struggles were answered with the use of force, as the violent assassinations of Malcolm X of the BPP movement in the USA and Steve Biko with BCM in South Africa demonstrate. The use of force and the struggle of psycho-affective survival created a spiral of violence in many societies up to the end of the 20th century. The colonial authorities did not grasp what motivated and fed the violent resistance against the culture of superiority of the colonial frame of mind.

The innate immorality of the colonial mentality of superiority, as defined by Fanon, was investigated from another perspective by the French philosopher Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979). He questioned the one-dimensionality of the highly industrialised Western society of the post-war environment. He argued that this kind of society had the effect of dehumanising people and directly abusing their human dignity and pursuit of a flourishing life. The result is the one-dimensional human – the oppressed victim of the consumerist and technological society. South Africa has been victim to both colonial and one-dimensional mindsets, and the consequences of these conditions became the destructive driving forces in what Fanon identifies as the psychopathology of the black population. Black South Africans have been dehumanised by both conditions.

Marcuse (cf. 1971, p. 28) argued that the problem is not mere economic class differences per se, as Marx maintained, but the fact that modern societies have become what he termed 'one-dimensional' societies without real opposition. Despite democracy and the inherent means for change that democracy offers, citizens are still enslaved in industrialising societies. People are dominated and driven by the urge to produce and consume to keep the industrial giant intact. This kind of domination has no real and effective opposition. The opposition that a modern political democracy offers is not real opposition because 'it does not, cannot liberate the master or the slave' in the machine of production and consumption. Both the master and the slave do not live but are lived by production and consumption

(Marcuse 1971, p. 28). They are not free to live according to their deepest human desires and to pursue happiness because the system drives them. The system forces them into a one-dimensional life beyond their own ideals and longing. He posited that humans are captured in body and mind in the machine of modern society. They are inhibited so that they cannot live out all the deeper 'lusts' of being human. They do not really live but are lived by society. The totality of life is controlled by rules, codes, regulations and commerce, while science and religion are prominent actors in this total enslavement. Drawing on the psychoanalysis of Freud, Marcuse (1971) explains that blocking a human person's deepest desires and space for enlivened happiness and idealism results in violent resistance. A highly industrialised society is, therefore, inherently violent. This enslavement creates deep-rooted aggression that spills over in conflict and wars. The one-dimensional person is also inherently violent in interpersonal relations because of the inhibition to flourish as person in their space. People in a one-dimensional society can recapture their innate dignity and ability to flourish as human persons and escape the enforced innate violent trait only when they are liberated from the one-dimensionality of the industrialised and consumerist society. Such a liberation requires more than a change of the chains or the refurbishment of the living space of these oppressed one-dimensional persons. Freedom from one-dimensionality must be comprehensive, must destroy all forms of bondage and must deliver real, all-encompassing living space. True freedom should be 'a liberation involving the mind and the body, liberation involving entire human existence' (Marcuse 1970, p. 9). However, modern affluent democracies cannot offer this radical freedom.

Why? In answer to this question, Marcuse (cf. 1971) drew on the philosophy of Marx and Bloch to develop his neo-Marxist view of radical liberation and constant revolution to attain the goal of liberation. The only way out is to destroy the systems of enslavement. Liberation can only be achieved when the agents of enslavement are subjected to constant change – an ongoing revolution. When they remain stagnant and are protected by more enslaving institutional codes and laws, total enslavement and dehumanisation will result. Therefore, only constant change, which is revolutionary in nature, would free the master and the slave and break down the shackles of the one-dimensional society. Liberation is only possible in a society where structural stagnation and its inherent violence are prevented by perennial revolutionary change. The main task of all moral agents should be to dismantle the violent, enslaving institutions and seek total liberation, which would enable humans to live their deeper 'lusts' instead of being lived by the fossilised systems of inherently oppressive codes. With this social analysis, Marcuse challenged moral agents with the duty of becoming revolutionaries in search of 'total liberation'. They can

revert to violent means as a valid strategy of change because the liberating violence must be counter-violence against the violence inherent in enslaving social structures, the latter as expressed by the codes of the system and the agents executing and protecting them. His plea for such a total revolutionary liberation of enslaved humans from fossilised social institutions was taken up by the 'New Left' movement among students in the late sixties. By means of their violent protest and refusal to live according to the codes of the systems, they not only toppled prominent political leaders but also changed the institutional character and face of education dramatically.

What did we inherit from our colonial history and the apartheid period with respect to the dispossession of land and the rapid industrialisation of South Africa? We certainly did inherit a well-developed infrastructure and economic growth, but the deficit is much larger and more devastating. Taking Fanon's description of the psychopathology of the colonised person and Marcuse's portrayal of the one-dimensional enslaved person of the modern industrialised and consumerist world into account, we could argue that we have inherited a community without a sense of human dignity – persons with an innate syndrome of inferiority, with no pride in the inner self and its achievements. These are also persons with an inherent rage against the order of things. On the other hand, we inherited the superiors who are proud of Westernism, as well as enslaved by it, because they are 'lived' by one-dimensional structures whose shackles may become even worse as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) progresses. Both groups of persons are angry and prone to violence because they do not see light at the end of the tunnel – a clear roadmap to becoming fully human and pursuing flourishing personhood (happiness, peace, joy, hope and fulfilment) in the current South African predicament. All we hear is the sound of rage. All we see is the constant outburst of rage. All we experience is the heat of rage. Moral renewal must address this rage and the underlying driving forces. I will try to do so in the rest of the book.

The second disastrous effect of colonial land dispossession was the perennial and constantly growing inequality of rich and poor, to such an extent that this phenomenon became a characteristic of South African history. Terreblanche (2002) has undertaken thorough scientific research on the growing institutionalised inequality between the descendants of the Europeans who settled in South Africa and the descendants of the indigenous Africans since the 17th century. This inequality emerged right from the beginning of the first settlement and became an ongoing and deepening process throughout colonial history. The inequality also had a racial basis right from the start. For three centuries, the rich were white people and Europeans and the poor were black people and Africans. This factor is addressed in the introduction to this chapter.

Land dispossession resulted in many of the ills plaguing the South African nation at the dawn of the democratic dispensation. Fanon's explanation of the psychopathology of the colonised and Marcuse's portrayal of the one-dimensional person of the industrialised and consumer society of the 20th century describe, in simple terms, the details of the last will of colonialism – dehumanised landless people with a syndrome of inferiority and insecurity resulting from disrupted cultures, disordered religion, dislocated families and hopelessness. Above all, there is an intense rage against and deep distrust of everybody and everything that represents the past. Add to this the aggression of the one-dimensional person, and it becomes understandable that a culture of all forms of violence is gripping the country. Furthermore, the inequality between black and white people in all its forms because of the colonial social stratification challenged the new dispensation with demands of immediate economic justice and quick transformation of South African society. These challenges were put on the agenda of the 'new South Africa' for immediate attention. The raging dehumanised person, politically liberated from the shackles of colonialism and its recent branch of apartheid, demanded a better life and a future of happiness. Were they heard and their hopes accommodated? I turn to this question and others later in this chapter.

■ Racism, dehumanisation and the syndrome of inferiority and indignity

Humans form groups. The formation of larger communities is part of the innate nature of the human person. The nucleus group is the family, and for the purpose of survival and protection, families can assimilate into bigger groups. Groups develop certain traits. Because of environmental challenges, groups have evolved into people with different skin colours. Caucasians developed white skins and long hair because of the cold environment of Northern Europe (see Hirchman 2004, p. 387). The closer people lived to the hot equatorial environments; the darker their skin colour became to protect them against the heat. In the cold environments, people had erect protective dwellings to survive in those conditions. They developed certain skills to do so. In other environments, people developed other skills. The skills of a group in a particular environment, their customs, their way of organising their group and their means of communication became their culture. Later, a group with a specific culture became known as a 'people'. The 'people' share traits and have a strong 'we-feeling'. Except for skin colour and facial features, human groups do not differ biologically. The word used over the centuries for distinct groups comes from the ancient Greek word 'ethnos'. Groups with the same traits because of climatic and environmental challenges became known as 'ethnic groups'.

Over the centuries, migration brought groups into contact with other groups that maintain differences in culture, religion and customs. It is part of human nature to be suspicious of 'otherness'. The suspicion can fade away and turn into 'togetherness'. Some groups eventually came together and developed into new cultural entities with new traits to portray their new identity. The natural course of migration is the appearance of new forms of 'togetherness'. Many historical examples can be mentioned where new groups came into being by natural assimilation. Virtually every nation has a history of assimilation of foreigners, immigrants and refugees. The early history of Afrikaners in South Africa is a good example. Their early history exposes a steady process of assimilation between immigrants from abroad, slaves and indigenous inhabitants of the Cape. The development of Afrikaners as a single ethnic group in South Africa is a good example of 'otherness' that became 'togetherness'. The first Dutch settlers soon encountered the Khoi and San and developed a workable means of communication for the purposes of trade. This Cape community was soon exposed to slaves from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, other parts of Africa and Madagascar (Shell 2012, pp. 63–64). New waves of European settlers arrived with the French Huguenots, British settlers and missionaries from Germany and the Nordic countries. These groups lived in symbiosis, and out of this 'togetherness' grew an ethnic entity who later came to call themselves Afrikaners. The Afrikaners are not a white tribe of Africa, but a people of mixed racial descent. The early history of the Afrikaners indicates the flexibility of ethnic identities and proves that 'otherness' can become 'togetherness'. Many other historical and contemporary examples of natural processes of growing into 'togetherness' by unforced or restricted assimilation can be mentioned.

However, the contrary is also true. The suspicion of 'otherness' can result in idolisation of the own and the demonisation of the other. In another publication, I explain the patterns of the 'us' and 'them' line of thought and the eventual manifestation of inter-group strife and hostility (see Vorster 2017, p. 140). I revisit the underlying research here and apply the main findings with recent research outcomes in this assessment of racism as a central component of the inheritance of colonialism. Inherent in the idolisation of the 'own' is the sense of superiority. The group may perceive itself as superior and the other as inferior, and the superiority could drive the resistance against any form of togetherness. However, the resistance can also be motivated by a fear of losing the 'own' identity in the process of togetherness. The idolisation of the 'own' usually follows the following pattern: the in-group develops a potent sense of solidarity by claiming one or another noble cause for their existence and separateness. It can be a divine calling to reach some holy destiny. To strengthen the search for solidarity, the group reconstructs their history

and sacralises their perceived unique qualities such as intelligence, skills, abilities and customs. When they have power over other groups, they use it to control and even enslave others. They enhance and protect their power and privileges with social stratification. The 'in-group' solidarity and its co-option of power to assure separateness and privileges often results in the alienation, dehumanisation and exploitation of 'others'.

The history of Afrikaners from approximately 1870 shows how they developed against the early pattern of 'togetherness' and assimilation by cultivating a fiery nationalism centred on whiteness, shared history, Protestant religion, their language and land to fence them off from British imperialism and the indigenous black tribes of Africa. In the latter part of the 19th century, the dream of an Afrikaner people with an own language and future emerged (Giliomee 2020, p. 220). This ideal was fiercely pursued in the 20th century, driven by the vision of gaining full political control and becoming an own republic. This surge of nationalism in their recent history then followed the typical pattern of an intense 'we-feeling' that developed into idolisation of their own identity and a solidarity that actively resisted 'togetherness' because of the self-defined ulterior motive of being a white ethnic entity in an independent republic controlled by white people. History, culture, language, religion and social structures were all defined within the ambit of whiteness and race.

What is explained above portrays the backdrop of the heritage of racism in South Africa. The idea of race originated from Darwinian research on the origin and evolutionary development of species and became a useful tool by colonial politicians to identify indigenous populations as different (and inferior) races (Hirchman 2004, p. 393). Nowadays, the social sciences posit that race as a social category is illogical and scientifically baseless. Ethnic groups can be identified by way of different skin colour, traits, cultures, religions, history and so on, but to identify human races with superior and inferior qualities based on evolution biology has no historical, logical or scientific proof (cf. Hirchman 2004, p. 408). Some partisan Christian traditions, such as the Aryan Christianity and apartheid theology, taught that race is an attribute of the human person. They founded this point of view on the protological story of the building of the Tower of Babel by people with 'one language and common speech' with the aim to become a powerful nation 'with a name' (Gn 11:1–8). As a result, God confused their language and scattered them over 'all the earth' to prevent their striving for divine power. They read in this passage, *inter alia*, the origin of races and the divine command that people should maintain their racial identity and avoid racial integration (for a valuable exposition of these ideological theologies, see Heschel 2001, p. 79; 2010; Müller 2015, p. 125; Wolff 2006, p. 153). These teachings are erroneous because the modern concept of race does not feature in the biblical passage. Biblical ethics

describe a people [*ethnos*], but nowhere does it prescribe the veneration of a people into a superior entity or command that the ethnos should be isolated or have a special divine calling to protect their identity and refrain from any form of assimilation. God's call to holiness is to the individual believer and the faith community and overarches different ethnic groups. In Christ, there is no ethnic, class or gender inequality (Gl 3:28). The equality of all people is the *magna carta* of the biblical message (see Keener 2018, p. 166; Lategan 2012, p. 383).

Racism can only be defined within the context of colonialism. Race is a social construct of Western colonialism. It explains the systematic and systemic alienation of non-European indigenous communities on the foundation of 'otherness', of which skin colour is the most important. This alienation started with the enslavement of people of colour and developed 'through exploitation to structural unemployment' (Giliomee 2003, pp. 8–14). All other features of the reactionary forces against otherness also form part of racism, such as demonisation of the 'them' over and against the romanticised 'us', solidarity against the enemy, the deep sense of superiority and the justification of the cause to gain power to protect the 'us'. The system of apartheid contained all these ingredients. For Mbeki (1998, p. 41), it was a system 'of racial division, racial oppression, despair and human degradation [...]'. Racism goes hand-in-hand with power, and the use of power to protect and promote the 'we-feeling' usually leads to exploitation of the 'other'. Racism is a colonial phenomenon, the perpetrators are those in power, and at least until recently, they were white people. Soft, neutral de-contextualised definitions of racism such as those of Marger (1994, pp. 7–8) and Schutte (1995, p. 18) miss the real point because they do not address white power and the exploitation and dehumanisation of black people. Such 'soft' definitions steer the debate about the moral agency to address racism in an ineffectual direction.

A popular argument among young black intellectuals in South Africa today is that black people cannot be racist. McKaiser (cf. 2012) debates this point of view in an opinion piece. He explains that this argument rests on the supposition that racism cannot be defined in a void and should always be related to the history and experiences of people at a certain stage and time. As such, racism is inextricably linked with Western colonialism and can therefore only be comprehended through the eyes of the victims. It can manifest itself differently in different historical contexts. Racism in South Africa followed the pattern of invaders from abroad taking power and effective control over the means of economic growth and prosperity. Black South Africans were exploited and dehumanised, and the syndrome of inferiority and lack of dignity are part and parcel of their psychopathology, as Fanon explained. Racism is much more than merely a negative attitude that can come to the fore as hate speech, insults, symbols and so forth.

Following this argument, black people may resent white people, use hate speech against them, stereotype them, denigrate them, insult them and abuse them, but such bad behaviour cannot meet the criteria of racism because black people have no power over others in the colonial sense. Furthermore, the argument entails that white people cannot understand racism and will have difficulty defining the phenomenon because they can never stand in the shoes of a powerless, dehumanised person with no sense of human dignity and the perennial feeling of inferiority.

McKaiser (2012) disputes this argument and raises valid points of criticism, but I think that the core thread of the argument about the relationship between race and power is to the point. We should understand this when defining racism without a historical context because it will lead us to deficient answers to the problem of racism as a potent social ill today. Racism has to do with power and powerlessness, and an honest attempt to address racism effectively will force us to look deeply at the still lingering painful effects of past power abuses and new forms of abuse that may appear in the new South Africa and may be experienced by minority groups today.

Based on my own experiences in the past and my current experience, I would like to raise two arguments to explain this. Firstly, in the high tide of apartheid, it was a common practice that black people addressed white people as 'boss' and 'madam' [*baas* and *miesies* in Afrikaans]. Even an elderly black person had to address a young white person in this manner. A black child had to witness their parents – even the important father figure – address white people in this manner as part of labour relations, social relations and even in ordinary public interactions. It signified the superiority of the white boss and the inferiority of the black person. Amenities for black people were of lower quality than those for white people. Schools for black children were sub-standard and facilities for sport and recreation were far below the standards of those in white areas. Living conditions in black 'locations' were miserable and meagre in comparison with the lavish white areas and comfortable lifestyles of middle-class white people. Black people had no effective political means to improve their circumstances and living conditions. They lived by the grace of an all-white government on national, regional and local levels. They had to eat out of the hand of the white boss. The children grew up with this syndrome of inferiority and consciousness of being worthless citizens constantly dependent on the 'boss'. Having been raised with such poor self-esteem, the child becomes an adult with a strong inclination to remain in the orbit of insignificance, just like the previous generation. The black person's lack of self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities forms a mental block when the person gains the opportunity to develop and prosper. Because of the syndrome of inferiority and the resultant low self-esteem, the person fears to tread on the unknown territories of entrepreneurship, academic development and progress.

A new Constitution and political rights cannot solve the syndrome of inferiority and low self-esteem instantaneously. Rehumanising people after a long period of dehumanisation is a long process of healing. Healing the deeply entrenched syndrome of inferiority in the psyche of black South Africans will take time and require the goal-orientated moral agency of all actors in the field of human development. The process necessitates constant compassionate involvement and patience when the rage explodes. I hope to present a modest answer about the options that may assist moral agents in this quest to establish human dignity and flourishing personhood amid the syndrome of inferiority and feelings of constant failure.

However, let us secondly reflect on another emerging process that could disrupt the cohesion of our social fibre. Moral agents cannot overlook a new trend that is gradually fuelling another rage and that is a growing feeling of alienation in the white community, especially among the youth. It is true that young white people still benefit from the privileges white people had in the time of colonisation and apartheid. They enjoyed stable households in middle-class and upper-class communities. They attended good schools and, as a result, had privileged access to tertiary education. Because of political privileges and protection, they had control over their destiny. However, these disparities could not last because of their inherent immorality. Therefore, the eventual policies to redress these disparities intended to bring young black people on an equal footing with the same privileges and means of carving out a good future. This is a commendable goal, but the way in which these policies were applied can be questioned. Instead of enlarging the cake by way of responsible and meticulous economic management, the governments since 1994 have attempted to redistribute the old cake from before 1994. This conduct means that young white persons have become the targets of a new form of discrimination based on race. To implement this practice, the democratic governments have had to maintain the policy of racial classification, although the racial *Population Registration Act 30 of 1950* (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1950), the cornerstone of apartheid, was repealed in South Africa in 1991. Racial classification has been living on as the basis of socio-economic action (*BBC News* 2021). If the South African community continues to think along racial lines, they will inhibit the moral agency aimed at the evolution of moral standards that rise above racism and its many detrimental effects. Many young white persons have been excluded from occupations, bursaries and grants for tertiary education, promotions in the workplace and from representing South Africa at international cultural and sporting events because of race.

The result of this discrimination and deprivation has been a wave of emigrations (Avery 2021). Young white people and families were forced to leave the country. According to a study by Galal (2021), 915,000

South Africans are living abroad, and the trend is growing. These are mostly skilled white persons. Despite the treacherous 'brain drain', which the country could ill afford, family structures have once again been disrupted by irresponsible political social engineering. Young white people have become uprooted foreigners in other countries where they do not belong culturally and where they are not at home while they could have been involved in the economic and social development of South Africa. The loss of these emigrants implies the loss of multiple academics, medical practitioners, teachers, engineers, farmers, businesspeople and highly skilful entrepreneurs, and it disrupts the socio-economic development of the country (see Mlando 2019). Disrupted families remain behind, parents miss their children and grandchildren abroad are raised without the supporting structures of extended families, especially grandparents. The feeling of rejection, alienation and negativity caused by the emigration of loved ones not only distances Afrikaners and other white people from the much-needed development of the whole community, but it also feeds suspicion about the efforts of the democratic government to build the nation. It spills over into a rage against new racially-orientated policies and plans. This rage can also fuel the fire of eventual violence.

The plans of the democratic governments since 1994 to build a non-racial nation founded on the constitutional values of human dignity, equality and freedom within the framework of a solid Bill of Rights and ridding the nation of the injurious past can be lauded, and many positive results in this endeavour can be noted. South Africa is indeed a better place for all citizens than it was before 1994. But to think and plan according to racial classification and to continue with the law underlying this policy, to my mind, inhibits any attempt to deal with the devastating effects of racism. The system has been changed, but the syndrome of inferiority and future angst is still with us. Moreover, this pathology among many black people spills over to alienated and suspicious white people and culminates in more and more rage. Where are we going when thinking and planning along racial lines? Nowhere! Where could we go? I hope to give guidance in the chapters to come.

■ Economic inequality and poverty

In the earlier section titled 'The injurious effects of the dispossession of land' I referred to the history of inequality between white people and black people in the colonial era. More should be said about the remnants of this inequality that faced leaders in their negotiations for the new democratic dispensation. The historical inequality caused pervasive social problems in the new South Africa, of which the poverty of a large percentage of the community was the most important. The second president of the new

South Africa, President Thabo Mbeki (1998, p. 68) referred to the 'two nations of South Africa'. The one nation is white and relatively prosperous. 'It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational communication and other infrastructure' and 'all members of this nation have the possibility to exercise their right to equal opportunity, the development opportunities to which the Constitution of 1993 committed our country'. The 'second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor' (Mbeki 1998, pp. 71–71). 'This nation lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure'. After criticism from naïve drivers of reconciliation and in the wake of the euphoria of the 'one rainbow nation', he softened his stance and rather spoke about 'two economies'. However, his analysis was accurate, as the later thorough study of Terreblanche (2002, p. 151ff.) on the history of inequality in South Africa indicates. The colonial history and everything accompanying it, including deprivation, social stratification and exploitation of indigenous Africans as described earlier, gave birth to and sustained a deeply divided country – a division between black people and white people. The white people became prosperous and shared in the natural wealth of the country while black people had to live off the 'leftovers' from the table of the colonialists. The inequality manifested mainly in the huge disparity between rich and poor. However, the inequality between black and white South Africans was not only economic but was also visible in other areas of human life. The disparity between white people and black people manifested as a disparity between 'haves' and 'have nots' when it comes to political rights and political mobilisation, observing culture and religion, full access to educational systems, labour opportunities, freedom of movement, right of entry to amenities and restricted means to become fully involved in developing and sharing the wealth of the land. There were times of poverty among white people, such as the poverty of Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer War from 1899 to 1902, and the 'poor whites' crisis because of the depression in the early 1930s, but they had the political means and full access to the produce of the land to turn the tide and lift themselves out of poverty. Their remarkable economic revival and the reasons for it are described by Giliomee (2003, p. 447ff.) in his well-researched book. Black people did not have the political means and access to the produce of the land to do the same because of the mentioned land dispossession, social stratification and a total lack of effective political rights in the colonial era.

When it comes to the inequality between rich and poor in South Africa, Terreblanche (2014, p. 54ff.) explains in a more recent publication that four political-economic systems employed in South Africa between 1652 and 1994 nurtured the growing and deepening inequality. Of special interest for the contemporary features of inequality are the contribution of post-war

capitalism and the neoliberal economic philosophy that swept across the Western world from the 1980s onwards. He argues that the post-1989 local application of this philosophy deepened the inequality that resulted from colonial history and even advanced it in the post-1994 democracy, irrespective of the noble ideals of the liberal Constitution.

Terreblanche (cf. 2002, p. 371ff.) analyses the extent of the inequality on the eve of the new dispensation in 1994. The long history of inequality left South Africans with a legacy of huge structural unemployment, which means that the economy was not able to provide employment for 36.1% of the population. Some employed themselves in subsistence agriculture and they can be described as underemployed. The scale of unemployment was as follows: black people 46%, mixed-race people 23%, Asian people 30% and white people 6.7% (Terreblanche 2002, p. 373). With reference to the scientific measurements used in South Africa to determine the extent of poverty, Terreblanche (cf. 2002, p. 383) concludes that a very high percentage of the South African population were abjectly poor in 1996. Inequality led to widespread poverty.

How do we define poverty? Compassion International has an expanded definition of poverty based on the measurements of the World Bank. This expanded poverty definition (Compassion International 2022):

> […] recognizes that to be poverty-stricken is to be afflicted and overwhelmed by need in any or all areas of life. Impoverishment encompasses poor living conditions, nonrepresentation, anxiety from feeling powerless, exclusion from the social structure, and an inability to meet basic needs because food, clean drinking water, proper sanitation, education, health care and other social services are inaccessible. This poverty threshold starts with fear for the future and broadens to include dependence, oppression and even exploitation. (n.p.)

This definition explains exactly what poverty in South Africa as a result of the inequality of colonialism entailed at the dawn of democracy. The measurements used by Terreblanche (2002) indicate that:

> [B]etween 50 and 60 per cent of blacks and 22 and 32 per cent of coloureds were living in poverty – more so in rural areas. This poverty can be attributed to land deprivation, proletarianization, discriminatory measures to the white proletariat, official discrimination in social spending, especially on education and training and stagflation since 1974. (p. 384)

With reference to laws in the colonial era – and especially during apartheid – he furthermore ascribes poverty to racial inequalities and systemic injustices in income, distribution of political, military, economic and ideological power, as well as the distribution of economic, entrepreneurial and educational opportunities. Lastly, he refers to a developing differentiated class structure that emerged in the black community as a result of the rise of a black elite because of the *Bantustan Policy* of the apartheid government. Bantustan leaders and the chieftain classes co-opted by the apartheid

government became a rich elite at the expense of the communities of the 'homelands' in which they resided (Terreblanche 2002, p. 399). Moreover, in his view, poverty was also related to the violence and criminality that have plagued South Africa over many years. The systemic violence of the system created counter-violence in the form of violent uprisings against the system and criminality because of poverty and unemployment (Terreblanche 2002, p. 400).

Some leaders, mostly the white negotiators at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), argued that 'levelling the playing field' will eventually resolve the problem of inequality and resultant widespread poverty. According to this view, the dismantling of apartheid and all the strict discriminatory measures would bring black people and white people onto equal footing. All will have the same opportunities. They often referred to the economic rise of Afrikaners after the Anglo-Boer War. However, most black leaders argued, rightly so, that there should be redress, otherwise the inequality will persist. They felt that a new Constitution and dismantling apartheid would not suffice because of the ill effects of years of exclusion. The colonial heritage of inequality posed huge challenges to the new South Africa. Have these challenges been met since then? This question will be dealt with in the next chapter.

To conclude the discussion on the main problems that emerged from our colonial heritage, the issue of the instilment of a culture of violence in the psyche and conduct of South Africans is addressed in the following section.

■ The emergence of a culture of violence

Terreblanche (2002, p. 400) is correct with his remark that the colonial history of South Africa can be characterised as inherently violent. His remark is validated by evidence of many violent skirmishes about land over the centuries. The contact between settlers and African tribes forms the nucleus of the enduring violence, but violent clashes between the Afrikaners and the British over power also fed violence into the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) of South Africanism. Furthermore, religious persuasions, ideologies and moral theories about the justification of violence did their part in developing the culture of violence the new South Africa has been facing.

Violent conflicts constantly erupted as the European settlers expanded their 'borders' in the 17th and 18th centuries. There were nine 'border wars' between the settlers and the isiXhosa kingdoms in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, the interior political disruption and migration of *Mfecane* [isiZulu for 'The Crushing'], many battles between the Dutch 'Voortrekkers' and the Zulu kingdoms, of which the Battle of Blood River

(16 December 1838) is well-known and still in the memory of both Afrikaners and the Zulu people, though for different reasons. The rapid changes these conflicts brought on are well described in the historical survey of Giliomee and Mbenga (2007, p. 124ff.). As the British colonised the Zulu territory, various bloody battles ensued. The British annexation of the two republics established by the 'Voortrekkers', namely, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal), led to the Anglo-Boer War. This was an extremely violent war, since the British military command attempted to prevent the Boers from getting supplies by destroying their farms and killing the livestock. They wanted to keep the war as short and cheap as possible (Pakenham 1979, p. 454). The women and children, as well as some black farmworkers, were moved to concentration camps with harsh and inhumane conditions. In the white concentration camps, 27,000 women and children died of illnesses resulting from hunger and poor medical treatment. The number of black deaths is not known because no record was kept for the camps where black people were confined along the main railway line from Kimberley. These prisoners were used to keep the railroad in good order to ensure the ease of movement of British soldiers and military equipment – another sign that black people did not matter in colonial times (see Giliomee 2003, p. 253ff.). Measured against the number of citizens in the two republics at that stage, this action of the British can be termed genocide and would have been defined as a crime against humanity in today's terms.

The rest of the 20th century was marred by the violence of the 1914 rebellion, the Bulhoek Massacre (24–25 May 1921) causing the death of 163 Xhoza civilians by the police force, and the 1923 violent repression of the revolt by mineworkers. During the time of WWII, Afrikaner nationalists were involved in armed resistance against the pro-British government of the then Union of South Africa. In 1948, the National Party (NP) won the election and immediately introduced the policy of apartheid with the *Population Registration Act 30 of 1950*. The rulers regarded violence as a justifiable tool for the implementation of the policy because they argued that all South Africans would, in the end, benefit from a country divided into racially separate areas and states. Black people were forcefully removed from demarcated white areas to demarcated black areas in every village, town, city and rural area in terms of the *Group Areas Act (GAA) 41 of 1950*. Apartheid made no moral or economic sense and was incrementally resisted by black people. However, the apartheid government was head bound to make the policy work by means of more and more restrictive legislation. More restriction led to more resistance, and from the 1960s, the country was immersed in 'a spiral of violence' – the constant clash between systemic violence by the system and counter-violence by the oppressed. A spiral of violence or 'triple violence' is the constant violent interaction

between a system of oppression and the counter-violence of the oppressed, which is then answered by more oppression and resultant resistance (*see* Banana 1981, p. 52; Camara 1974, p. 139ff.). The dark days are still vivid in our minds: Sharpeville (in 1960), Soweto (in 1976), the country-wide protest actions in the 1980s, bombs in public places, soldiers on the streets, necklace murders, Vlakplaas (north of Pretoria in the Gauteng province, which served as the headquarters of the then-South African Police [SAP]) and, above all, the long border war in Angola and Namibia (then known as South West Africa) against the military wings of the Southwest African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the ANC and their military supporters from Marxist countries. Because of what Giliomee and Mbenga (2007, pp. 346–395) named 'the search for a new order', the 1980s was a time when the whole country was engulfed in different shapes of violence – military, reactionary and the violence against the mind by defamatory and degrading propaganda. It is not farfetched to maintain that South Africans, because of a violent history, have become prone to choosing violence as one of the first means to solve problems. They have become insensitive. Agents on all sides of the racially divided country and communities tend to romanticise violence as a quick and certain solution.

This romanticising and proneness to violence also have religious and ideological roots. Firstly, the romanticisation of the violence inherent to the processes of colonisation can be mentioned. As in South Africa, all over the world European colonisation was accompanied by intense violence to subject indigenous peoples. Latin America was occupied violently with the blessing of the Roman Catholic Church. The moral argument in favour of these conquests was that colonialism will bring Christianity to the 'barbarians' and 'pagans' and they will reap the fruits of a higher civilisation. The good end justifies the means. This consequentialist moral theory justified colonial violence in the eyes of the perpetrators. The same moral justification of violence was evident in the many wars against Native American tribes in North America, and in these cases, Protestantism provided moral arguments in favour of violence. A good example of this pattern of reasoning was the motivation of the Puritan fathers for their wars against Native American tribes. Motivated by the agreement of the *Mayflower Compact* (1620) (see Bradford [1620] 2003, p. 1), they felt obliged to erect a 'City on the hill' – a colony with good laws, ordinances and a people living 'in the fear of the Lord'. Their covenant theology served as the basis of divine–human relationships (Johnson 2005, p. 130). In their view, God's covenant with humanity splits humanity into two communities: the Christians and the unbelievers. The covenant theology of the Puritans created a peculiar expectation in the relationship with the Native Americans. They expected the Native Americans to have righteous and pious behaviour. They expected the Native Americans to be humble, respectful and willing

to submit their lives to the Christian God. In their effort to create a 'Christian colony', they claimed God for their cause and the justification of their actions. This spirituality led to the atrocities during the Pequot War of 1636–1637 – a war the Puritans believed was ordained by God (Slater 2014). At the *Mistick Fort*, many Pequots died an agonising death when the fort was burnt down by the Puritan colonists, a deed lauded by Major Mason (1736) as an act of God:

> [...] who laughed at his enemies and the enemies of his people to scorn making (the Pequot fort) as a fury oven. This did the Lord Judge among the heathen, filling (the Mistick) with dead bodies. (p. 30)

In the northern parts, Roman Catholics supported the confinement of nomadic Native American tribes to reservations because the confinement made the process of Christianisation easier. Although this action led to starvation among the nomads, the means were justified by the perceived good end of becoming part of the Christian civilisation.

Secondly, in South Africa, the Calvinist Reformed tradition deeply influenced Protestantism. The South African Reformed tradition implemented a moral tradition of deontological 'divine command' ethics. Selective uses of biblical passages aided the construction of a worldview and lifestyle of strict rules and regulations pertaining to public order and public morality. This ideological presupposition initiated and nurtured the use of force to establish an orderly and 'civilised' society according to strict moral codes defined by the Dutch thread of this tradition. This tradition determined that, for example, in penology and jurisprudence, capital punishment was justified, not only for homicide but also for rape (especially the raping of a white female by a black male) and political insurrection. Police violence to curb unrest was an ordinary way to display the 'strong hand of the law'. Harsh prison sentences were not unexpected and the use of force in prisons was permitted. The use of violence by means of corporal punishment in the public education of children was a common practice and often defended on religious grounds. Teachers were permitted to apply corporal punishment to boys and girls indiscriminately. The teacher was simultaneously the prosecutor, the judge and the executioner of corporal punishment, and the victim had no access to institutional or legal protection. In times of political turmoil, the use of violence surged in places of employment and violent crimes spilled over to the streets because of an insensitivity to violence to maintain public morality and civil order.

Thirdly, the liberation struggle added its own brand of 'justifiable' violence to solve a problem. Just like the colonialists, the proponents of this struggle used a consequentialist moral theory by claiming that the violence of resistance aims to serve the better end, namely, liberation for all. They claimed, just like other liberation movements, that the only way 'to

subvert the dominant powers of oppression is to oppose them with antagonistic power' (Fierro 1977, p. 202). Over and against the 'violence that oppresses' of the colonial society, they proposed and practised a 'violence that liberates' as a justifiable means to solve the problem of oppression. In this respect, they also founded the legitimate use of violence in the consequentialist moral theory of the end justifying the means. Liberation theology in South Africa was an ardent agent in the promotion of this 'justifiable' violence, as Camara (1974, p. 143) displayed in his call for liberating violence. In this respect, they clothed the violence of the 1980s in a dress of justifiable actions, even if it went far beyond actions against representatives of the system to include necklace murders and political killings of opponents. Just as in the case of colonial violence, they did not define the limits of violence. The constant redefinition of the 'good end' perpetuated and extended the 'means' of the consequentialist theory to such an extent that violence to achieve a self-defined good end has become a constant feature in the South African social genetic makeup.

The violence inherent to the colonising enterprises, the strict moral codes of the Reformed tradition pertaining to the maintenance of law and order, jurisprudence, authority and education, and the justification of the liberating violence of the struggle inserted an inclination to violence into the DNA of the South African population. Although capital and corporal punishment are outlawed now, the genetic inclination to violence still presents itself in the high rate of violent crime, political killings of opponents, pockets of police brutality, and especially in domestic violence against women and children. Where discussions about solving South Africa's problems surface on social media, the call for violent means to problem-solving is noticeable and usually takes the form of a constant call to reinstate capital and corporal punishment and demands for the aggressive hand of the law. The inclination to violence as problem-solving can rightly be noted as one of the important negative heritages of our pre-1994 history. This genetic deficiency should be addressed thoroughly in our pursuit of happiness and peace for all, and I will present some ideas about a change in our inclination to resort to violence when attempting to solve problems.

■ Résumé – What did we inherit?

The brief survey of the colonial history of South Africa, including the history of apartheid as a branch of colonialism, discloses some burning moral problems. These problems started a long process of moral decay, to such an extent that the country is in urgent need of finding a moral compass that can invigorate our nation to search for a future healthy society built on moral excellence and spaces of human development and growth. I regard the following problems as the main sources and conveyors of moral decay:

- The dispossession of the land of indigenous peoples in South Africa is one of the core ingredients of the persistent moral decay in the country. Loss of land resulted in the uprooting of long-established, stabilised and peaceful societies. For the original inhabitants of South Africa, land undergirds human personhood and sustains a sense of human dignity, being somebody, enjoyment, peace and hope. Losing land fuelled a destructive process of dehumanisation. In recent history, this dehumanisation has been invigorated by the one-dimensionality of the industrial society. Because of this destructive force, African people not only carry the burden of colonial dehumanisation but also the dehumanisation of high-industrial societies. We inherited a community without a sense of human dignity – persons with an innate inferiority complex, with no pride in the inner self and its achievements. They are also persons with an inherent rage against the order of things and a call for all-encompassing decolonisation and total liberation. On the other hand, we inherited the superior pride of Westernism, but these persons are also enslaved because they are 'lived' by one-dimensional structures whose shackles may become even worse as the 4IR continues. Both groups of persons are angry and prone to violence because they do not see the light at the end of the tunnel – a clear roadmap to becoming fully human and pursuing flourishing personhood (happiness, peace, joy, hope and fulfilment) in the current South African predicament. All we hear is the sound of rage.

- The colonial history left South Africa with a tremendous burden of racism. Racism in South Africa has to do with power and racially delineated spaces for superior and privileged white people and inferior and underprivileged black people. Because of systemic exclusion from birth to death, black people had no effective political means to improve their circumstances and living conditions. They lived by the grace of an all-white government on national, regional and local levels. They had to eat out of the hand of the white 'boss'. The children grew up with this inferiority complex, conscious of being worthless citizens, dependent on the 'boss'. With such poor self-esteem, the children became adults with strong inclinations to remain in the orbit of insignificance, just like the previous generation. The black person's lack of self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities forms a mental block when the person gains the opportunity to develop and prosper. Because of the inferiority complex and the resultant low self-esteem, the person fears treading on the unknown territory of entrepreneurship, academic development and progress. A new Constitution and political rights cannot solve the inferiority complex and low self-esteem instantaneously. Rehumanising people after a long period of dehumanisation is a long process of healing. Healing the inferiority complex in the psyche of black South Africans will take time and requires goal-orientated moral agency from all actors in the field of human development.

- The colonial history and everything accompanying this process, such as deprivation, social stratification and exploitation of indigenous Africans, as described, gave birth to and sustained a deeply divided and unequal country – a division between black people and white people. The white people became prosperous and shared in the natural wealth of the country, while black people had to live off the 'leftovers' from the table of the colonialists. At the dawn of democracy, 50%–60% of black people and 22%–32% of mixed-race people were living in poverty – more so in rural areas. The inequality manifested mainly in the huge disparity between relatively affluent white people and poverty-stricken black people. However, the inequality between black and white South Africans was not only economic but can also be seen in other areas of human life. The disparity between white people and black people was also a disparity between 'haves' and 'have nots' when it came to political rights and political mobilisation, observing culture and religion, full access to educational systems, labour opportunities, freedom of movement, the right of entry to amenities and restricted means to becoming fully involved in the development and sharing of the wealth of the land.

- Because of a long history of violence and the ideological, religious and legal justification and romanticising of violence as a means to force change, execute policies and solve problems, South Africans have inherited a culture of violence from the colonial age. Violent means were used to maintain the system and to try destroying the system. The violence inherent to the colonising enterprises, the strict moral codes of the Reformed tradition pertaining to the maintenance of law and order, jurisprudence, authority and education, and the justification of the liberating violence of the struggle inserted an inclination to violence into the DNA of the South African population. The inclination to violence as problem-solving can rightly be noted as one of the most important negative heritages from our pre-1994 history.

To my mind, these issues are the main problems we inherited from our colonial history. We need to find a moral compass to address them. Did the transformation of 1994 succeed in giving moral agents in South Africa a compass to guide us to a future of good order and a flourishing life? To answer the question, I examine the post-1994 undertakings, accomplishments and failures in the next chapter. Although I regard the ongoing racial classification in South Africa as a large component of the country's social problems, I will use racial terminology to explain South Africa's current social ills. After my plea for togetherness and true 'South Africanness' in Chapter 4, I will refrain from this terminology and resort to the terms 'South African' and 'South Africanism' when proposing the way we could go.

Our post-1994 heritage

■ Introduction

Where are we now in the search for a moral compass for South Africa? To pinpoint our position is not easy because we are overwhelmed by all kinds of viewpoints, diagnoses, projections, warnings and disinformation on social media and even in the news media. The use of social media in South Africa is growing rapidly (Budree, Fietkiewicz & Lins 2019, p. 315). Most of these platforms present information that is uncontrolled and not correlated in an informative scholarly manner. Furthermore, the distribution and sharing of fake news have become a major concern in politics, business and administration of huge enterprises. Talwar et al.'s (2020) recent research about the sharing of fake news on social media revealed alarming findings about the way in which corporations can be sabotaged by way of fake news pertaining to the alleged weaknesses of their products, especially when the fake news is structured and presented in a smart way. Disinformation and incitement can easily be spread. In recent years, South Africa became a popular victim of disinformation, fake news and distortions on social media and sometimes even in the ordinary news media. Wasserman (2017, p. 3, 13) located in his research the manifestation of 'fake news' within the South African media landscape with good arguments, and he illustrates how fake news could produce responses that relate directly to specific

social and political forces at a given historical moment. His references to the disinformation by Bell Pottinger (BBP Communications Ltd.) regarding the dangers of the alleged 'white monopoly capital' in South Africa proves the suspicion that fake news can be purposely planned, formulated and set off at the right moment in time to stir up unrest and turn communities against each other. Fake news on social media was also instrumental in the widespread violent unrest in parts of the country in July 2021.

We have become accustomed to the fact that those accused of certain atrocities are found guilty by angry people on social media and sentences are proposed before these people even appear before a court of law. Protests condemning the accused with strong language and defamation at courthouses are a common face on our television (TV) screens. Activists on social media describe problems in South Africa with heavy overstatements and generalisations and do not hesitate to resort to insults, inciting of violence and hate speech, irrespective of the honest attempts of responsible moral agents to protect the dignity of people. Politicians often resort to social media to further their views, mostly with superficial arguments in the form of categorical statements based on unsubstantiated evidence. Even incitement to hate speech which can turn into violence became evident in this respect, as found by the South African Human Rights Commission (2019) in relation to a tweet by the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Julius Malema, which read: 'The only white man you can trust is a dead white man'.

On the other hand, perpetrators hide the extent of their often-criminal activities with shrewd deception and misleading arguments. Some political leaders thrive on the current of information on social media sweeping over our communities, concealing their mistakes shrewdly and arrogantly in waves of disinformation. A good example of such deception is the erroneous statement of the JG Zuma Foundation (2021) in the wake of the decision of the Constitutional Court of South Africa regarding the former president's prison sentence in June 2021. Furthermore, critics of the new democratic dispensation in South Africa often tend to portray events in the country with the 'worst-in-the-world scenario' – highest 'in-the-world' criminality, corruption, domestic violence, inequality and many other spheres of life where South Africans are the worst in global terms. On the other hand, some proponents of the idea of a 'constitutional state' tend to romanticise the new dispensation to such an extent that we could believe that we live in paradise and that the liberation introduced a golden age. Both tendencies are one-sided and even dangerous because the 'worst-case-scenario' proponents can cause across-the-board pessimism, resulting in an attitude of carelessness about problems and total non-involvement in seeking solutions. The 'all-is-well' idealists can cause a laissez-faire attitude that overlooks serious problems and misleads the community to complacency

and moral inactivity. Concerned citizens also lament the absence of good stories about South Africa in nationally respected news media and must deal with the answer that 'good stories' are not newsworthy and do not 'sell the paper'. All these factors inhibit a balanced diagnosis of what is at hand in South Africa after 1994.

An absolutely objective social analysis is not possible. The claim of neutrality and 'just following the data' to analyse and diagnose is an outdated concept in the philosophy of science. What one sees depends, indeed, on where one stands! At best, the onlooker could attempt to be balanced in their approach by considering as much as possible other well-established research findings. But the locality, presuppositions and ideological paradigm of the analyst and predictor will always exert some influence on the analysis and predictions. Taking this reality into account, I venture to draw a picture of the successes and flaws of modern South Africa as I observe them, and I trust that this analysis is fair and even-handed. Let us look at the positive and negative sides of our environment today.

■ The positives

■ Introducing constitutionalism

The Liberal Democratic Constitution, which was negotiated by all the legitimate and authentic political leadership in the period 1990–1994, brought an end to the structures of the colonial era. Social stratification came to an end in the laws and statutes of the country. An independent judiciary, the rule of law, freedom of the press and, especially, the control of political power by a constitutional court emerged to ensure the rights and liberties of all citizens on the foundation of the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The Bill of Fundamental Rights demarcated the sphere of state sovereignty and power and ensured the protection of citizens against the abuses of power by rulers and other social institutions serving the community. When comparing the new dispensation with colonial history and apartheid, as its latest manifestation, the new dispensation of constitutionalism can rightly be considered as modern and a corporation of most of the ideals of the post-WWII urge for democracy and liberty. These ideals are explained by Bazezev (2009, pp. 358–359). The new dispensation was also termed as a miracle, because a country on the verge of a full-blown civil war reached a compromise where all the parties made huge concessions by either rejecting or rephrasing age-old ideological ideals and expectations for South Africa. The about-turn in their patterns of reasoning was particularly the case with the NP of the apartheid era and the ANC. The NP abolished the philosophy and practice of apartheid and the ANC the ideology of strong state power, nationalisation

of some private enterprises and a Marxist economy. They compromised on the important issues raised by minority groups, such as language, education and culture. The willingness to compromise amid severe critique and threats of violent resistance to the negotiation process by extremists on both sides was a remarkable achievement. The government of national unity which ruled in the period 1994–1996 was also an institution with great potential to develop a political culture of dialogue and compromise, but it did not achieve this because of the premature and unwise withdrawal by the NP in 1996. The election of 27 April 1994 was a historic occasion and memories of long queues of black and white voters and the exuberant atmosphere of expectations of something new and better can be described as a momentous turning point in the history of the country. The foundation was laid for a future of hope.

The acceptance of a Bill of Rights was also a milestone. For centuries, South Africans had no culture of human rights and systems, and institutions were established with no concern for the fundamental rights of people. This deficiency promoted power abuse, social stratification with immense discriminatory laws and the dehumanisation of black Africans. White citizens of the Dutch Reformed tradition even opposed the idea that people should have any natural and inalienable rights and ascribed the idea of natural human rights to the influences of humanism and the revolutionary epoch in Europe after the French Revolution in 1787–1799. Their suspicion was encouraged by the influential Dutch jurist Groen van Prinsterer (1806–1876) in his critique of humanism (Groen van Prinsterer 1904, p. 14).[2] Afrikaner political theorists who were influential in the political ideals of Afrikaner nationalism rejected the idea of human rights on religious grounds, and when the NP took control in 1948, they refused to co-sign the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The ideology of Christian nationalism excluded the notion of human rights, but because of new voices in jurisprudence, Reformed theology and Christian philosophy, the tide turned to such an extent that the apartheid government signed the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* in 1991 and immediately acknowledged with this act that apartheid was a policy of oppression and should be abolished. This ideological shift introduced a positive appreciation of the Freedom Charter published and adopted by the ANC at Kliptown, Soweto, in 1955 and established sufficient grounds for a discussion about implementing a Bill of Rights and nurturing a culture of human rights against the current of colonial history.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 – Chapter 2, Sections 7–39: Bill of Rights* (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1996)

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2. For an explanation of the negative appreciation of the idea of constitutional protection of human rights in the Dutch Reformed tradition see Vorster (2017, pp. 59–90).

could benefit from vigorous discourses regarding the extent of these rights and effective ways to protect them. It could recognise the values of the traditional Western individual rights, the socio-economic rights proposed by socialism and communal rights and *ubuntu* of African traditions. Eventually, the final document combined first-, second- and third-generation rights, and since then these rights have been interpreted by the courts and a just and fair society has emerged. South Africans can be proud of this achievement after the long colonial history of distrust, disrespect and oppression and all the odds against this development in the time of apartheid and the struggle. The many leaders and civil societies who constantly campaign for the protection and promotion of constitutionalism deserve our full support because this dispensation is essential in the search for a moral compass. Since 1994, the Constitutional Court has been immensely successful in solving violations of human rights and attempts at abuse of power by the state and civil institutions.

◼ Ending structural violence

As indicated in the discussion regarding violence in the DNA of post-colonial South Africa, systemic violence featured prominently in colonial policies and especially during apartheid as the 20th-century branch of colonialism. Forced removals, group areas, separate and inferior amenities, the limitations on black Africans to interact in the economic spheres and many more restrictive policies institutionalised violence. A sign indicating that only white people can enter a certain amenity such as a beach or movie theatre, make use of certain (superior) transport facilities, use a bench in a park or represent national teams in sports and national cultural events boils down to systemic violence. To enforce this systemic separateness required the violent hand of the state. In the eyes of the opponents of the system, the country was a 'police state' where the white government used the 'police force' to see to it that black South Africans do not trespass on 'white terrain', that white areas remain white and that black people are side-lined to their own amenities, which were usually limited, inferior and overcrowded. On the South African Railways trains, black people were permitted to travel in carriages marked as 'third-class'. The 'third-class' railway carriage was a symbol of the 'black condition' – third-class housing, third-class schools and third-class service delivery as 'third-class' citizens. Resistance against systemic violence was answered with excessive force. The states of emergency announced by the government on several occasions permitted police to use force, and the cases of shootings and killings by police using firearms are well documented. In times of resistance, security legislation permitted arrest without trial for six months, banning of organisations and opposing news media and the use of the South African Defence Force (SADF) against citizens. Instances of excessive police brutality were reported at sessions of the TRC

(see TRC 1994). The structural violence of apartheid was constantly revealed by organisations such as the Christian Institute of South Africa with its Spro-cas publications (see Spro-cas 1971, 1972a, 1972b, 1973) and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) (see SACC 1976a, 1976b, 1976c, 1977, 1978).

The Constitution of 1994 and the Bill of Rights abolished institutionalised violence and rendered systemic violence illegal. This step does not mean that systemic violence disappeared, but it lost its legitimacy. Now, any form of systemic violence in the private and public sectors is illegal. The purification of violent systems and the eradication of structural violence were major steps. All military activities at the South African borders stopped, troops were withdrawn from townships and police services changed from being a force to becoming a service. This step was certainly not enough to cure the inclination to violence in the DNA of South Africans, but it at least broke the spiral of triple violence – systemic violence, struggle violence and enforcing violence. This step can also be appreciated as one of the positives of the 1994 transition.

◼ Advancing socio-economic possibilities for all

The new dispensation intended to redress the economic inequality inherited from colonial history. The foundation of the call for transformation, which is enshrined in the new Constitution policies, was developed to advance the groups that were marginalised in the colonial era. Among these were affirmative action (AA), black economic empowerment (BEE) and 'cadre' deployment (CD). In the explication of the right to equality in Chapter 2 of the Constitution (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1996), the following is said:

> Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment in all rights and freedoms. In order to promote equality, legal and other measures can be taken that are designed for the protection or development of persons, or categories of persons, who were wronged through unfair discrimination. (p. 7).

The policy of AA means 'preferential treatment for disadvantaged groups of people', and the grounds for preference are 'usually race or gender' (De Waal, Currie & Erasmus 2001, p. 223). Jurists reiterated that AA should not be seen as a punishment for the prosperous but as an action that aims for the fair division of income and opportunities (America 1986, p. 73). Such processes have recently been launched in many parts of the world, usually when historic circumstances or economic disruption disadvantaged certain groups of a society. Mere protection of rights is, in such instances, not enough and extraordinary measures should be introduced to drive restitution (Sabbagh 2003, p. 411). This policy was, from its inception, a very controversial issue and the question was asked whether the policy

was not, in essence, a form of 'reverse racism'. However, to rectify the wrongs of the past by way of repentance, forgiveness and redress are deeply embedded in the Christian tradition, and as seen from this perspective, the policy can be regarded as just and morally sound. The intention and the framing of the policy can be regarded as a positive development and an earnest and honest attempt to address the historical inequality between white people and black people in South Africa. But the implementation of the policy leaves much to be desired. The good intentions were soon buried in dispute because of the employment of disadvantaged people without the necessary training and skills development, nepotism, self-enrichment of agents in the process and corruption. However, the inadequate application of the policy does not render the intention of the policy as disastrous and impracticable. The intention is sound, but the execution up to now was flawed. In Chapter 4, I address the policy and nonsensical execution of AA with the aim of finding a way forward.

Land restitution and distribution are also laudable ideals to address the wrongs of the past, especially the disastrous consequences thereof. As is the case in almost all the countries that experienced colonial rule, land restitution as part of distributive justice is high on political agendas. As in the case of AA, the intention to address the land issue can be regarded as a positive contribution of the new dispensation. The long history of dispossession and its injurious effects on the psychopathology of the colonised people, which I described in the earlier section titled 'The injurious effects of the dispossession of land' (this book, ch. 2), signifies that peace will never prevail if the land issue is not settled. Initially, principles were laid down to build a framework for the orderly implementation of the process. These comprised an orderly programme of land restitution and an orderly programme of land redistribution. Land claims had to be submitted on or before 31 December 1998. A Land Claims Court was established to evaluate the claims, and fair compensation was offered to owners whose land would be expropriated. Land redistribution was planned on the foundation of voluntary selling and buying. Despite these good intentions and fair policies, land redistribution is currently in a dismal state. The Government of South Africa (2018, p. 8) revealed in their *Land Audit Report South Africa 2017* that 26.5 million hectares of agricultural land is still in possession of white farmers while they comprise 9% of the population. Black people comprise the vast majority of the population and they own 8.6 m hectares. What happened? The process started off well, but again, bad management, nepotism, corruption, greed and self-enrichment inhibited the smooth execution of a noble intention. Some of the old claims are still not settled. The process resorted to chaos and suspicion of the government's intentions, the white farmers' willingness to sell at fair prices and complaints of new forms of racism clouded the process in blame-shifting, loss of interest in

redress and hate speech. Bad planning and management, such as the hesitance of the government to provide new owners with title deeds, the absence of adequate training of the new farmers and, especially, the slowing down of the process caused huge disappointment and detachment by many stakeholders. Cousins (2016, p. 137) posited that land reform in South Africa is failing and asked if it can be saved. Thus, in this case also, the intentions and original planning were sound and morally acceptable, but the execution led to a mess. However, the intention to address land reforms and the original policies can be regarded as a positive aspect of the new dispensation.

Other major achievements in the socio-economic sector must also be noted when one looks at the positives of the post-1994 dispensation. The World Bank (2021, p. 1) indicates that the new dispensation of 1994 inaugurated a healthy growth rate in the economy which was damaged before the time by severe international sanctions against the apartheid government. The rising growth rate continued in the Mandela and, especially, Mbeki administrations but declined in the era of the corrupt Zuma administration. Healthy signs appeared as a result of the leadership of President Ramaphosa, but the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic inhibited rapid growth. However, economic growth is back on track and the market-driven approach of Ramaphosa bodes well for the future. The most remarkable economic indicator is the rise of the black middle class. The AA and BEE policies of the ANC led to a doubling of the black middle class to such an extent that the spending of this class bypassed the spending of the affluent white middle class within 15 years. This component of the population inspired growth in other sectors, such as urban development, education and small businesses. They also became a potent force in politics, demanding from the rulers first-generation rights protection such as freedom of speech, association and privacy and holding them accountable for misdeeds. Southall (2014, p. 647ff.) and Mattes (2015, p. 665ff.) examined the influence the black middle class had on politics since 1994 and what they may have in the future. Although these authors reported at that stage that the middle class may not deviate from the ANC ideals of 1994, they also indicated that the influence of the growing black middle class will be a political force to be reckoned with. This 2015 insight was proved correct by the 2019 national election results and the 2021 local election results, which signified a constant downward trend of the ruling ANC party, mostly because of its loss of support from the black middle class. The political future depends on the middle class (both black people and white people), and such a situation is good for democracy. While the poor demand socio-economic rights and basic service delivery and are easily bribed with hollow promises, the middle class expect good governance and tend to be more critical of bad management. This middle

class became a stabilising power in democracy because of their respect for the Constitution, their integration into previously affluent white residential areas and their deployment of skills. This stability was a valuable counterforce against the culture of plundering and corruption in the Zuma years. The entering of a black middle class onto the scene of South African history can thus be lauded as a positive of the 1994 transition.

The promise of the ANC government in 1994 to build a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) house for every South African family created many expectations and was applauded by the population as a bold and far-reaching intention. The execution of the programme, however, met with many hiccups. These were researched by Marutlulle (2021), and in his analysis of the current housing inadequacy he outlined many obstacles that inhibited the execution of the programme. Critics viewing the rapid rise of shanty towns and informal housing settlements with scrappy infrastructure and amenities are quick to ascribe these inadequacies as another example of empty promises which left the poor in a state of despair. However, the research done by Marutlulle reveals many unforeseen problems the government had to deal with over the past 27 years, and his findings portray a difficult and demanding situation surrounding adequate housing today. However, we must acknowledge that the execution of the programme delivered relief for many families, and new houses and accompanying infrastructure like schools and clinics are there for everyone to see. On 03 May 2019, *BBC News* reported that in the period 1994–2018, the government built 3.5 m houses. The news report is founded on correct statistics, which are based on the numbers of annual progress. Calculated at a rate of six persons per household, this achievement entailed nearly 21 m poor people being accommodated in better houses. The housing programme of the ANC government since 1994 made remarkable progress, especially in the first fifteen years, although much should still be done, as Marutlulle (2021) posits.

◼ Relaxing tense racial relations

In Chapter 2 (see the section titled 'Racism, dehumanisation and the syndrome of inferiority and indignity'), I attempted to indicate what the phenomenon of racism is all about. Fanon ([1961] 2004) rightly argues that racism can only be defined within the context of colonialism. We said earlier that race is a social construct of Western colonialism, founded on Darwinist anthropology. Racism explains the systematic and systemic alienation of non-European indigenous communities on the foundation of their 'otherness', of which skin colour is the most important. This alienation started off with the enslavement of people of colour and developed an outlook of Africans as inferior and Europeans as superior. The disaffection

launched a deep-rooted dissension and urge to separate. The inherent inclination of Europeans to demonise the 'them' over and against the romanticised 'us', solidarity against the enemy, a deep sense of superiority and the justification of the cause to gain power to protect the 'us' is the foundation of racism. The system of apartheid contained all these ingredients. Racism goes hand-in-hand with power, and the use (or abuse) of power to protect and promote the 'we-feeling' leads not only to separation but also primarily to exploitation of the 'others'. It leaves the 'inferior others' with a psychopathology of indignity, blemished identity and a sense of incompetence and worthlessness. Racism is not just a relational issue that can be solved by good neighbourliness but a colonial phenomenon in which the perpetrators are those in power and, at least up until recent times, they are white people. Eradication of racism needs long, intensive surgery and an even longer time of healing. I will revisit this statement in Chapter 4.

Irrespective of the dark and heavy heritage of racism and the huge task ahead of dealing with the problem, relations between black people and white people on a daily social level have improved over the past 29 years. The South African Institute of Race Relations researched race relations in South Africa since 1929 and published regular surveys since 1946. Recently, this institute reported that the majority of South Africans do not regard racism as the country's major problem any longer. South Africans of all races share a common vision of unity and testify that they do not experience racism in their daily interaction with others (South African Institute of Race Relations 2021, p. 1). Another research institution, namely, The South African Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, also published scholarly surveys about the state of racial relations since 2000. Over the years, their diagnoses showed where we were at a time of division, suspicion and open hostility in the 1980s and how relations improved, especially after the findings and recommendations of the TRC. Their résumé complies with the findings of the South African Institute of Race Relations. In a recent report, this institute published the findings of empirical research that investigated the state of reconciliation. Defining reconciliation as the will to forgive, make and promote peace as well as the willingness to make amends, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (2021, p. 12) found that a growing (although still small) majority maintains that reconciliation improves. There is also a growing agreement between groups that 'a majority of respondents take pride in their national identity and believe they share a common identity with other groups of people' (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation 2021, p. 43). After years of enforced separation, a shared national identity develops and more and more people of all races are buying into it. With reference to this report, President Ramaphosa said in a weekly letter to the nation on 14 December 2021 that most respondents

believed that race relations in South Africa have improved and that they are at their best level since these regular studies began in 2000 (The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa 2021).

Critics of the argument that racial relations have improved tend to use certain isolated occurrences of racial hate speech and conduct and portray these incidents as if they represent the attitude of the whole community. A good example of this kind of disinformation is the comments in *BBC News* (2021) referring to the 'toxic' race relations in South Africa. The reporter founded his statement on a few stories by individuals about isolated incidents of racist conduct by extremists without consulting or referring to the scholarly research done over the years, which confirmed that racial relations have improved. Although the injuries of colonialism are still very evident, race relations have improved and the greatest asset of this positive development is that the 'us' and 'them' of the past can listen and hear each other without bias and are motivated by the common vision of 'South Africanism' as an all-encompassing identity.

I believe that other positive legacies of the post-1994 dispensation can be mentioned on the meso and micro levels, such as the progress of mutual respect, limitation of derogatory language, intercultural art festivals, inclusive sport, the interaction of children at schools, residential integration, normalisation of marriages across the colour bar and shared pride about the achievements of South Africans irrespective of colour or race. The best example of this 'South Africanism' is the wide support for the multi-racial Springbok rugby team who, with their three times winning the rugby World Cup, united South Africans around the dictum 'one nation, one team'. Black players become icons for white children and vice versa.

The positives in the post-1994 heritage are good building blocks to build a moral South Africa for the future, but the process will be in vain if we do not agree on the negatives and take hands to do something about it. To find a compass and use it effectively depends on a clear indication of where we stand today. Therefore, the negatives should also be honestly revealed, and to take part in this discussion, we will now turn.

◼ The negatives

◼ Incompetent and corrupt political management and lawlessness

One of the most obvious and laudable characteristics of the first democratic government of South Africa was the presence of quality leadership in politics, religion, business and civil society. The government of national unity with leaders such as Mandela, Mbeki, De Klerk and others with different political persuasions inspired South Africans to embrace the new

beginning and to make the best of it. Religious leaders such as Tutu and Beyers Naudé, young entrepreneurs, inspiring leaders in the corporate sector, leading agents in civil society and many young theologians nurtured a hope that overshadowed the suspicions and fears of the past. Leaders became role models for the population, and their behaviour had a calming influence on a population where conflict was hidden just under the surface of social life. Many symbolic actions of Nelson Mandela aimed at reconciliation and non-racialism brought about a desire to heal the wounds of the past. Arslan and Turhan (2016, p. 29) drew on these activities of Nelson Mandela in their research about reconciliation-orientated leadership by investigating his normative statements, symbolic acts and judicial actions. They applied the 'conflict triangle model' of Galtung to the activities of Mandela and found that he moved a whole population towards reconciliation in a short time. He curbed the 'triple violence' through social and judicial changes, a high moral stance on forgiveness and his rejection of a spirit of vindictiveness. These findings are accurate because, nowadays, Mandela is remembered as a symbol of reconciliation and peace by South Africans.

But Arslan and Turhan (2016, p. 42) also found a looming darker side when Mandela left the political scene. His successors in politics deviated from this reconciliatory path, and with divisive language and conduct, they impeded the reconciliation process which Mandela held dear. Extremists on the far-right and far-left sides of the political environment, although minorities, drove racialism, populism and identity politics, and by doing this, delayed the process of reconciliation and what it entails. This finding is also a valid finding because the successor of Mandela, Thabo Mbeki focused more on economic growth and less on national reconciliation. He did remarkably well in the political economy with the RDP and Growth, Employment and Redistribution Plan (GEAR) programmes and other growth initiatives. However, in a strange way, he lost the support of white intellectuals who became suspicious of his motives, especially when he applied his 'two nations' theory to South Africa (Mbeki 1998, p. 71). He also lost contact with the impoverished because of his tardiness to act decisively with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) crisis during his term and became, in their eyes, one of the 'ruling elite'. Mandela's drive for nation-building and reconciliation gave way to a constant blaming game by many politicians, and they resorted to their ethnic enclaves to do the best for 'their' people in a new spirit of 'us' and 'them'. New forms of identity politics manifested and exerted a divisive influence on the whole community. The leadership struggle between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma at the 2007 conference of the ANC ripped South Africa's frail social fibre once again, not only between black people and white people but also among black people because of

the ideologically-driven power struggle in the ANC. I will address the ideological confusion in the section on 'Ideological confusion, loss of direction and impoverishment'. Suffice it to say, the 2007 conference of the ANC was a turning point away from the reconciliation-orientated leadership of Mandela.

What followed when Jacob Zuma became president was a total disaster, both in the spirit and the economy of the country. With his entrance into the South African public scene, the ANC lost all moral high ground, and this demise in character trickled down to all spheres of social life. His poor and inept leadership pitched the country into a chaotic whirl of corruption that swept many politicians and their cohorts into a culture of corruption over a period of nine years. Regular reports of the Corruption Watch and Transparency International, which are available online, paint a bleak picture of heightening widespread corruption under the watch of Jacob Zuma and his cohorts. Shocking evidence of fraud, theft, state capture, nepotism, money laundering and squandering by politicians in cahoots with foreign businesspeople was given at the Zondo Commission. The televised hearings portrayed an immense current of corruption at the hands of leaders, and the eventual reports of this Commission revealed enormous mismanagement and self-enrichment – mainly to the detriment of the poor. Political leaders wasted their credibility, and the strong aura of reconciliation and togetherness of the Mandela years lost its appeal.

The policy of cadre deployment as part of AA positioned large numbers of untrained people in leadership positions in key areas of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and local municipalities. Cadre deployment was necessary in South Africa as part of the redress of the previous disadvantages pertaining to black people. Swanepoel (2021) rightly argues that cadre deployment can be an acceptable form of redress and is used worldwide by ruling parties to see to it that their policies are executed by loyal agents. It should not be a contentious issue. But he indicates that the difference between the moral application of cadre deployment and the immoral misuse of the policy is not always well defined. Cadre deployment in South Africa lost its moral ground in recent years because it enabled corruption and contributed to the blurring of (ANC) party–state lines. Swanepoel (2021) concludes that cadre deployment led to damaging cadre employment, which entails, in the words of Van Onselen (2021), 'the dispensation of economic patronage' to loyalists and friends. Drawing on this distinction proposed by Van Onselen and utilised by Swanepoel, one can point to the employment of unqualified Zuma loyalists as executive officers and managers in SOEs.

On 15 October 2019, President Ramaphosa (2019) reported that corruption cost South Africa close to ZAR1 trillion. Virtually all the important

SOEs suffered over the past ten years through incompetent management, untrained workers or corruption. The reports of the Zondo Commission, tabled in 2022, portray an image of misuse of funding, debt, bankruptcy, self-enrichment by cadres and state capture by foreign role players. The government of Zuma answered with huge bailouts that increased the debt of the country and misdirected taxpayers' money. Moreover, socio-economic programmes, such as housing projects, job creation and educational and medical facilities, were deeply affected. The once vibrant RDP, which supplied a few million houses and stimulated economic growth, came to a standstill in the Zuma years. At the centre of the moral decay of the Zuma administration was the renewed suffering of the poor. The funds intended to improve their lives and living conditions found their way into the pockets of corrupt cadres and their collaborators abroad. The regular reports of endemic corruption in this era shocked citizens and led to growing suspicion against leadership, especially in the political sphere. This suspicion is especially evident in municipalities where poor service delivery is rampant (Masiya, Davids & Mangai 2019, pp. 39–40).

The poor service delivery is a direct result of the conduct of corrupt leaders and especially the ANC's erroneous cadre deployment and employment. In an empirical survey by Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016, pp. 97–98) about poor service delivery, the authors find that local governments fail to employ enough qualified and skilled people, especially in regard to computer literacy and general administration. Ill-trained workers cannot deliver and produce. The study reveals that since 1993, just before the implementation of cadre employment, productivity in local government has dropped by 42.2%. These deficiencies cause client dissatisfaction because of slow service delivery, no delivery at all and hollow promises by incompetent officials. Disgruntled citizens resort to sometimes violent protests to voice their dissatisfaction. Protests are nowadays the order of the day. In this respect, it is again the poor and vulnerable who are the main victims. Affluent people resort to private service delivery, but the poor communities must bear shortages of water, electricity, dilapidated roads, wrecked infrastructure, decaying hospitals and the humiliating condition of sewerage flowing in the streets and at schools. They are again the victims of dehumanisation by officials elected to serve the community but who instead squander financial resources or refrain from doing their duties. In the local elections of 2021, the ruling ANC lost support, and their percentage of voter support dropped from 68% in 2005 to 46% in 2021. Perennial corruption and poor service delivery are the main causes of this decline, and the age-old rage from the era of colonisation is rising again.

Criminality in South Africa is an ongoing and growing concern. The annual reports of the South African Police Service (SAPS) – formally named

the South Africa Police (SAP) and reorganised and renamed in 1995 – consistently project high crime statistics. The violence accompanying crime persists. The murder rate is 259 people out of every 100,000 of the population per annum. Domestic violence is prevalent. The Minister of Police recently reported that 10,006 cases of rape were reported in the period April 2021–June 2021 (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2022a, p. 1). Drug trafficking, human trafficking, poaching of wild animals, hijacking of cars and loaded trucks, robbing of transit vehicles carrying large sums of money, burglaries, stealing of arms and dangerous weapons, arson and looting of sensitive material such as copper cables and batteries of mobile phone transmission stations, vandalism and cyber fraud are common features in South Africa today. Kriegler (2017, p. 2) argues that most of the crime statistics are undercounted because many crimes are not reported. The rate of crime reporting is higher in affluent (mostly white) residential areas and is also investigated with more urgency than crimes in townships (mostly black). The conviction rate of reported crimes is also low. Kriegler ascribes this predicament to police incompetence and low morale in the SAPS and the fact that the previous four Commissioners were deposed because of suspected corruption or incompetence, which discouraged ordinary members from fulfilling their duties with due dedication and passion.

The conduct of persons in leadership positions can make or break a community. Mandela fostered the vision that South Africans could live in peace and harmony and that they could address the plight of the poor. Most South Africans associated themselves with this vision. His values trickled down to the grassroots of society and vitalised a general sense of compassion, moral behaviour, respect and a wide-ranging intention to promote enlivening peace. The trickle-down effect of the Mandela worldview made a new South Africa in a short time. Unfortunately, the last 20 years exposed another top-down trickling. Corrupt and inept leadership filtered into society the poison of lawlessness, which is much more than mere criminality. Lawlessness entails not only illegal behaviour but also behaviour not controlled by laws; it also refers to a general disrespect for the law and a 'laissez-faire' or 'everything goes' mentality that takes hold of citizens and sets their minds on a total lack of compliance with law and morals, even in the small shelters of life. Lawlessness raises its ugly head in intentional crime and corruption, as well as in the daily lives of people, such as driving while using a mobile phone, contempt for traffic regulations, littering and ecocide, dishonesty in exams, cheating in business deals, cyber deception and lies, misbehaviour and many more examples. Lawlessness fuels a permissive society. The unruly July 2021 riots in parts of the country and the huge wave of theft, looting, damaging of property and arson are, in my opinion, good examples of such a permissive society.

The spirit of destruction during these riots was a direct result of the growing toxicity of lawlessness that trickles down from the higher echelons of leadership. This pattern cannot be outlawed. To curb lawlessness with more and more laws is not viable nor realistic. The ultimate answer is character-building and responsible moral leadership. The detoxification of the current South African way of life could be enhanced by an across-the-board valet of attitudes and a cleansing of the immoral lifestyle we adapted. The clean-up must then be complemented with the sowing of the seeds of good moral values. This process will require much better moral leadership and moral agency by all role players in community building. I will return to this argument in Chapters 4 and 9.

South Africa has good leaders in every sphere of society, and their voices against corruption, violence and crime are prominent. The current president, President Cyril Ramaphosa, symbolises good and competent leadership. However, the trust people ought to have in leadership declines and growing suspicion becomes a disturbing factor in the leadership–subject relationship, especially in the political sphere. We do not have a lack of good leaders; we have an environment where leaders are not trusted anymore. The status of politicians dropped to such an extent that competent and well-intentioned leaders are not interested in politics but would rather pursue a career elsewhere. The country is desperately in need of public sphere leaders with moral character and an attitude of servanthood and dedication to develop the community, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

▪ Ideological confusion, loss of direction and impoverishment

In the years of the struggle, the ANC opted for a kind of socialist economy where the state can be the main driver of economic growth and distribution. Influenced by the socialist philosophies of the post-war liberation movements, leaders of the movement held on to the idea that socialism would be the best way to introduce economic justice and redress the discrimination of the colonial era. The negotiation process during 1991–1994 leads to an interesting confluence of economic ideals. Motivated by the idea of economic redress, political leaders, business leaders, labour leaders and economic theorists construct a system where the state and the free market will be equal drivers of the economy. This 'free market economy with a strong social arm' eventually determined the *Reconstruction and Development Programme Fund Act 7 of 1994* (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1994). Within the parameters of the programme, the new government intended to integrate growth, development and redistribution into a single programme (ANC 2009, pp. 1, 3, 6). The role players designing

the new political economy agreed on constitutionalism as the political framework and the principles of the RDP as the economic framework for the way to proceed. This agreement represented a significant ideological compromise. African nationalism (ANC), neoliberalism (business), Marxism (communist party) and socialism (trade unions) settled on a programme that combined growth and redistribution and fashioned a typical South African ideology. The execution of the programme had good consequences in the first decade of full democracy in the sense that it stimulated growth and redistribution simultaneously. This ideology had good consequences which I referred to in the section on 'Advancing socio-economic possibilities for all'.

From many sides, the new government was under pressure to embrace neoliberal globalisation and market fundamentalism. They were offered promises by political leaders and big corporations abroad that if they establish a market economy, investment and economic growth will follow. In the end, the growth will trickle down to the poor. According to Terreblanche (2014, p. 89), American pressure groups even subtly threatened the new government with the warning that the economy could be damaged if they do not cooperate. The deviation from neoliberalism and market fundamentalism led to the inception of the GEAR plan in 1996. Terreblanche (2014, pp. 90–91) maintains that the execution of this plan was dysfunctional because the economic conditions for a market economy were not met by political support. The plan enriched white people even further and created a black elite, but it did not alleviate poverty. The inequality between rich and poor became even bigger. Why did this well-intended plan fail? I would say that the politics of liberation, which was firmly entrenched in socialism and even Marxism, cannot be reconciled with free market ideas. The politics of the ANC and the free-enterprise market economy were incompatible. The government attempted to ride on two horses simultaneously – a horse of socialist politics and a horse of neoliberal economy. Big business was invited to invest (economy), but bureaucratic hindrances (politics) were constantly erected to assure AA and empowerment of black people. The outflow of money was also bigger than the inflow.

On the one hand, proponents of the GEAR programme blamed trade unions and the socialist component of the ANC for the dysfunctional execution and poor results of the programme. On the other hand, the socialists blamed the neoliberal component that enriches the already affluent and entrenches the inequality between rich and poor. The toppling of Mbeki in 2007 at the hands of the Zuma wing in the ANC initiated a swing away from the cornerstones of neoliberalism and to more state initiatives, such as grants to the unemployed and free tertiary education for impoverished students. Zuma and his wing in the ANC intended to address unemployment

and the predicament of the poor with direct state intervention. The consequential bureaucracy and ill-planned AA policies shifted the neoliberal movement to the margins. The elevation of the state as the major player in the economy infused large-scale corruption, as we mentioned in the section on 'Introducing constitutionalism'. In the Zuma era, the two economic ideologies turned the ANC into an idling movement with vigorous infighting, leadership challenges, mutual distrust and suspicion. The infighting, corruption and incompetent leadership of Zuma pushed economic growth far beneath the level necessary to address unemployment and poverty.

The National Development Plan (NDP) was launched in 2013 (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2013) and relaunched in 2017. The government aimed to engage all role players, shape budget allocation according to the intentions of this plan up to 2030, improve the quality of public services and address the inequalities effectively. Nine years into the term of the NDP, business is still not engaged effectively because of bureaucracy, AA policies are still ill-planned and executed, public services are in a dilapidated state – especially in rural villages and townships – crime is still rife and corruption by state officials gained new impetus when the government was forced to spend large amounts of money to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, only to give perpetrators a new source to pillage.

The two ideological positions brought the ANC into a deadlock position. Investors do not have a taste for the heavy, controlling hand of the state and corporations inside the country struggle to do business freely. Affluent people prefer to invest elsewhere. Everyone waits and wants to see which ideology will vindicate. The Ramaphosa faction favours neoliberalism with a social arm, and his government made small steps toward privatisation and market-driven job creation. But the leftist radical economic transformation (RET) faction pursues a socialist agenda and inhibits the rollout of neoliberal policies and agency. The South African citizenry finds themselves in a heated clash of ideologies. They do not see direction or meaningful results, large-scale poverty persists and redistribution has virtually stopped because of the ideological uncertainties. Economic growth has fallen into a static mode with small successes in minor areas of the economic environment. The development of the country now portrays very little movement because of ideological confusion, and the ruling ANC government is nothing more than a divided house where the inhabitants mistrust each other and attempt to oust their ideological opponents in the ANC power structures.

◼ Inefficient rehumanisation and generation of a sense of intrinsic dignity

As explained earlier, one of the positives of the post-1994 South African environment is the relaxing of the tense racial relations of the past.

A minority of people will nowadays complain about racially motivated hostility in the public sphere, and the old colonial doctrines of inferior and superior have faded away. People learned to respect each other and racial bias regarding national sports teams, performing arts and other common spheres portrayed normal social interaction. The racially motivated hate speech of the past subsided greatly, and where it appeared would be in the corners of fanatic minority groups still ideologically motivated to see the 'others' as intruders, enemies and exploiters with all kinds of selfish ulterior motives. Some radical political demagogues use the racial card to promote their extremist ideals or to hide their mistakes. But despite these small pockets of racially based noise, the broader spectrum of South Africans experience good and improving racial relations. Recent surveys by the South African Institute of Race Relations (2021) indicate that relations are indeed improving. But is racism fading?

Irrespective of the positive trend in racial relations in the public sphere, we must still keep in mind that the racism of the colonial era and apartheid was much more than mere relationships in social contact. The analyses of Fanon ([1961] 2004) and Marcuse (1971), which were addressed in the section titled 'Racism, dehumanisation and the syndrome of inferiority and indignity' (ch. 2) linked colonial racism with power and loss of identity. Biko (cf. 2004) believed that colonialism forced black people in South Africa into an inferiority complex because they were evaluated in terms of the values of the colonist. His point of view is valid. It is indeed true that black people were dehumanised by the colonial systems, and they lost their innate dignity and pride as human persons. They were side-lined to 'thinghood'. They were displaced time and again and their tribal and family structures were shattered by economic exploitation. The result of this long process of social alienation and violation of their dignity was the phenomenon of a complex of inferiority. The question arises: Did the post-1994 dispensation in South Africa succeed in addressing this psychopathology of racism in South Africa? Have the exploited of the past been transformed into full human beings with dignity in the eyes of others? Are they rehumanised and filled with the sensation of dignity? Rehumanisation entails a reparation of their human dignity and the restoration of their self-esteem from feelings of inferiority to normal relationships and the utilising of their skills and talents without feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Are they now 'somebody', on course to flourishing as full human beings? Did the 'better life' of freedom, access to education and the full range of the economy, general franchise and complete political rights wipe out the denigration of their past? How far is the South African psyche cleansed from the pollution of power-driven racism that harmed both the colonised and the colonist?

My answer to these questions will be negative. In my opinion, racism as the psychopathology defined by Fanon and Biko is still deeply embedded

in the broader South African psyche. White South Africans are still inclined to look upon the 'colonial' and 'Western' as the better set of values, the more advanced, the civilised and best way to self-fulfilment and achievement. They measure black customs with Western ways of life and means of appraising others. Their perception of black people is very much influenced by the yardstick of colonial values. While integrating into the total corpus of the society and interacting with black people in a cordial way, they generally do not consider the non-colonial in the South African environment worthy of pursuit. Very few white people will visit a mainly black township or take part in the ceremonies of their black co-workers or employees. Fewer can speak any of the local African languages or read and appreciate African art, music, religious worship, cultural customs or philosophy. Their life spaces and experiences are still defined and executed by the colonial ethos, and 'Westernism' is, to a great extent, still the piloting star. Colonialism, in a political sense, departed, but the colonist is still here with the colonial mentality and attitude. This process of alienation, degradation and constant indignity brought into being the minority complex which Biko (2004) pointed to. Both Fanon and Biko propose a decoloniality which is much more than just political liberation and good relations. Decolonisation must decolonise the black mind, must elevate the beauty and equal validity of blackness and lift the burden of the minority complex. Decolonising the mind is a prerequisite for a moral compass that can lead us to a better future.

Theorists in the social sciences and the humanities investigate the prevalent concept of decoloniality, and some of these scholarly attempts inspired a potent but interesting discourse (see Christie 2020, p. 197; ed. Creary 2012; Oelofson 2015). What does decoloniality entail in the South African realm? Is it merely changing the political environment with the institutions and structures? Fanon ([1961] 2004) argued that decolonisation is much more than political liberation and taking part in a free economy. It entails a restoration of identity, which means a decolonisation of the mind of the colonised by seizing control of their self-definition according to traditional African identity, spirituality and values. In the last decade, the concept intrigued the thoughts of South African scholars. However, despite this interest and the ongoing discourse, not much can be observed of decolonisation in the public sphere.

As explained above, the colonist is still here, as well as the colonised. The colonial identity is still very much alive in the black experiences – especially among the youth who idealise 'Westernism' in their self-definition. Sibani (2018, p. 67) researched this phenomenon in Nigeria and his findings are applicable to South Africa today. A general tendency among these young people is to opt for the 'colonial image' as the way to dignity and respect. They prefer the English language as a medium of communication,

even within their social grouping. They dress like Europeans, think like Europeans and become less and less passionate about the indigenous and the traditional. Their self-definition takes place within the parameters of 'Westernism'. Sibani (2018, p. 72) defines the inclination to 'Westernism' as erroneous and a plea for the restoration of traditional identity. However, he (like many protagonists of decolonisation) fails to explain how the current of Western culture can be managed in order for the traditional to rise again, because the current is too strong. The black youth profile, especially in urban areas, has the ring of modern Western secularism and liberal moral values drive their ideals, expectations, relationships and family structures. Just like young people across the world in the age of technocracy, African youth become the 'fast food', 'smartphone' and 'Google' generation. Colonialism impeded indigenous values, culture, identity and 'out-of-the-box' thinking and doing, and both white people and black people are, to a certain extent, still victims of this 'Westernism'.

However, 'Westernism' will not be the escape route out of the psychopathology of colonialism. Neither will decolonisation, lauded by many 'identities protagonists' as the only way to rehumanise and dignify people. These movements have a negative trend away from the inner self. 'Westernism' is a longing for identity by way of embracing values because they are regarded as 'good' and 'better' and improve identity. Decolonisation is the counter-process of 'non-coloniality'. It defines people not by what they are but by what they are not. We may find an answer to this identity dilemma by searching for a new 'post-colonial' ethos of 'South Africanism' – an identity born and bred on South African soil out of the seeds of our common experiences. Such an identity can bring us all to the sensation of human dignity and a personhood that transcends 'thinghood' and 'otherness'. In Chapter 4, the possibility and feasibility of such a new post-colonial identity will be investigated as a response to the perennial presence of the 'colonist' and the 'colonised' among us and the drive towards 'Westernism'.

◼ The ongoing culture of violence and anxiety

The violence of South African history changed its colour after 1994 but did not calm down. The new dispensation eradicated all forms of structural and systemic violence by implementing a sound Bill of Rights and earnestly avoiding the formation of new forms of institutionalised violence. This step was brave and far-reaching, and it put the nation in a new environment where human dignity drives legislation, labour relations and interpersonal associations. The old forms of systemic violence furthered, for example, by the most restrictive laws concerning housing, freedom of movement, protest, association and many others disappeared as guiding principles

in jurisprudence. The new dispensation also brought a welcome end to the counter-violence against the oppressive colonial structures and the widespread justification of liberating violence. The discourse of justifiable justice in the socio-political sense lost its impetus in South Africa and is no longer a serious moral issue. Therefore, I am not going to offer a moral stance about the justification of violence here.

What is much more important is to examine the perennial social violence that still plagues our nation. Violent crime afflicts all citizens, and Eagle (cf. 2015) explains how violence inhibits much-needed social cohesion by causing fear and anxiety among South Africans. This explanation is justified by the 'imprisonment' of South Africans themselves. Huge fences, security cameras, alarms, watchdogs and electronic devices are now commonplace in residential areas. The security industry grew exceptionally. Security companies have more agents than the SAPS. Agents in the property market use the notion of 'safe and secure' as a positive annotation when they advertise a residential property. Officials are obliged to erect traffic signs to warn motorists of 'high crime spots' on national roads. When people intend to travel, planning their safety is the first matter they attend to. Parents are afraid to permit their children to enjoy their own social lives. Employees can only enter their places of work by complying with sometimes irritating security systems. Violence infuses anxiety in the whole nation, and no sector of life is free from fear, distress and enduring concern about safety. Besides the fear and the stress Eagle (cf. 2015) points to, we can add the urge by many South Africans to leave South Africa because of fear for their safety. Furthermore, violent crime breeds unhealthy suspicions. Two examples can be mentioned in this regard. Firstly, the increase in violent murders of white farmers since 1994 raised the flag of white–black conflict. Some interest groups ascribe these murders as the retaliation of black people against white farmers because they perceive white farmers as illegal occupants of 'stolen' land by way of the land deprivation of colonialism. The civil society Afriforum (2015) constantly claims that farm murders are racially motivated. Recently, the president of South Africa (Ramaphosa 2019) refuted these claims, which he calls 'irresponsible claims of some lobby groups'. In his view, 'killings on farms are not ethnic cleansing. They are not genocidal. They are acts of criminality and must be treated as such' (Ramaphosa 2019, n.p.). In this respect, he voiced the many findings of the SAPS that found that murders of white farmers are not racially motivated nor out of hand and occur because farmers are seen as soft targets. Still, this perception persists in some sectors.

Another dangerous perception among people living in townships is the suspicion that migrants from other countries who reside illegally in South Africa are responsible for the high crime rate (Crush & Peberdy 2018, pp. 10–11). This suspicion is often fuelled by disgruntled, unemployed South African citizens and the rhetoric of opposition politicians and is,

to a certain extent, responsible for the constant rise of xenophobia and criminal attacks on foreigners. The 2008 surge of xenophobic violence in South Africa was responsible for 62 deaths, 670 people wounded, dozens of rapes and the displacement of approximately 100,000 people (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2015, p. 20). Since then, skirmishes with foreign businesspeople and the destruction of their businesses have been constantly reported all over the country. These acts of violence and criminality are the results of an erroneous perception and ill-founded suspicion that foreigners drive high criminality. Conversely, both the empirical studies of Crush and Peberdy (2018, p. 14) and Kollamparambill (2019, p. 1) contested this perception and concluded that there are no systematic connections between foreignness and criminality.

Yet, another alarming feature of the culture of violence is widespread domestic violence, which is mostly gender-based. A recent report by Statistics South Africa (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2020) indicates that domestic violence and, especially, femicide have reached alarming and very serious levels. The most vulnerable in this predicament are the disadvantaged women. The report shows that unemployed women who are dependent on a partner for their livelihoods and who must take care of children suffer the most. These are mostly black women, and they experience the double burden of a sense of inferiority and social bias. However, domestic violence and femicide are not limited to people living in poverty, because among the affluent the ratio is much higher than the global average because 46% of all women reported that they feel unsafe, not only at home but also in public spaces.

Domestic violence and femicide are usually caused by distressing social circumstances of unemployment, poverty and harsh living conditions where crime, drug and alcohol abuse and dysfunctional families exert destructive influences on households. In South Africa, these conditions are furthermore invested with the age-old inclination to violence as the means to solve a problem. A history of violent behaviour and legitimised violent socio-political structures has left modern-day citizens with a decreased sensitivity to violence. But other factors also contribute to domestic violence and femicide, and in this regard, we can refer to religious and cultural factors. African traditions have a strict patriarchal communal system under the rule of a chief or a king. Marriages were polygamous, and because of the migrant labour policies of the expanding mining industry, men easily started new families where they resided. The status of women in these systems was limited. They were looked upon as inferior and without a voice. They were instructed to be submissive to their husbands and could not leave them and start afresh because of the religious sanctity of marriage. Early Christianity in South Africa reiterated the inequality of women and their obligation to be submissive. Banda (2005, p. 166) posits that even in

the current explosion of newer Christian churches whose memberships are mainly female, biased translations and interpretations of religious texts are used 'to teach women that they are inferior and it is their duty to submit themselves to their husbands or partners'. The social lockdown because of COVID-19 led to an increase of gender-based violence to such an extent that scholars also termed this violence as a pandemic where women had to face toxic masculinity by husbands and partners who could not find some solace in their workplaces and the fulfilment of their labour.

South Africa has a history of violence. Colonialism instituted structures of oppressive violence; the struggle romanticised liberating violence. High rates of criminality introduced many citizens to violence. Many still perceive violence as the most effective means of solving a problem. This contagious force entered households, the streets and social spaces and infused the broader community with fear and escapism to their self-made fortresses. In short, the waves of violent behaviour restrict the ability to socialise, serve, care and engage, which are all necessary virtues for building a nation.

■ Résumé – Where are we?

Let us revisit our colonial heritage and our post-1994 experiences with the purpose of mapping our local position. At least, to know where you want to go depends on where you stand. A moral compass cannot be effective when it is not fixed in a certain location as the point of departure.

In Chapter 2, we discussed the main tenets of the heritage of colonialism and aimed to be as balanced as possible. Four broad main historical movements in the colonial era bequeathed unto us a difficult heritage to deal with. These are the effects of the colonial dispossession of land, the burden of the psychopathology of power-based racism, deeply entrenched inequality and the culture of violence.

Chapter 3 perused the post-1994 undertakings, accomplishments and failures in the quest to address the heritage of colonialism. Very impressive achievements can be observed with gratitude and a sense of inspiration and hope. These are:

- The end of the long process of social stratification in the laws and statutes of the country. The new Constitution, built on the foundation of the values of human dignity, equality and freedom, lays the foundation for a united, non-racial and non-sexist society. An independent judiciary, the rule of law, freedom of the press and, especially, the control of political power by a constitutional court emerged to ensure the rights and liberties of all citizens. The Constitution recognised the values of traditional Western individual rights, the socio-economic rights proposed by socialism and communal rights and *ubuntu* of African traditions.

- The Constitution of 1996 and the Bill of Rights abolished institutionalised violence and rendered systemic violence illegal. This step does not mean that systemic violence disappeared, but it lost its legitimacy. This step was certainly not enough to cure the inclination to violence in the DNA of South Africans, but it at least broke the spiral of triple violence – systemic violence, struggle violence and enforcing violence.
- Restoration programmes intending to redress the injustices of the past were introduced. Most important is the AA, land reform and land redistribution and housing programmes. These programmes aimed to improve the socio-economic conditions of the black population and to introduce disadvantaged people as equal partners in the flow of the economy.
- Racial relations improved, and despite some isolated pockets of racially motivated strife that occur from time to time, all indicators show that social relations are healthier than in the colonial era. However, this relational advance does not mean that racism disintegrates in South African society. Racism is not just a relational issue that can be solved by good neighbourliness; it is a colonial phenomenon in which the perpetrators are those in power and, at least up until recent times, they have been white people. Eradication of racism needs long, intensive surgery and an even longer time of healing.

These positive features of the post-1994 democracy can be regarded as positive seeds that can be utilised to reap an eventual harvest of a flourishing life of hope and peace for South Africans. Unfortunately, the serious negative countenances of the new dispensation and failures in leadership cast a shadow over the ideals of hope and peace. These are:

- The reconciliation project of Mandela came to a standstill fifteen years into a democratic South Africa. The model of his visionary and inspiring leadership was replaced by incompetent and corrupt political management over the past twelve years. Corrupt leaders used the restitution agenda to enrich themselves and their cohorts at the expense of the poor. Incompetence in leadership, nepotism, bad management and theft of public funds dipped the nation into a swamp of abysmal service delivery, corruption and criminality. We are faced with a huge challenge of all-encompassing immorality trickling down from wicked political leadership.
- The development of the country exposes insufficient movement because of the ideological confusion of the present government. The ruling ANC is nothing more than a divided house where the inhabitants mistrust each other and attempt to oust their ideological opponents in the ANC power structures. The divisions and confusion filter to all sectors of governance. The South African citizenry find themselves in a heated clash of ideologies. They do not see direction or meaningful results,

large-scale poverty persists and redistribution has virtually stopped because of ideological uncertainties. Economic growth has fallen into a static mode, with small successes in minor areas of the economic environment. The ideological confusion impedes progress.

- Rehumanisation and the sensation of dignity are still deeply entrenched in contemporary South Africa. Irrespective of the positive trend in racial relations in the public sphere, we must still keep in mind that the racism of the colonial era and apartheid was much more than mere relationships in social contact. Self-definition and identification are forcefully driven by the values of 'Westernism'. Decoloniality has limitations when applied to rehumanise and change the psychopathology of racism and the ensuant 'inferiority complex'. Reconciliation does not transcend the drive to 're-store' and 'trans-form' with the intention to create a new reality. The process up to now has opted for merely reviving old values for certain sectors but fails to inject 'newness' in moral agency. Hopefully, the moral compass will lead moral agents to inspire and implant plausible rehumanisation and sensation of dignity.
- Although the new dispensation eradicated all forms of structural and systemic violence by implementing a sound Bill of Rights and earnestly avoiding the formation of new forms of institutionalised violence, the culture of violence reminiscent of colonial history continues. Violent crime, violent xenophobic attacks on foreigners and the high levels of femicide and domestic violence prove that violence is still acutely implanted in the South African ethos and destruct social cohesion. The violence spreads fear and suspicion and inhibits people's willingness to foster togetherness.

Irrespective of the heinous heritage of colonisation and the perpetual moral decay and atrocious predicament of contemporary South Africa, we are still left with some positives that can be utilised as seeds in the search for a moral compass. This is where we are now. With a positive attitude and resoluteness to find the right way forward, we can cultivate the seeds to eventually produce a thriving harvest of a morally sound country where a happy citizenry can enjoy a flourishing life. Seeing that we have mapped our present location, let us begin with our search for direction. Where can we go?

The road to newness: All-embracing reconciliation

■ Introduction[3]

When the new dispensation started, the idea of reconciliation soon became a popular piece of political jargon. With noble intentions, leaders called for a process of reconciliation to repair the historical divisions between the races in South Africa. The most influential leader in the call for reconciliation was Nelson Mandela. The iconic figure moved opposing groups to a consensus that reconciliation is the first step on the way forward. He maintained that reconciliation could harmonise the fears of some and the aspirations of others and can heal the wounds of the past. His drive for reconciliation resulted in many welcome attempts to cross the racial divides that had, since colonial times, separated people based on race on virtually every social terrain – even marriage and family. Corporations, civil societies, sporting bodies, churches and educational institutions left the racial separation mode and established integrated institutions. Racial classification

3. I have researched and addressed some of the issues I discuss in this chapter in an earlier publication. I revisit, reinterpret and apply some of those materials within the context of this chapter. For a more extensive explanation of the principles underlying the Christian perspectives on reconciliation, forgiveness and remembrance, see Vorster (2011, chs. 2, 4, 5).

as a condition to rebuild separated entities became irrelevant. Privatisation of schools and educational institutions remained possible, but only on the foundation of language, culture and religion. The early drive toward a reconciled community led to the establishment of the TRC under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu. He was another icon of reconciliation and promoted healing and reconciliation by seeking truth, repentance and forgiveness. The process was by no means plain sailing because of the hesitation of old perpetrators on both sides to tell the truth or to reveal what they knew. Be that as it may, the drive for reconciliation and the work of the TRC dropped the idea of reconciliation and what it entails squarely in the lap of all South Africans and forced people to reflect on it.

Can people reconcile if they are still bounded by economic deprivation and social inequality? Mbeki furthered the idea of reconciliation, but rightly emphasised that reconciliation must lead to transformation. However, in his time as president, the transformation dictum side-lined reconciliation. Redress actions were prioritised in legislation, and institutions were forced to introduce 'black quota systems' (see Joubert 2012, p. 592). The philosophy behind these acts of transformation is morally sound, but the applications met with severe economic consequences. Social transformation must go hand-in-hand with economic growth. The Zuma era could not sustain economic growth, and the mismanagement of the Zuma administration and state capture threw orderly transformation into a chaotic state of cronyism, nepotism and systemic corruption, which is discussed in 'Incompetent and corrupt political management and lawlessness' (see ch. 3). The justice promised by the reconciliation project did not materialise (Du Toit 2017, pp. 183–184). The purpose of this brief survey is to explain the collapse of the reconciliation project and the halt in the process of healing the wounds of the past by seeking the truth and initiating redress. Those noble ideas were swamped by disorderly economic abuse, the self-enrichment of many politicians and their cohorts and a culture of corruption that rushed like a fierce fire through the institutions. The reconciliation project of the 1990s stalled. In his scholarly evaluation of the reconciliation process, Du Toit (2017, p. 169ff.) explained that South Africans became disillusioned with the ideal of reconciliation. The strides towards South Africanism, outlined by the successes of the TRC, faded.

Without reconciliation that penetrates deep into the psyche of the nation and disturbs all the recurrent suspicions, fears, otherness, alienation, feelings of dehumanisation and sense of indignity, a true and potent togetherness will not develop. We would never find a moral compass for the road to newness if we do not become a community gripped by the urge to make reconciliation work in our still-divided society. 'Newness' will remain a dream. The noble idea of reconciliation, its rich meaning, its explosive force and its call to moral agency should be revisited. In my

opinion, Reformed theology can help us here. Reconciliation is a concept that grew in the Christian tradition over centuries (De Gruchy 2002, p. 17). Christian traditions used the concept to explain the core idea of the gospel of Christ, namely, the reconciliation of the human person with God as the result of the redemption in Christ (for their thorough explanation of this doctrine, see Brinkman 1996; McGrath 2000; Wentsel 1991). This renewal regenerates and enforces total transformation of the human person. But the concept also features in moral theology as a remedy for broken interpersonal relationships. Clerics receive the ministry of reconciliation in a spiritual sense, but Christians, as moral agents, are called to promote reconciliation in a troubled world and to enhance togetherness, harmony and unison. The biblical perspective on reconciliation could give us food for thought in our quest to revive the noble ideals of 1994.

■ Reconciliation: Meaning and process

The concept of reconciliation in biblical theology has a threefold dimension. We can explain the concept using the metaphor of steps. The first step is raising awareness of the predicament of distorted relations and the cause(s) of these distortions, as well as the perpetrators responsible for these. The second step is repentance and forgiveness: the persons responsible for the distortions should repent, and the repentance must be honest and truthful. The repentance must be answered with forgiveness from the side of the victim, and then the step of reparation follows. The process should penetrate all aspects of the distorted relationships and requires a willingness on the part of the involved parties to accept this and to do things that run against the grain of the pride that is inherent to human nature. In the process, 'truth-telling' is the key to success. Otherwise, reconciliation becomes cheap and ineffective, as Bonhoeffer reminds us. In his view, true reconciliation is costly for both the perpetrator and the victim (Bonhoeffer 1963, p. 45). Let us then reflect more probingly on the steps of the process.

■ Awareness

In biblical theology, people's knowledge of their inclination for evil and hatred is the first step necessary in finding the way to God and peace with others. The concept of 'original sin' in biblical theology points to the total depravity of all persons and their innate inability to appease God. This depravity and inclination for evil manifest in many spheres of human existence and agency. Various prominent theologians highlight what they perceive as the human person's innate nature because of evil. This nature is violent and aggressive (Vriezen 1966, p. 56), extremely proud and selfish (Augustine 1958, XIV.4), portrays a basic infidelity and lack of trustworthiness (Calvin 2008, *Inst*. II.1.1.239), is inclined to elevate the human person to god

and master, is self-centred and exploitative of nature (Moltmann 1993, p. 229) and has limitless confidence in human nature.

The human person must be aware of this innate inclination for evil and selfish exploitation of humankind and creation. Knowledge of the inner self is possible because of God's gift of the seeds of religion and morality bestowed on the human being at creation. His law is written in the hearts of all humanity. Therefore, no person has any excuse when they fall prey to evil, commit injustice and incur harm. The *locus classicus* of the biblical portrayal of original sin and the evil deed of the depraved human person is the words of Paul, which reads (Rm 1):

> Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (vv. 28–32)

The human person should be aware of this condition and should seek solutions and solace outside the inner self in the grace of God. God offers renewal and a change of the inner self by way of the atonement of Christ. Awareness as a first step to reconciliation also applies to socio-political reconciliation. Just as the Christian doctrine of reconciliation infers, the reconciliation of opposing, warring and estranged people flows from an awareness of the causes and detrimental effects of a predicament marred by violence.

It is exactly on this point that white South Africans get it wrong. They tend to look at colonialism from a distance – from a perspective focused on wealth and material development. Some argue that colonialism made many contributions to South Africa and that all people can benefit from these positives. They argue that the intentions were noble, but the execution was not. Or they complain about the lack of gratitude among black people for white sacrifices and the eventual abolishment of white power. On some occasions, white leadership has apologised for the wrongs of apartheid, and they have shown sincere remorse for the fact that black people were alienated and excluded from being full South Africans. These arguments have a ring of the objective truth – colonisation has had certain positive results in the material sense. The apologies have mostly been from the heart and well-meant. However, they miss the point.

To understand why I say this, we could revisit Fanon's idea of the psychopathology of the colonised. Black people were not only excluded from the wealth-creation potentialities of the land but were also

dehumanised to such an extent that they lost the sensation of human dignity. The dispossession of the land of the forefathers, with its rich meaning for religion and culture, displaced them not only geographically but removed them from a way of living, connecting with the ancestry and living a full life according to customs set over many centuries. Can a white person appreciate such a condition? I find it difficult to stand in the shoes of a dehumanised black person because I can rationally argue and comprehend the dehumanisation – even with empathy – but I cannot really appreciate the feeling because I have not experienced such dehumanisation. Because of this lack of experience and feeling, I cannot know the intensity of the pain of dehumanised people. When this awareness is deficient, repentance and reconciliation become cheap.

How do we raise this awareness? Scholarly research can share new knowledge and may propose valuable means to deal with black experiences, but this knowledge remains distant because it does not enhance experience and 'feeling'. An academic can comprehend the cold winters of Siberia and can have all the knowledge necessary to explain exactly what the climate is like. The person could use striking examples of the extreme temperatures and the effect it has on inhabitants and the general environment, but all of this remains knowledge without experience. Visiting Siberia and personally experiencing the harsh weather will enrich the person's academic knowledge. The pathology of a dehumanised person can be defined in detail – deprivation, a lack of a sense of dignity, an inferiority complex, a person full of rage and many other negative manifestations. However, these become cold facts if the experience of being dehumanised is not grasped. Therefore, scholarly research is not enough to raise awareness of the total pathology of a dehumanised person.

What could assist us in this process is to listen attentively to the many stories of black experiences in colonial South Africa. It can be the story of the young labourer who had to leave their rural existence to work under challenging conditions on a mine, living in secluded living spaces and sharing a meagre income with their family at home. It can be the story of a domestic worker who had to leave their own family with grandparents to reside elsewhere to find suitable employment. They could only search for employment in areas where they had permission to work. They had no job security, could be fired on short notice and were treated in an undignified way. They rarely saw their own children and could not enjoy marriage and family life. It can be the story of the child who abandoned the absent family and was homeless, forced to commit petty crimes to survive and constantly avoiding the police who had the task of clearing the inner cities of 'loitering black people'. It could be the story of talented youngsters who were not able to pursue careers of their choice in living spaces of their choice or entrepreneurs who could not enter the market to use their skills and pursue

their ideals. Such stories share experiences that could be transferred into the realm of people who did not have such experiences. The stories and memories of people at the sessions of the TRC gave the whole population glimpses of what dehumanisation really entails.

Literature and art are better equipped to raise awareness than academic discourse and empirical research. Over the years, some writers addressed these experiences in short stories and novels, with many good examples that can be mentioned. In 1948, the year when apartheid was implemented, Alan Paton published *Cry, the Beloved Country*, which addresses the topics of the destructive influences of the gold mines on migrant labourers, systemic violence and the need for inter-racial reconciliation. The pain of Kumela and the white farmer Jarvis's change of heart from racist pre-occupation to reconciliation vividly portrayed the black experience. In 1952, a prominent Afrikaans writer, FA Venter wrote *Swart Pelgrim* [*Black Pilgrim*], which shared the experiences of a black migrant worker and immediately raised awareness among Afrikaner nationalists about the harsh realities of labourers in the mining industry. In the 1960s, Afrikaans resistance writers – also called the '*Sestigers*' [Sixties] – such as Jan Rabie, Etienne le Roux, Dolf van Niekerk, André P Brink, Abraham de Vries, Chris Barnard and Adam Small so rigorously unveiled the injustices of the system and the pain of black experiences that some of their books were banned by the government (see eds. Cloete et al. 1980). The 1978 bestseller, *Die swerfjare of Poppie Nongena* [*The long journey of Poppie Nongena*], written by Elsa Joubert, opened the eyes of especially white women to the predicament of domestic workers in apartheid South Africa. Literature did more to change white attitudes than the speeches and rhetoric of political leadership.

Awareness of white experience is equally important. The rhetoric of radical extremist black politicians and activists calling contemporary white people thieves and settlers and singing songs of hatred and anti-white violence inhibit awareness of the other experience necessary for all-encompassing reconciliation. White people in South Africa are no longer foreign settlers, just like Caucasian people in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other European colonies are no longer regarded as settlers or immigrants. They are South Africans and share the country with other South Africans. Their roots are here and no longer in Europe. Afrikaans and South African English developed here and bear the marks of the African environment. Although not African, they are from Africa and rooted in Africa, with clearly discernible traits of 'Africanness'. Over centuries South African farmers have mastered the science and art of farming, and they are regarded as some of the best in the world. They guarantee food security and are an indispensable component for sustainable economic growth. The same is true of white businesspeople and entrepreneurs. Still, they are constantly accused by black political activists of stealing land, of

racist behaviour and of being a stumbling block in the way of radical transformation. Black politicians sometimes use white people as scapegoats when they are faced with their own political failures. Honest and fair-minded criticism directed at black politicians is mostly met with the 'race card'. The positive role of white South Africans in the building of the new nation is very seldom appreciated by black political leaders and academics. Because of this lack of recognition, most white people experience alienation in the land of their birth and the habitat of their previous generations. They have developed an identity crisis (see Matthews 2015, p. 2). Resane (2021, p. 2) makes a case for white 'fragility', which in his view describes the discomfort of white people when faced with arguments about racism. During such encounters, white people tend to react defensively, in fear or even with rage. He maintains that this 'fragility' is not racism, but it obstructs the common search for non-racialism. His argument provides food for thought, but he fails to examine and deal with the question of the causes of this 'white fragility' in the South African context today. He proposes four steps towards non-racialism. These are 'look back and move forward', 'move from reaction into interaction', 'move from exclusion to participation' and 'move from isolation to integration' (Resane 2021, pp. 5–7). These are noble ideas, but they will not be realised if honest awareness about white people's experience of alienation is not raised without prejudice.

To raise awareness, interaction, participation and integration of communities in South Africa is a prerequisite. In this respect, Resane raises a valid point. However, how do South Africans interact? Wale (2013, p. 33) reported ten years ago that, according to empirical research, more than half of the population of South Africa did not interact with people of other races at the time. There is cordial interaction in areas of labour and recreation, but this interaction does not penetrate to the core of the baggage of negative experience and resultant demeanours. Separateness still controls many schools, churches, civil societies and corporations and restrains awareness.

Interaction by sharing experiences through stories, memories, symbols and art could raise awareness. But the sharing is still, to a large extent, characterised by separateness. Institutionalised separation was abolished 29 years ago. Race relations have improved on the surface of society. However, the old modes of separateness still exist, and the racial groups function mainly within the limitations of the in-group – sometimes because of fear of a loss of identity. Leadership in South Africa has a huge responsibility to create spaces in their spheres of authority for black people and white people to interact with the specific purpose of encountering each other's experiences, to honestly grapple with these experiences and to raise awareness. Truthful awareness paves the way for repentance and forgiveness.

■ Repentance

According to biblical theology, the second step on the road to reconciliation is repentance and forgiveness. Repentance means, firstly, to acknowledge that a deed was evil – in other words, it is wrong in the eyes of God and fellow persons. Sin must be perceived as sin. Bash (2007, p. 60) explains that an attempt to relativise evil has a detrimental effect on forgiveness. When the wrongdoer requests the victim not to take the evil deed seriously or 'ask victims to forget about the wrongdoing', the injustices flowing from the wrong deed(s) 'can reinforce the hurt' and can leave the victim with the idea that the wrongdoing 'was not serious'. Much of the disappointment about the findings of the TRC on the side of victims is the suspicion that some agents of the state and ANC leaders during the time of the struggle covered up their involvement in political murders and other atrocities. They failed to acknowledge that their actions caused deaths and held that their actions were justified in light of the political struggle. Relativising sin and wrongdoing also blocks memories, which are essential when a society is confronted with the atrocity again.

Secondly, repentance entails that the wrongdoers recognise their part in the wrongdoing (Bash 2007, p. 63). Therefore, truth-telling is vital. Repentance without truth-telling is not genuine repentance. It is, after all, the truth that sets us free. When David confesses his sins before God in Psalm 51, he puts himself in the picture from the start of his lamentation. He personalises his wrongdoing by saying to God: 'For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me' (Ps 51:3). Many examples of the prescription to take personal responsibility for evil deeds during the act of repentance can be found in the New Testament (i.e. 2 Cor 7:9–10; 12:21; Ja 5:19–20; I Jn 1:8–2:2; Rv 2:5; 21–22: 3:3, 5, 16). Sometimes, people soften their involvement by describing their wrongdoing in broad, abstract terms and then escaping personal responsibility, for example, by blaming the system as the enforcer of the wrongdoing the agent committed. Repenting persons sometimes recognise that their actions were evil, but then deny their own guilt because the evil actions were motivated and driven by 'outside forces' that they could not control. To recognise the injurious deed as evil and to take personal responsibility for the deed and the harm it caused are vital for profound and lasting reconciliation.

Thirdly, there must be contrition, 'which is a deep sorrow for sin and a strong impulse for turning away from sin' (Woodbridge 1995, p. 731). True remorse is to complement the personal responsibility for the wrongdoing by saying sorry without 'but' and 'if'. The truthfulness of the contrition lies in a plausible intention to change and turn away from evil. Contrition is thus deep sorrow, but also, 'in the will a change of purpose, an inward turning away from sin, and a desire to take responsibility for it' (Woodbridge 1995, p. 731).

Often in the sphere of socio-political reconciliation, 'saying sorry' is tempered by attempting to balance the injurious act with the good intention of the wrongdoer. Theorists defending the atrocities caused by colonisation often resort to the phrase: 'We have hurt you and have done wrong, but our intentions were good'. In the Christian moral tradition, good intentions can never be used as a waiver for bad behaviour and wrong deeds. Persons cannot do harm with good intentions. Morally, virtue must always correspond with effect. Fruitful repentance emerges when a perpetrator can say honestly and sincerely: 'I have done wrong; I have caused you pain. I am sorry, and I will turn away from the evil act'. Such a confession remonstrates against the human inclination of self-elevation and self-justification and is therefore arduous and testing and requires immense self-renunciation. The same is true of forgiveness.

■ Forgiveness

The concept of 'forgiveness' is another central theme in the Christian theology of reconciliation and restoration. God's constant forgiveness of the rebellion and moral decay of God's people features prominently in biblical theology. While the nucleus of the idea has to do with God's forgiveness of the guilt of sin in human beings and the call to people to forgive each other by imitating the model of Christ, forgiveness has a socio-political dimension, just like repentance. Forgiveness has a spiritual dimension embedded in the God–human relationship, but also in interpersonal relations and inter-communal relations. The aim of forgiveness is the restoration of broken relationships, firstly between God and the wrongdoer. Then, because of this act of God, there is a restoration of troubled interpersonal relationships and social relationships in the public sphere. Gestricht and Zehner (2001, p. 33) research biblical metaphors and proclamations regarding forgiveness and indicate how prominently the concept features in biblical anthropology.

The Old Testament portrays the various angles of the idea of forgiveness. Forgiveness entails forgiving wickedness and sin and 'being taken up as God's inheritance' (Ex 34;9; Dt 29); the covering of evil done (Lv 10:17) following the offering of guilt (Lv 7); cleansing of sin; the forgetting of sin; the removal of sin; 'as far as the east is from the west' (Ps 103:12); putting sin behind one (Is 38:17); healing (Is 38:17); and hurling all inequities 'into the depths of the sea' (Mi 7:190). God is the primary agent of forgiveness but also of judgement (Ex 34:6); it is his gift of liberation and healing, and it must first be requested from God. God's forgiveness empowers the forgiven to forgive wrongdoers their trespasses, which then entails putting the evil deeds behind them. It heals, cleansing the slate of the past and liberating the conscience of the repentant wrongdoer from the heavy burden of guilt and remorse.

Forgiveness was the central theme in the ministry of Christ and the core element of biblical Christology. He introduced himself as the sacrificial lamb (Jn 1:36), the suffering servant (1 Pt 2:21–24) and the ransom for many (Mk 10:45). He has the power and authority to forgive sins, and this power is evident in some of the miracles he performed (Mt 9:6; Mk 2:1–12 and Lk 5:17–26). God's forgiveness and the command to forgive is also a very prominent theme in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:2–14; Lk 11:2–4). He expands the authority to forgive to his apostles and to the church (Jn 20:23; Eph 4:32 and Col 3:13). He transfers to the disciples the keys of 'the kingdom of heaven'. They can liberate people from the bondage of sin by forgiveness. What they 'bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever (they) loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven' (Mt 16:19–20). In the synoptic gospels, the concept of forgiveness has a juridical meaning, pointing to the acquittal of an accused person and the pardoning of guilt and punishment. In his teaching on prayer, Christ instructs his followers to pray for God's forgiveness of their trespasses and the ability to forgive others. People should pursue the ideal of forgiveness on the model of God's forgiveness (Bash 2007, p. 94).

Paul's writings enhance the juridical metaphor. Within the broad framework of justice and reconciliation, God's forgiveness and forgiveness in interpersonal relationships are driven by the sacrifice of Christ and especially his resurrection. Sins are forgiven because of the cross and resurrection, resulting in freedom from bondage and newness of relationships (see Barth 1961, p. 28; Bultmann 1953, p. 266). The epistle to the Hebrews and the writings of John emphasise forgiveness as a sanctifying and cleansing act, just as the Old Testament expounds.

The biblical teaching on forgiveness contains many juridical, cultic and healing metaphors. The following principles of ethics could be derived from the biblical theology of forgiveness:

- Creation and human life suffer under the burden of evil. Evil alienates the created human person from God, fellow human beings and creation.
- God prefers newness and promises to restore creation under God's reign. God establishes a new kingdom.
- The new kingdom manifests as a present and future reality because of the sacrificial offer of Christ and his resurrection to reign over the present and future dispensation. In the evil world, Christ makes healing and cleansing possible.
- The healing and cleansing of humanity start with God, who, in God's graceful compassion of the creation, drives the healing and cleansing to eventual newness by way of forgiveness. Furthermore, God's forgiveness liberates, frees, revives and acquits persons from the bondage of the inability of self-redemption and change. The newness manifests in a new relationship with God.

- God's forgiveness inspires forgiveness as an act of cleansing and healing in interpersonal relationships. The victim's act of forgiveness of the perpetrator in interpersonal relationships creates newness in estranged and hostile relations and replaces alienation and fear with togetherness and peace.
- God's forgiveness in Christ empowers people to live by the power of forgiveness (Hauerwas 1983, p. 89). In this way, people can also create new relationships that can bridge the divisions caused by historic grievances and attitudes of otherness. Interpersonal forgiveness brings people together and creates something new without pre-requisites and conditions. Forgiveness empowers estranged and alienated people to embrace each other in a new form of communion.

These biblical teachings could be applied in the realm of socio-political reconciliation. God makes reconciliation possible and empowers people to realise this gift in any environment of schism, broken relationships, suspicion and enmity. Forgiveness can be interpersonal and individual but also communal. Groups can follow the path of forgiveness. Collective guilt could be answered with collective forgiveness. Argued within the South African context of racism, these biblical principles entail that the perpetrators must be aware of the injustices of the colonial past and the pain and dehumanisation it perpetuated. Who are these perpetrators at present? White people today can argue that they were not part of the system or even that they opposed it. Still, they reaped the fruits of privilege, and their descendants are still reaping the fruits today. Colonial powers can argue that although they caused harm, they brought benefits to the colonised communities. However, the fact is that dehumanisation cannot be rectified by beneficial acts. It is like the rapist giving a raped woman something to eat to soften the violence, humiliation and indecency of the act. The pain persists because of the humiliation and is even intensified because of the unconcerned attitudes of the perpetrator and the attempt to justify the evil act.

The road to newness remains a dream of colonial powers, and in the case of South Africa, the beneficiaries of apartheid, past and present, are not aware of the psychopathology of black people because of the long and enduring dehumanisation and its ongoing adverse manifestations. White people must listen to the many black voices in politics, religion, art and the public sphere and become truly aware of the deep humiliation and rage caused by colonisation. The awareness cannot be conditional, because awareness with a qualified 'but' or an 'if' becomes weak and results in superficial repentance and cheap forgiveness. Awareness is to identify the evil and recognise the own personal involvement as the wrongdoer in the predicament of the victim.

Confession of guilt and true repentance is the logical consequence of true awareness. Many white people find this part of the road to newness

difficult and ask: 'On what issues should I repent?' or 'What must I confess?' Here again the conditional approach inhibits the process. True repentance and confession acknowledge direct or tacit involvement in apartheid; reaping the fruits of exploitation; quietism and silence where evil shows itself; giving the cold shoulder to atrocities in the name of law and order; and tolerating the humiliation at the hands of rulers and executing officials. Not only the distant system and cold laws established by faceless others, but I have personally had a hand in the dehumanisation. I am the perpetrator. This is true repentance and confession as God teaches us in Psalm 51:3–4.

The act of forgiveness is a difficult task for the victim. Humans are not good with self-abasement. The rage caused by being dehumanised feeds assertiveness and revenge. However, these attitudes inhibit newness. Also, the victim should be self-denying. However difficult it may be, the victim should discriminate between the wrong and the wrongdoer – the person and the act. When there is true repentance and confession that flow from honest awareness, forgiveness must follow. This means liberating, healing and cleansing the perpetrator and embracing the forgiven. A new relationship comes to life (Smit 2007, p. 322). Forgiveness transcends the suspicions and distrust of otherness and nurtures trust in the spirit of togetherness.

Augsburger (1995, p. 389) argues that forgiveness should be unconditional because God's forgiveness is unconditional. Furthermore, enemy love 'is the nature of God and God's children'. Human forgiveness is grounded in non-conditional love for the perpetrator. An attitude of love is 'a pre-requisite to the forgiveness process' and 'love is a forgiving attitude which reaches to restoration'. Considering this important contribution of Augsburger, we can argue that loving forgiveness transcends the feelings of acrimony, the temptation to play the blame game, to wave the flag of racism over and over or to question the repentance and confession of the former perpetrator. Just as in the case of repentance and confession of guilt, forgiveness and loving one's enemy is costly, difficult to grasp and goes against the grain of the human condition. But newness will evade us if loving forgiveness does not close the chapter of the colonial past and set off a new dawn.

What, then, about the past? Both perpetrators and victims have memories of the past. Remembering a past of suffering has been a contentious issue among scholars who survived the Holocaust of WWII. I have alluded to this previously by indicating that (Vorster 2009):

> The debate [on] the need or needlessness of a common memory in turbulent times is not a new topic in […] the discourse [about forgiveness and reconciliation]. In a [seminal] study about Holocaust remembrance, Krondorfer (2008, p. 233) explains the two major lines of thought in this regard by presenting the viewpoints of Nietzsche on the one hand and Wiesel on the other. He [explains]

that Nietzsche held the view that people cannot live in the present when they are prisoners of the past. Without forgetting, [...] humans [...] would have to relive the past continuously and would never live in the present moment. [...] [*According to Krondorfer, Nietzsche said that*] there can be no new future [...] – no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no present [...] – without forgetfulness. Many perpetrators took this position after the Holocaust. [*In other words, remembrance inhibits the journey to newness. For this reason, Nietzsche labelled remembering of the past a sick passion.*] On the other hand, Wiesel proclaimed that he will never forget the Holocaust even if he is condemned to live as long as God himself, because only a clear remembrance of a painful past can prevent a repetition of gross violations of human dignity and can restore the human condition after the reign of evil. Wiesel [*argued*] that only memory could help him to reclaim his humanity (see also Frunză 2008, p. 109). (p. 1)

Forgiveness does not nullify remembrance, nor does it entail a joyless living in the past. In biblical history, God's acts of forgiveness of his people are often preceded by the call to remember their ungodliness and idolatry and then to comprehend the vastness of his grace, love and offering of a new beginning. Remembrance played an important part in biblical feasts such as the Passover, the Feast of the Huts, the Feast of Purim and, today still, Holy Communion (see Vorster 2009, pp. 3–6). These feasts move bad memories towards expectation and hope.

Smit (2007, p. 309) reminds us that forgiveness, according to the Christian tradition, does not compel forgetfulness. There is a definite place for remembrance on the road to newness. Smit (2007) explains:

Christian faith is based upon memory. To remember is a fundamental activity of Christian faith. In every worship service the Christian community remembers. We remember the good message, the gospel. We remember the story of Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection. Christian worship is rooted in remembering. God urges us to remember, to commemorate, and the congregation is reminded and exhorted to remember, to celebrate, to be renewed and transformed and to love God and others. (p. 309)

De Gruchy (2002, pp. 23, 178) draws attention to the fact that remembrance is an 'essential part of the process of healing'. We can add to this important viewpoint by arguing that remembrance gives perspective on the richness of forgiveness and the road to newness. Smit (2007, p. 311) and Borraine (2008, p. 206) emphasise the value of common memory. With reference to Niebuhr, Smit maintains that (Vorster 2009):

[*W*]here common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community, and where community has to be formed, common memory must be created. (p. 1)

Both victim and perpetrator can then appreciate the new relationships by comparing them to past wrongdoing and hostility. The victim and the perpetrator should remember the experiences they had to confront in their common journey toward awareness.

Symbols could play an important role in remembrance. Symbols of liberation, forgiveness and reconciliation give direction to both the perpetrator and victim. Symbols that honour colonialism and those reflecting the atrocities of the past can also serve the cause of forgiveness when these are perceived as symbols that remind people not to repeat the atrocities of the past. These symbols could enforce the will and agency to say and achieve the 'never again'. The positive meaning of keeping symbols alive will be revisited in Chapter 8 (see section titled 'Remembrance and symbols').

The next step in the process of forgiveness is reparation.

■ Reparation

God's forgiveness, as portrayed in scripture, does not end with the act of forgiveness. God forgives to enable his people to start afresh without their evil deeds blocking their way. They must change their ways. The atonement of Christ is the appeasement God requires to set his people free from guilt through forgiveness. God takes the initiative in grace and with redeeming action and then makes his moral commands in view of this fact. The people themselves cannot appease God, but they can and should answer the act of forgiveness by changing their ways and living a 'new' life of faith and conversion. Their new life is then a matter of gratitude (Wright 1983, p. 21). Their new life of gratitude and a new relationship with God are their reparation following the forgiveness for their wrongdoing. The prophets in the Old Testament reprimanded God's people time and again for their atrocities and urged them to repent. God then forgave them their idolatry or dishonesty in jurisprudence or the exploitation of the poor with the innate command to destroy the idols, to care for the poor and to be honest when executing the law. The wrongs must be rectified. Scripture teaches that God's forgiveness and people's interpersonal acts of forgiveness of perpetrators must be answered with a new life. Part of this new life is reparation. The wrongs must be rectified and the harm done repaired in a feasible way. When a person has stolen something, shows remorse and asks forgiveness from the victim, the forgiveness inspires them to give back the stolen item. The same principle applies in the case of socio-political reconciliation. While reconciliation in the socio-political domain is an inter-communal endeavour, it requires a collective approach. Collective guilt, collective repentance, collective forgiveness and collective reparation pave the way to reconciliation and the road to newness in South Africa. But how can we do collective reparation in South Africa?

Asking forgiveness from people who were dehumanised and dispossessed and hindered in their quest for sharing the wealth of the land goes hand-in-hand with the intent to repair the damages done. In this

respect, redressing the land dispossession over centuries of colonialism comes to mind. Indigenous people were dispossessed and bear the brunt of all the injurious effects of the loss of land, as discussed earlier. The loss of land not only led to perennial poverty but to all the detrimental experiences of the psychopathology Fanon explained in his analysis of the mind of the colonised. Repentance and forgiveness must be answered with restitution and redress by the forgiven. This reparation becomes part of the gratitude and new life of the previous wrongdoer and is the final chapter in the process of reconciliation. Articles 1–5 of the Constitution make provision for legislation to manage land reform and land redistribution. Christian ethics can embrace this notion of land restitution and should support the principle in the Constitution and as the intent of the legislation. These values correspond with the biblical view of repentance, forgiveness and reparation. Reconciliation in a socio-political realm and progress on the road to newness depend on a fair and just reparation of the wrongs of the past.

South Africa did well with land restitution in the first decade of the new dispensation. Most land claims were solved amicably. Expropriation was managed in a just and fair way and courts settled disputes to the satisfaction of most of the claimants and landowners. Unfortunately, the process stalled after this, either because of poor management, incompetence of officials or, in some cases, blatant corruption. The policies of AA and BEE are other forms of reparation, but cadre deployment without training and education, nepotism and mere incompetence raised concerns about these policies. The president of the country raised these concerns, among others, in his 2022 Human Rights Day speech (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2022c). Nevertheless, the policies have created a growing middle class and have improved the lives of many black people. Land redistribution as a longer-term project of reparation seems to be highly problematic. Lack of funds, lack of will and the lack of training for new farmers as well as ever-present corruption and nepotism inhibit smooth and effective transition. The Government of South Africa opted for a policy of expropriation without compensation, but the Constitutional Court rendered this intent unconstitutional. The morality of such an action can also be questioned because proprietors deserve fair and just compensation when the property is expropriated.

Moreover, the issue of holding a present landowner responsible for atrocities that happened centuries ago is morally contestable. Most contemporary white farmers bought land and developed highly productive farms. Nowadays, farming depends on expert skills and technical and economic expertise. Expropriating land puts food security and valuable international trade at risk. The chaotic land grab in Zimbabwe since 2002 impoverished the country to such an extent that it became one of the

poorest and most unstable countries in the world. I argue in the case of colonisation that good intentions do not justify bad results. Proponents of apartheid often used this moral theory to justify the previous generation's involvement in the implementation of the policies of separation. The teaching of Jesus about moral choice and moral responsibility comes to mind when dealing with the 'good intention' argument (Lk 6):

> No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognised by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briers. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. (vv. 43–44)

Bad intentions contaminate the means as well as the outcome and cannot produce a good result. Evil will lead to evil and good to good. The argument that good intentions justify a bad outcome, as argued in the apartheid ideology as well as in the present government's drive to expropriate land without compensation, is contentious. Furthermore, it can cause a perennial investment in erroneous intentions with the promises of good outcomes and, in the end, cause more harm than good. Intentions, means and outcome must be morally sound, as Jesus teaches in Luke 6:43–45.

In the process of forgiveness and healing, a situation may occur where reparation is not possible. Not all atrocities can be redressed, for example, where past atrocities have led to a loss of life or even where monetary or material reparation is not possible. In this respect, a heavy burden is then laid on the victim to forgive without reparation. God's forgiveness is without compensation but not without reparation. God sets an extraordinary example. The 'reparation' following God's forgiveness is the willingness and honest attempt of the sinner to pursue and nurture the new relationship with God and to heal relationships. If we forgive as God forgives, both perpetrator and victim can tread the road to newness together. In a divided community of perpetrators and victims where reparation does not fill all the spaces of pain and distress, forgiveness will be a liberating act for both victim and perpetrator and a powerful inspiration to seek newness.

These steps in the process of reconciliation are the best way to restore dignity and rehumanise people. Encountering perpetrators of dehumanisation who are fully aware of their atrocities and who show remorse and repentance with a willingness to repair the damage elevates the victim's sense of being a person. Only love can bring the wrongdoer to the point of asking for forgiveness. The communal awareness of the personal suffering of the victim and the loving empathy of the perpetrator creates the feeling of being taken seriously as a person with human dignity. Such an encounter within the sphere of love ignites the power of dignity and paves the way to rehumanisation. The victim can find solace in the changed attitude of the wrongdoer, the new relationship between them

and the promise to go forward together. The act of forgiveness then empowers the victim to be an agent of healing and not a person without value and meaning. Forgiveness is a powerful and dignifying act for both the victim and the perpetrator. Awareness, repentance, forgiveness and reparation are the inevitable steps in achieving true and enriching reconciliation. The outcome of such a process is dignifying togetherness.

■ Togetherness

Reconciliation is the only road to newness. The Christian doctrine of reconciliation teaches that God's reconciling actions bring radical change in relationships. Firstly, the person reconciles with God, and this new relationship changes all other relationships. Marriage, family, society and people's relationship with nature change, and these social structures become new entities of cohesion and solidarity. The forces of division such as the 'in-group–out-group' ideology, attitudes of suspicion and hostility, envy, exploitation and the innate human inclination to hate are replaced by unity, trust and a common goal to heal broken relationships and repair damage. Reconciliation is not only spiritual in nature, but because of its effect of concrete newness, it penetrates all human relationships, societal ills, alienation and the relationship of the human person with nature.

When we apply the doctrine to the South African environment, it becomes clear that awareness of the predicament of dehumanised black people must be answered with collective repentance by the white population, because not only the promoters of the policy of apartheid but also the critics of apartheid, despite their past criticism and opposition, still reap the fruits of white privilege. The road to newness requires collective and honest forgiveness. Forgiveness does not negate remembrance but can engage with remembrance to construct a communal insight for the future. Communalism follows the way of material and spiritual reparation and ends in togetherness. Togetherness sheds new light in society and thus brings about the newness that reconciliation aims to achieve.

A society of togetherness should be willing to sacrifice the idols of the past and all powers that infringe on the new relationships, such as identity politics, cultural bias, sexism, superiority and the habit of forcing social realities such as differences in language and religion into new compartments of 'us' and 'them'. These differences should be managed within the ambit of togetherness, because while togetherness creates new relationships, it does not delete cultural differences. Togetherness means common dignity, equality, unity and mutual respect but is not necessarily likeness. In togetherness, there will be diversity in the unity, but togetherness should be a shelter for variations in religion, culture and language. These variances should not be driven to such an extent that they become new vehicles of

intolerance and marginalisation and cause new forms of otherness and alienation. Diversity should be managed in the ambit of togetherness and not the other way around. Unity can accommodate diversity and diversity can flourish in unity within the togetherness brought about by the steps of reconciliation.

Togetherness can accommodate diversity but runs a risk when it faces new forms of official classification. In colonial times, official racial classifications led to social stratification. When a new child was born, the child was classified as white, black, mixed-race or Indian. This classification determined the future of the child. It was a future of prosperity and freedom for the white child or one of disadvantage for the black, mixed-race or Indian child. The *Population Registration Act 50 of 1950* was the cornerstone of apartheid because all the laws with a racial foundation and purpose were founded in this Act. The Act was rightly repealed in 1991 (*Population Registration Act Repeal Act 114 of 1991*) with the view of forming a new nation of human dignity, equality and freedom. However, the new government still uses racial classification as a method to manage society, with the excuse that this classification is necessary to ascertain what services should be rendered to different communities and to enforce the restorative policies of AA and BEE.

Because of this continued classification, political leadership still thinks and argues in terms of race. Racial terminology persists in political campaigning and policy discourses without any hesitation. For the present government, white and Indian people are still 'they' and 'them'. Despite some political leaders calling for unity and patriotism on days of commemoration and remembrance, the same leaders use the parameters of the 'us' and 'them' pattern of reasoning in the daily management of political affairs. Certain civil societies and even churches taint their identities and agencies with colour identification, and colour is still a prominent adjective to a name in some sectors, for example, a 'white church', a 'white' or 'black' school or a 'Black Lawyers Association'. Although language differences are mostly dealt with in a non-divisive and non-discriminatory way, language and cultural preferences are, in some cases, used to mask a preference for race. Some Christian congregations still identify themselves as '*volkseie*' [Christian popular] congregations, which is against the core confessional standards of the church, to hide a racial and cultural identity. The '*Beweging vir Christelike skoolopvoeding volgens jou geloofs – en kultuurgrondslag*' [Movement for Christian Education according to your faith and cultural basis] (1994) is another entity that causes concern in this regard. Although parents have the constitutional right to establish schools with a certain ethos, one can rightly ask if the schools within this movement will accommodate a black child who prefers to be educated within the parameters of the chosen ethos. Are the language and culture not the cover to hide racial preferences? The mask is revealed when such schools

exclude black Christians who are Afrikaans-speaking and culturally like themselves. Also, in some influential civil societies like Afriforum (2006), who claim to protect and act on behalf of Afrikaners and other minority groups, an overwhelming focus on the linguistic and cultural rights of Afrikaners raises suspicion about racial preference. Similar civil societies and movements in black communities, like Black First Land First (BLF) (2016), have been established and operate based on race. Furthermore, racial preferences and even racial stereotyping are still prominent in political campaigning during election times, as proven in the local election campaigns of November 2021. In this respect, the leadership of the EFF are the champions.

Racial classification cannot be part of togetherness in South Africa. It impedes togetherness and newness. The racial classification of the ANC government fuels racial stereotyping in the broader society and should be repealed urgently. The nation will not heal if this official classification faces South Africans in their interaction with governmental affairs. All forms of racial classification should be replaced by 'South Africanism'. We are all South Africans striving for a good future for ourselves and the next generation. Within this space, social ills such as poverty, homophobia, domestic violence, social alienation and all other pressing social ills can be treated effectively. Racial classification is not necessary to address these issues. Togetherness in South Africa can only be realised in true and vibrant South Africanism. Moral agency in South Africa within the spheres of politics, religion, education, art and culture, business and sport should urgently pursue South Africanism. This venture will be an important leap on the road to newness. For this reason, I refrain in the rest of this book from using racial terminology and will concentrate on the moral agency of South Africans when offering directions for the way ahead.

■ Becoming a community of character

In his discussion and exposition of Christian moral agency, Hauerwas (1981, 1983) refers to the Christian faith community as a community of character that does not *have* a social ethic but *is* a social ethic. Christian values founded on the Christian doctrine of redemption and holiness characterise the conduct of the faith community because of an innate morality. Christian virtues drive Christians in their daily conduct within the broader community. In this way, the faith community sheds a certain light on society by way of their moral character. They do not present an ethic; rather, their character embodies an exemplary ethic, which then boils down to the Great Commandment of love.

I take the liberty of using Hauerwas's phrase, 'a community of character', in a broader way. Any community can be a community of character if it

can develop a solid moral basis and pursue the common good of the community at large. The Christian idea of the innate moral sense created by God (Rm 1:19–20) with the aim to prevent creation from falling into total chaos empowers all people to discern between right and wrong. Also, God's general revelation and providence empower all people to pursue the common good. Furthermore, the idea of the natural law in Calvin's social ethic is receiving new emphasis and positive recognition in modern-day Reformed ethics. An exponent of this revisiting of the Reformation concept, VanDrunen (2010, cited in Vorster 2021, p. 30) argues convincingly that the 'natural law enables all people to come to appropriate moral decisions and establish decent and respectable laws'. As such, 'notwithstanding the reality of evil, the innate sense of morality remains intact. This implies that God holds the entire human race accountable before him [...] (VanDrunen 2014, p. 211)' (Vorster 2021, pp. 32–33). However, 'natural law must not become natural theology, which entails that [...] nature can be used as the foundation of theological-ethical principles' (Vorster 2021, p. 30).

All South Africans have an innate sense of morality and could become part of a community of character; in other words, a community with the virtues necessary for the pursuit of the common good. The seeds of these virtues can be found, among others, in the concept of *ubuntu* in African traditions, the Christian concept of servitude, the plea for love in the Muslim and Hindu religions and the idea of human dignity in secular thought. South Africans have the means to turn away from evil and unite in a communal pursuit of the common good for all. Why have we become a community of violence, corruption, selfish urges for prosperity at the cost of others, lawlessness, lying and stealing? Why are there these flaws in our moral character?

If I may venture an answer, I would say that our sense of morality faded away because of a prominent pattern of reasoning among South Africans today. The reasoning follows the following pattern: I know it is wrong to steal, but I am unemployed; I know domestic violence is wrong, but I am driven by my precarious circumstances; I know I must pay taxes, but I evade tax because of public corruption. The wrongdoing can be justified by a self-designed excuse. A good example of this line of thought was the many comments on the unrest and looting in the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces of South Africa in 2021 after the arrest and imprisonment of former president Jacob Zuma. Commentators generally linked the looting to poverty, as if poverty can justify the looting, killings, theft, arson and destruction of private property. One can react to this reasoning by asking: Why did the looting not spread to the many other poor communities in the rest of the country? Why were

so many people with trucks and other vehicles involved? It is not a sign of poverty! And why are other countries where poverty is even worse than in South Africa not plagued by such a high level of crime, corruption and criminality? Something is still wrong with the South African psyche, and in my opinion, it is the inclination to relativise moral virtues by normalising immoral acts and justifying the means with a self-designed and selfish end. The virtue ethics of a community of character are replaced by consequentialism, where the means are determined by the self-designed 'good' (for me) end.

Deontological ethics can help us here. The deontological theory entails that moral conduct must be driven by a set of principles. In the development of Christian ethics in Reformed theology, Barth (2003, p. 535) defined ethics as an ethics of God's command, either by way of the gospel or by way of the law. People cannot be different from God when it comes to morality and moral agency. All morals come from God. Although his position met with some criticism (see Werpehowski 1981, p. 304), Barth's view is important for the application of the deontological theory in the South African context. The consequence of his view is that the deontological theory could also be applied to our other moral traditions. Beauchamp and Childress (1989) explained:

> First, deontologists try in different ways to vindicate their judgment that certain acts are right or wrong. Some writers in religious traditions appeal to divine revelation (e.g. to God's promulgation of the Ten Commandments), whereas others appeal to natural law and natural right, which they contend can be known by human reason. Some philosophers, including WD Ross, find intuition and common sense sufficient. Still others, such as John Rawls, develop a contractarian theory by deriving their principles from a hypothetical social contract; they ask which principles rational contractors would adopt if they were blinded to their particular talents, abilities and conceptions of the good life. (p. 37)

All traditions in religion, culture, politics and education are equipped to nurture the moral character of South Africanism. The process must start with the leadership of all these traditions. Leaders should campaign for the moral conscientisation of their followers and set an example of moral conduct. Clergymen and women, traditional leaders, politicians, educationists and leaders in civil society, business and any other sphere of society ought to teach South Africans to raise their moral standards and should lead by example. People who become social icons because of their special talent for art and sport can play a very effective role in convincing others, especially the youth, to turn away from wrongdoing and general immorality.

Leadership in South Africa is currently in a crisis and the effect of immoral leadership is stinting our growth into a community of character.

How can a moral character develop when citizens witness violence, slander, swearing and abusive language in Parliament? What respect will they develop for leadership, considering the corruption and lies? What can they learn from religious leaders who resort to quietism amid the moral crisis or from populists who use religion for self-enrichment? What can our youth learn from their icons if these talented people resort to drug abuse, sexual immorality and the use of illegal substances to enhance their performances? Every nation has some leaders who are immoral, but in South Africa, immoral leadership has become the rule. We must call on leaders to take up the primary role of leadership, that is, moral conduct and value-driven execution of their duties. Moral leadership and what it entails will be discussed in Chapter 9.

■ Résumé

Reconciliation is the step-by-step movement towards something new. The process in South Africa cannot restore something from the past. The past predicaments are all contaminated by ages of dehumanisation and exploitation. We must achieve newness, which could come to fruition in a community of character – a South African nation with moral sensitivity and overarching moral agency. Let us summarise these steps:

1. **Awareness:** Listen to others with empathy and grasp the feelings of pain because of the deprivation, rejection and alienation we all inherited from colonialism.
2. **Repentance:** Acknowledge the wrongdoings of the past, and confess before God and the injured people the collective guilt of co-opting colonialism as a means of self-enrichment at the cost of indigenous peoples.
3. **Forgiveness:** However difficult it may be, perpetrators must ask forgiveness from their victims and victims must forgive them. This is the difficult part of reconciliation, but the most essential part on the road to newness. Reconciliation stands or falls with forgiveness or the lack of forgiveness.
4. **Reparation:** The wrongs of the past and the damages caused must be repaired by redressing all structures that caused those damages. Redressing policies must be supported by all, but the political leadership should manage it in a sound and responsible way.
5. **Togetherness:** The outcome of reconciliation is, firstly, a loving community characterised by innate togetherness that transcends the divisions and classifications of the past. We must move from 'blackness' and 'whiteness' to 'South Africanness'.

6. The outcome of reconciliation is to become a community of character, which entails the development of a virtuous and rule-based moral sensitivity. Leadership in South Africa must guide this process with moral education and moral example.

True and demonstrable reconciliation will enable us to find a comprehensive moral compass and to address the other injurious effects of colonialism. This compass directs us to investigate the serious problem of poverty and how to establish economic justice. This is the aim of the next chapter.

Challenging poverty and coming to grips with economic justice

■ Introduction

Colonialism and the concurrent social stratification left a heritage of widespread poverty and inequality for the new democratic dispensation in South Africa. The new Constitution allows for reparation measures to alleviate poverty and the remnants of colonial deprivation and exploitation. These good intentions bore positive fruits and poverty declined in the first fifteen years of democracy. A broader middle class developed because of an above-average economic growth rate. However, in the decades since 2010, poverty has increased again because of the poor application of redress policies and corruption in the public sphere. The poverty and concurrent unemployment can be discerned in the increase in the number of jobless persons, street children, petty crimes, begging, violent protests and hunger on the streets. The World Bank and Statistics South Africa frequently publish well-researched reports on poverty in South Africa.

Considering these well-researched statistical reports, Bittar (2020), writing on behalf of the Borgen Project, identifies five prominent indicators that reveal the extent and show the trends in the growing poverty.

Firstly, the project indicates that 'nearly half the adult population of South Africa lives in poverty'. The three threshold points used by the South African government reveal the following (Bittar 2020):

> The upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) indicates an income of ZAR1,183 (US$70.90) per month. The lower-bound and food poverty lines indicate incomes of ZAR785 (US$47.04) and ZAR547.00 (US$32.78) respectively. (p. 1)

The Department of Statistics in South Africa found in 2020 that '49.2% of the population over the age of 18 falls below the upper-bound poverty line' (Bittar 2020, p. 1). The government resolved to address these poverty levels mainly through a programme called the New Growth Path (NGP) as part of the NDP aimed at alleviating poverty and aggressively driving job creation. This NDP policy aims to support small businesses by offering financing and enhancing multiple sectors of the economy. The NDP 'also aims to expand public work projects to ensure that more individuals will have access to consistent income'. Unfortunately, the NDP is currently largely inhibited by the ideological confusion described in the earlier section titled 'Ideological confusion, loss of direction and impoverishment' (ch. 3). While the president works towards a market-driven economy, the RET faction in the ANC hinders the process with outdated socialist preferences.

The second finding of the project is very alarming. Bittar (2020, p. 1) mentioned that 'women are generally more vulnerable to poverty'. She explained that:

> [*A*]ccording to the South Africa's Living Conditions Survey (LCS), 52.2% of women fall below the UBPL, compared to 46.1% of men. Additionally, the research shows that 74.8% of women-led households fall below the UBPL, whereas only 59.3% of men-led households do. (p. 1)

Moreover, Bittar (2020) expounded that a:

> [*S*]imilar gender gap exists at each line of poverty, with women consistently experiencing poverty more frequently than men. Data suggests that this difference has remained relatively stable over the past decade. (p. 1)

Many of the very poor households in South Africa are led by women as single parents, and the LCS found that single-parent women-led families 'are also more likely to lack access to water and sanitation'. The South African government's NDP was set to address these issues urgently, but by 2022 little progress can be observed because of the inherent numbness of a deeply divided ANC. The programme aims to develop infrastructure, disperse resources in rural areas and provide subsidies for housing enhancements.

Thirdly, the Borgen Project observes that the COVID-19 pandemic and the drastic measures imposed to protect the community and curb the spread of the disease made poverty worse in South Africa. There was an economic standstill in the months of stringent lockdowns, state funding was redirected

from infrastructure, education and training to health and additional grants were directed to a very large part of the population. Bittar (2020) says:

> With over 500,000 cumulative cases as of 13 August 2020, and close to 4,000 new cases on the same day, there is no doubt that the pandemic has exacerbated many of the underlying issues surrounding poverty in the country. Hunger and food insecurity have become much more pressing issues. Lockdowns, for example, have halted employment and left many South Africans with the impossible choice of working to provide food or staying home to stay safe. Forecasts are currently estimating that the pandemic may push up to 1 million people into poverty. (p. 1)

The fourth observation of the project is that inequality of all kinds determines access to income and wealth-creation in South Africa (Bittar 2020):

> Whether in terms of wages, wealth or consumption, South Africa always places among the most unequal countries. In 2015, the country scored 0.65 in the Gini coefficient, one of the world's highest. (p. 1)

While inequality on a mere social basis seems to have improved over the past 20 years when measured in terms of politics and constitutional principles, it has increased in terms of economic realities. The Borgen Project mentions that economic inequality has increased since the end of apartheid when viewed against income and consumption measures. 'Similarly, even though black South Africans are reporting the largest increase in the average number of assets owned, within-group asset inequality among poor South Africans has continued to grow' (Bittar 2020, p. 1). This disadvantageous trend seems to indicate that many of the socio-economic problems prominent in the decades of colonialism are still apparent, and they have now become a normal part of South African society. The project reports that (Bittar 2020):

> [*A*] study that the World Bank published proves that South Africa's inequality of opportunity, a type of inequality measured by the access to quality basic services such as education and healthcare, is higher than any other country. (p. 1)

The report of the project lauded the redress efforts of the democratic government because the governmental efforts to reduce inequality have included higher social spending, AA programmes and targeted government transfers. The country also saw promising success in the democratic government's progressive tax system. It has the potential to act as a redistributive tool in the coming years. In this respect, remarkable progress has been made in the first quarter of 2022.

The fifth concerning and alarming trend observed is that poverty headcounts in rural areas are significantly higher than that in urban areas (Bittar 2020):

> As of 2015, 25.2% of the population of urban areas lived below the UBPL, whereas 65.4% fell below the UBPL in rural areas. While grim at first, these findings do suggest that some policies are creating significant improvements in poverty levels. (p. 1)

The implementation of the NDP intends to serve as a blueprint for eradicating poverty below the lower-bound poverty line and reducing income inequality across the board. 'While still only in the middle phase of its execution, and the present pandemic certainly hindering it to some extent, this plan shows the government's commitment to reduce poverty' Bittar (2020, p. 1). The Borgen Project's positive appreciation of the intentions of the NDP, as explained by Bittar (2020, p. 1), can be welcomed as an honest attempt by the South African government to address economic inequality and poverty. However, my thesis is that the much-publicised and well-known disastrous lack of service delivery in rural areas is jeopardising this effort and has forced the execution of the plan to a standstill.

The discussion based on the diagnosis of the Borgen Project exposes the pervasive presence of poverty in South Africa and the urgent need to alleviate poverty and rectify economic inequality. I am in no way an expert in the philosophy of economic policies and systems, and I therefore discuss the issue of poverty from a Christian ethical perspective, with reference to well-known economic indicators.

■ A unique situation requires a unique solution[4]

While colonialism in Africa and the Americas resulted in the impoverishment of indigenous communities in general, the impoverishment in South Africa followed a unique pattern. People were impoverished not only by default but also by policies of economic exclusion and deprivation. Although the country moved into a full democracy with equal rights and opportunities, a large portion of South Africans entered the new dispensation with a backlog. The new policies failed to close the gap, and they are still failing. Theorists who are concerned about this predicament are constantly in a potent discourse about the best economic philosophy for a problem-solving economic policy. The discourse orbits around solutions driven by neoliberalism, or a market-driven, mixed system, social democracy, a social state, a welfare state, a development state, socialism and others. The old capitalism–socialism either–or choice seems to have faded away, and the discourse now offers more options.

Ethics cannot evaluate these options, but it could indicate what moral principles could give positive direction to the discourse. The discourse must, after all, contribute to the finding of a moral compass to direct us to a future of peace of mind, the common good and an adequate way of living.

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4. This section of the chapter represents a substantial reworking of Vorster (2019).

In this respect, Reformed moral theology presents us with thought-provoking principles to which I would like to appeal.[5] Caring for the poor is a very important moral instruction in biblical ethics – in both the Old and New Testaments. My appeal is to the main features of the biblical ethics of poverty alleviation. I aim to establish the possible role of a government and other moral agents, such as civil society, the market and the church, in poverty alleviation in South Africa.

An excellent survey of the socio-historical décor of ancient Israel by De Vaux (1988, p. 73ff.) offers a thorough exposition of the position of the poor, the strangers and the slaves in Old Testament times. So does Bammel's (1968, pp. 885–915) explanation of the '*ptogos*' [poor, needy] in the New Testament. These two expositions are valuable for an informative understanding of the position of the poor as a social class in biblical times. The results of these studies, as well as the highly informative article of Lion Cachet (1997, p. 215) about the deprived, are used in a summarised form in my exposition. These studies reveal that the poor did not form a separate social class in early biblical society. The early Israelite community in Old Testament times largely enjoyed a good standard of living. The nomadic and semi-nomadic modes of life of the Israelite tribes prior to the conquest knew no sharp or rigid distinction between rich and poor. Members of the tribe had equal rights and statuses as the defenders of the community (Bammel 1968, p. 889). Bammel (1968) refers to God's explicit commands in this regard:

> Exploitation of the poor fellow countryman is forbidden (Ex 22:24). Yahweh is against the oppression of the poor in the courts (Ex 23:6). Already in the fundamental laws, which on the one side, at least for the 7th year, restore the normal state of Yahweh's own exclusive right to the land, and on the other grant lasting protection to the poor, Yahweh, unlike the Greek gods, is the protector of the poor – a thought which was to endure throughout the history of Israel. (p. 890)

God announces his judgement on those who exploit the poor (Am 2:6–7, 4:1–3, 8:4–6; see also Kretzschmar 2014, p. 1). Deuteronomy also reflects the social conditions of its period. It promulgates the duty of almsgiving (Dt 15:7–11); says that when debtors are poor, their security must be given back to them before sunset (Dt 24:12–13), supplementing the law of Exodus 22:25–26; and protects the hired labourer (Dt 24:14–15). In every sabbatical year, the produce of the land was left for the destitute (Ex 23:11) and debts

5. This appeal revisits and furthers my earlier studies on poverty (see Vorster 2007, pp. 61–76; 2021, p. 203). I attempt to apply the biblical principles and theological reflection thereof within the contemporary South African context to indicate how pragmatic attempts to alleviate poverty could become traits of the moral compass we are looking for. For this purpose, I clothe the moral agency with respect to caring for the poor with the Christian theological perspectives on poverty and the calling to prioritise the plight of the poor in moral decision-making and moral agency.

were cancelled (Dt 15:1), 'so that there may no longer be any poor man among you' (Dt 15:4). In the Jubilee year, a general emancipation had to be proclaimed, and persons had to have their ancestral land restored to them (Lv 25:10), together with the stipulations in the rest of the chapter. Of course, this does not mean that there were no injustices. These emerge from depictions of the more common experience of life and from the observations of the prophets: there are wicked, impious rich men who oppress the poor, but the poor are beloved by God (Dt 10:18; Pr 22:22–23), and his anointed will do them justice (Is 11:4). However, the later economic development of the monarchy created new classes and accentuated social distinctions. This development, together with the fact that only landowners had civil rights and that they functioned as the judges worsened the position of the poor. This meant that society changed into an association with marginalised groups made up of the weak and the poor, who suffered several burdens. The poor were individuals, and precisely because they were isolated, they were defenceless. By this time, the poor could be regarded as a social class, a minority group in their society, and God treated them as such. The prophets took their cause in hand. Isaiah, for example, says in Chapter 10:

> Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. (vv. 1–3)

See in this regard also Isaiah 3:14–15, 10:2, 11:4, Amos 4:1, 5:12 and Psalm 82:3–4. The law protected the poor too, in the precepts of Exodus 22:24–26 and Exodus 23:6.

God proclaims God's loving care for the poor in the New Testament. Although Jesus refers to the spiritually poor in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:3), he addresses the materially rich and poor in his Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:20). Jesus's special concern for the poor and the downtrodden during the three years of his ministry shows his compassion for the plight of minorities. The same concern is discernible in Paul's preaching. He rejects any form of possible social distinction between the rich and the poor in the Christian community (Gl 3:27; Col 3:11). The letter of James contains a running attack on the rich, both inside and outside the Christian community. A reason for this attack on the wealthy is that God has chosen the poor before the world. Has God not chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him (Is 2:5)? The New Testament message was indeed directed at the social stratification of the Jewish and Roman communities of that period. The directives about poverty in the Old Testament were aimed at all the social groups in Jewish society. Caring for the poor was the obligation of the leaders in the political and spiritual realms. The leaders were judged on how they fulfilled their obligations to the poor and the

marginalised, such as the widows and the aliens. In the New Testament, Jesus charges people to care for the poor, especially his followers. However, it is fair to say that his teachings also applied to people in leadership positions. Based on what the Bible teaches about the alleviation of poverty and the stewardship of believers, Boersema (1999, p. 177) summarises the obligations of Christians regarding political and economic matters as follows: Are God's laws being obeyed? Is justice being achieved? Are the weak adequately protected? Is the earth being sufficiently developed to allow humankind to honour God? Are we being good stewards of God's earth?

Taking care of the poor and economic justice were prominent matters in the social ethics of the Reformed tradition. The theology of the classic Reformed tradition can be termed a public theology because of the constant call for justice for the poor, which is founded on the principle of human dignity and respect for the rights of the poor. The quest for economic justice features in the social ethics of this tradition over the centuries. This concern features prominently in the social ethics of Calvin and his reflection on the political order of his day. His theological ideas about the sovereignty of God, the image of God and common grace and natural law formed the foundation of his views on civil authority and the individual rights of people, especially the poor (*see* Calvin *Inst*. I:II:1:40; IV:XX:4:653; III:VII:6:12; II:II:15:236; II:VII:1:317; IV:XX:9:657; IV:XX:2:652). In his seminal book, Witte (2007, pp. 81–271) explains how Calvin's social ethic was developed by his contemporaries and successors into a powerful and influential rights-based social ethic with the rights of the poor and economic justice at its core.

The South African Dutch Reformed theologian Naudé (2016, p. 225) explains what the social ethic of the Reformed tradition entails when it is translated into a modern-day socio-economic moral agency. He argues that this social ethic can offer suitable systematic-theological criteria for judging the economic policies of rulers. The contribution of the Reformed tradition to the contemporary discourse is, in essence, threefold. Firstly, its understanding of human dignity should be translated into effective political rights, such as freedom of speech, and socio-economic rights, including the right to food security, shelter, health care, education and employment. Secondly, the Reformed tradition should take the predicament of the poor and the suffering as a point of departure. This tradition should therefore insist that special economic measures be instituted to care for those who suffer from marginalisation, injustice and abuse. These measures imply forms of redistributive justice that would provide first for people's necessities before it allows exorbitant accumulation of wealth. Thirdly, the Reformed tradition should hold the economy responsible for protecting and enhancing the integrity of creation. These general criteria are valuable and can be used effectively in the evaluation of economic policies.

Governments have taken many shapes in the past, starting with the Roman aristocracy. This was followed by the state church, monarchies, the many dictatorships, and eventually democracies. In all of these, the citizens had the same expectations founded on their moral convictions. They expected the rulers to be just and mild, to reward the good and punish the bad, to protect widows and orphans, to avoid war, to create peaceful institutions, to prevent corruption and to have a listening ear with respect to the complaints of the people (Stolleis 2008, p. 197). The duty to take care of the poor was, in principle, also carried over to the rulers. It is common knowledge that this duty has been neglected time and again by rulers in all forms of government. History is full of examples of rulers' exploitation of the poor, sometimes in association with the church. On many occasions, the poor and the marginalised revolted, only to be oppressed by strict measures. The rise of constitutionalism, with its high regard for human rights, can largely be ascribed to the historic plight of the poor. It became evident that peace and prosperity would only be achieved if a system of government could be designed to achieve hope and prosperity for all. These values are universal values embedded in natural law. However, there are also pertinent Christian values embedded in the revelation of God in scripture. A biblical ethic demands that people in power should take care of the poor. This principle should be the main aim of economic policy. Considering the universal values of natural law and the biblical norms regarding the responsibilities of the citizens and the rulers to alleviate poverty and to develop society, the choice for an economic policy should firstly answer the following question: which policy will be the best to implement in the effort to deal with poverty?

As the phenomenon of poverty in South Africa is unique, a unique South African solution must be found.

■ Either–or?

After WWII – and to a large extent because of the theology of Bonhoeffer – Christian ethics gradually focused on the socio-political realm of devastation. Following Bonhoeffer's (2015, pp. 471–473) call for a religionless Christianity and a theology of 'this worldliness', the situation of the poor and the downtrodden and the failures of the pre-war political systems to develop humane environments, raised growing concern among theologians. Theologians turned the focus away from a theology of private faith and mystic spirituality and pursued a moral theology that can enhance community development, especially a concern for the poor, after the crisis left by WWII. Theologians started looking for a theology that is driven by concern and hope for people in social need. More than any other time in the history of Christianity, Christian theology entered the domain of the

political economy. The political theologies that emerged over the past eight decades have redefined Christianity as a message of salvation for the poor and have served as the basis for all kinds of political and social endeavours to fight poverty – even with revolution. This drive resulted in various new hermeneutical theories with a shared characteristic, namely, a hermeneutic from below that contrasts the historical notion of a hermeneutic from above. I do not intend to evaluate these new theories here, but just want to indicate that theology after WWII changed dramatically from a doctrinal and spiritual theology to a social 'this worldliness' theology, in the words of Bonhoeffer (2015, pp. 471–473). The notion of Public Theologies dominates Protestant theologies today.

Whatever theological paradigm Christian ethics pursues in a certain tradition, the alleviation of poverty must be on the agenda of Christian moral agency. As said above, God shows remarkable compassion for the poor, and the alleviation of poverty should be seen as a fundamental matter in Christian ethics. For this reason, Christians from all confessional traditions have emphasised the fight against poverty throughout history. In Reformed circles, this endeavour was taken up by the deaconate and is based on the perspective of the clear scriptural principles concerning the service of the deacon. It is seen as the 'priestly' calling of Christians. All ecclesiastical communities have the practice of deaconates that provide financial assistance. In this way, churches do much for the poor and the sum of diaconal care is remarkable. Furthermore, churches have in the past addressed social issues as part of their prophetic calling, and good examples were the actions of churches regarding slavery, child labour and the plight of the workers in the age of the First Industrial Revolution. The traditional deaconate is discussed further because there is ample research that indicates the importance of the diaconal calling of churches and Christians and discusses the way in which it alleviates poverty. Suffice it to say that social concern has become a central feature in theological reflection since WWII.

Nowadays, Reformed moral agency is relevant not only to the priestly calling of the church but also to a prophetic critique of economic philosophies. The question is what system is morally sound and best suited for poverty alleviation, and the proposed answers range from pure socialism to neoliberalism. However, should it be either–or? Let us reflect on the options from the premise that the calling to attend to the plight of the poor is a deep-rooted principle and obligation in Christian moral agency.

■ Neoliberalism

The term 'neoliberalism' is associated with the philosophy of the economy as developed by Milton Friedman (1971, p. 61; 1973 p. 27). This philosophy is

also called 'ultra-liberalism' or 'neo-capitalism' (Küng 1997, p. 189). Other terms are also used to describe the market-driven economy. The neoliberal philosophy of the economy entails that a government's involvement in a country's economy should be limited as far as possible to allow the markets to drive the economy. The neoliberal philosophy departs from three important presuppositions: (1) the absolute and total freedom of the individual; (2) the unlimited freedom of the markets to determine and drive the economy unimpeded; and (3) the extensive limitation of government interference in the economic sphere. The responsibility of the economy toward the poor is to 'make more and more profit' (Küng 1997, p. 191). According to this philosophy, growing and flourishing markets and greater profit create job opportunities, and the poor ultimately benefit in this way. Wealth 'trickles' down from the markets to the poor. The neoliberalist philosophy has influenced the economies of developing countries to a larger or lesser degree since the Thatcher and Reagan eras. Meeks (1995, p. 115) is convinced that the market-driven economy will stay and will even expand in the foreseeable future.

The practical application of the philosophy of neoliberalism has undoubtedly resulted in powerful economic growth in developed countries. The upward curve in the South African economy over the first twelve years of democracy can also be attributed to the partial application of this philosophy. However, the question can be asked whether the philosophy really brings immediate relief for the poor in developing countries with large-scale poverty and a history of inequality because of social stratification. South Africa proves the contrary. Although the economy has grown in the period mentioned above, it has not really contributed to poverty alleviation during the last ten years. Poverty increased since 2010 and is still increasing. This situation in South Africa begs an answer to the question: is the 'trickle-down' effect really a given in an inequal society such as South Africa? It seems that something must be repaired before the 'trickle-down' effect can bear fruit.

Küng (1997) voices valid criticism against the philosophy and effects of neoliberalism where it was applied in practice. He argues that the total free market economy, as it is applied in Western democracies, easily develops into a sort of totalitarian system where all moral values become subjected to the ideology of the free market. The total system leads to a 'domesticated' and 'depotentiated' ethics, and he is of the opinion that (Küng 1997):

> [*A*] domesticated and depotentiated ethic puts at risk its very own values and criteria; it serves only as a pretext and remains inefficient. And at the same time, as it is already proving to be the case in many areas and regions, a total market economy has devastating consequences: the law, instead of being grounded in universal human dignity, human rights and human responsibilities, can be formulated and manipulated in accordance with economic 'constraints' and group interests; politics capitulates to the market and the lobbying of pressure

groups, and global speculation can shake national currencies; science delivers itself over to economic interests, and forfeits its function of achieving the most objective and critical control possible; culture deteriorates into being a contributor to the market, and art declines into commerce; ethics is ultimately sacrificed to power and profit, and is replaced by what 'brings success' and 'gives pleasure'; and finally even religion, offered as a commodity on the supermarket of ideas along with much that is para-religious or pseudo religious, is mixed at will into a syncretistic cocktail for the convenient stilling of a religious thirst which sometimes overtakes even *homo oeconomicus*. (p. 212)

This criticism and the current standstill in efforts to address the perennial inequality and to offer sustainable poverty alleviation in South Africa lead to the conclusion that the partly neoliberalist approach in the South African economy does not prioritise the fate of the poor. From a Christian ethical perspective, which prioritises the fate of the poor as the leading principle, the philosophy of neoliberalism can be questioned. While recognising the positive things that neoliberalism offers and could bring, there should rather be a search for a philosophy and policy that brings immediate and direct relief for the poor. Küng sees such a philosophy in 'neoliberalism with a social responsibility'. Terreblanche (2002, p. 439) goes even further. After his thorough criticism of neoliberalism, he pleads for a paradigm shift in South Africa towards a philosophy of social democracy.

■ Social democracy

Over the last two decades, there have been calls for a re-evaluation of the part that the state can play in direct poverty alleviation in South Africa. Wilson and Ramphele (1989, p. 440) and Williams (1998, p. 200) initiated a rigorous discourse on such a re-evaluation at the dawn of the new dispensation. In this discourse, Terreblanche (2002, p. 445) argues, based on thorough research, that although neoliberalism has merit in a highly developed country, it is not quite as successful in developing countries like South Africa where economic power, property and opportunities are so unequally distributed. For this reason, he appeals for a shift to the philosophy of social democracy as it appears in continental Europe. In short, this philosophy means that prevalence is granted to (Terreblanche 2022):

[*A*] redistribution of income, power, property, and opportunities, and to society-building, as undeniable preconditions for sustainable economic growth and the maintenance of a humane system of democratic capitalism. (p. 445)

Such a philosophy must have the alleviation of poverty and rectification of the high level of inequality as the driving principle in the political economy. Proponents argue that an equalising and uplifting political economy can be attained by a state that creates economic opportunities for the poor by taking innovative action while the private sector is allowed to participate

freely in economic traffic. It is not the task of Christian ethics to construe the details of such a practice, but from Küng and Terreblanche's examples, it seems as if such a system will better suit the needs of immediate poverty alleviation in South Africa. From a Christian ethical perspective, one can therefore judge that a market-driven economy, on the one hand, and a state that is directly involved with poverty alleviation, on the other hand, will be more useful for current-day South Africa than the philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon neoliberalism.

When prioritising the poor according to the traditional Christian principle of poverty alleviation, the pattern of reasoning and mode of planning should not get stuck in the either–or discourse – either free market or government-controlled action. The unique situation of poverty and inequality in South Africa and the moral principle of prioritising the plight of the poor as the driving force behind an effective and sustainable model for economic planning and policy could lead us to a graded free market approach assisted by state intervention on behalf of the poor.

■ Free market and the social arm of the state

In his state address at the opening ceremony of Parliament in 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa made an important statement when seen from a South African perspective. In the current crisis of unemployment, he said that the state cannot 'create jobs'. The private sector creates jobs (The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa 2022). The government can invest in development and infrastructure and can provide for social grants, but the private sector is the agent of job creation. This remark from the state president draws attention to a welcome deviation from the strong government control policies of the socialist Zuma era and the socialist idealism of the RET of the ANC. This remark offers a solution to the problem of poverty that could adhere to the global moral principle that economic policy and planning should prioritise the predicament of the poor.

It seems that the majority within the ANC increasingly value the free market economy. This position is a positive movement away from the ideological confusion that plagued the country in recent years. The unique solution to the unique situation of poverty and joblessness in South Africa can be found by promoting the free market while calling on the state to be involved in poverty alleviation as the time and situation requires. As the economy grows, the role of the markets must increase and the role of the state must decrease. Such a symbiosis has been applied successfully in the 20th century in many countries that faced social transitions. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-nineties, the countries who moved away from communism to the free market economy with ever-decreasing state involvement to steer the transition were

successful in alleviating poverty and becoming developing countries. To my mind, this is the direction to go because it is morally sound and practically feasible. Such a policy also has the potential to deal with the negative elements of pure neoliberalism and state-controlled socialist intervention. It thus seems that government and the private sector must combine their efforts to deal with the immediate needs to set in motion a process of economic growth. With progressing economic development, the free market can be liberated gradually, and the control of the government can gradually decrease.

Within the context of such an approach to the economy, the social policies of the democratic government since 1994 could be revisited and realigned to set the course for a vibrant new moral agency by all role players implicated in addressing poverty and inequality. Critics of the move proposed by President Ramaphosa can argue that the state has done, and is still doing, much for the poor with, for instance, BEE and social grants, and as this has been somewhat successful, the social intervention of the state must even be strengthened. One can indeed argue that BEE has led to a powerful middle class. However, all economic indicators show that these measures did not alleviate poverty but only managed poverty. The poverty among unschooled and, especially, rural people persists and has even increased. The feminisation of poverty has intensified. Despite its success with the creation of a new and powerful middle class, BEE also bears the negative marks of neoliberalism. The middle class mostly fossilises into an elite, with not enough wealth flowing to energise new employment and possibilities for economic growth. Grants offer indispensable assistance and the situation of poverty would have been far worse if it was not for this direct state intervention. However, social grants do not alleviate poverty or promote economic growth. However important and indispensable this measure is in South Africa, it must be regarded as a temporary incentive and not as a permanent solution.

Where could we go? Looking at BEE from the perspective of reconciliation, the policy is, at its core, motivated by a new form of social stratification. The policy inhibits South Africanism and has the potential to continue the divisions of the colonial era. State involvement in the economy with the aim to empower people is essential given the unique situation in South Africa, but it should rather be aimed at the development of entrepreneurial skills and enabling these entrepreneurs financially to enter the economy. *Black economic empowerment* must be replaced by *South African entrepreneurial development and empowerment*. Entrepreneurial development has a better chance of preventing the middle class from fossilising as an in-group with little space for the poor to progress. Skilled entrepreneurs thrive on economic growth, good outputs, challenges and growing revenues, which in turn create opportunities.

Cadre deployment has created jobs, but it is also responsible for very poor service delivery, especially in rural areas. A recent study by Makole (2022) points to the current effects of the government's policy of cadre deployment. He (Makole 2022) observes that:

> [...] while there is nothing idiosyncratic about deploying professionally knowledgeable and astute cadres guided by high ethical morality to drive levers of executive authority in public sector institutions, deployment of political cadres in South African government's positions has left much to be desired. The approach in which cadre deployment has been practiced in the South African public service sector has undermined the state's capacity to improve quality of service delivery and requires serious re-examination. (p. 1)

He complains that contrary to the vision of the ANC to follow a '*batho pele*' [the people first] approach, they undermined human rights and public services. Using a thematic and bottom-up research methodology with reference to adequate sources, including reports of the Auditor-General of South Africa, Makole (2022) explains that the six prerequisites (fundamentals) for the administration of professional and responsible service delivery are absent in most levels of government. Firstly, 'political patronage and poor performance management inhibits good service delivery' (Makole 2022). For *service delivery* to be successful, politicians should distance themselves from the officials. Officials must be free to do the necessary continuous performance management within their domain of responsibility without political interference or accountability to politicians when they opt for meritocracy, morality and professionalism instead of feeding the political urge to accommodate cadres indiscriminately. Secondly, there is a *great lack of professional competency and ethical conduct* in the South African version of service delivery. Rendering a service means being a servant that puts the people first [*batho pele*] and not being there only for remuneration and self-enrichment. Rendering an effective service entails competency, and competency means effective training. These fundamentals do not undergird service delivery in South Africa. State enterprises are subsequently in a dilapidated state. It seems that at the level of municipal service delivery, especially in those municipalities under the control of the ANC, the moral code of serving the people, caring for the people and respecting their dignity is side-lined in favour of power, cronyism and self-enrichment.

Thirdly, *service delivery* flourishes 'where transparency and accountability mechanisms are held in high esteem' (Makole 2022). However, the management of the current government is so obscure that it needs commissions of investigation to unravel the many corrupt dealings and practices that have a pretence of legality but are aimed at self-enrichment. The recent reports of the Zondo Commission testify to this decrepit situation. The fourth fundamental Makole (2022, p. 32) refers to is the *depolitisation of bureaucracy*, which means that 'public bureaucracy should

be depoliticised and insulated from political gerrymandering and manipulation by political elites so that it can be allowed space to improve its professional craft and image'. Public services in South Africa are politicised to such an extent that the domain of service delivery cannot function within the ambit of its own sovereignty, codes of conduct, competencies and vision.

Related to the fourth fundamental, Makole (2022, p. 33) also mentions that there should be no political interference in social delivery management. *No political interference* is the fifth fundamental. He explains that political interference in South Africa 'manifests itself through pressure that some government ministers put on directors-general to act ultra vires to mandates of (the) *Public Finance Management Act*'. As evident from testimonies before the Zondo Commission, ministers are also interfering 'by influencing procurement processes'. Makole describes unethical actions 'like issuing illegal directives to subordinates'. In this way, they bring the officialdom of departments and municipalities in disarray and sabotage their moral credibility. Such conduct 'creates tension between political and administrative heads which undermine fiduciary responsibilities and sabotage (the) public service mandate' (Makole 2022, p. 33). The sixth fundamental is that there should be *opportunities for talent development at public service institutions*, but in South Africa, this important aspect of service delivery cannot flourish because of cadre deployment where latent talents are not identified and nurtured. Reflecting on Makole's article, one can also discern an interesting paradox in the space of labour in the public sector. The government is promoting the development of the skills of young people with a bursary system, such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). As I said earlier, this policy can be appreciated and commended, but what happens to these trained young people afterwards? They are not able to find jobs in the public sector because most occupations are filled with unqualified and unskilled cadres who were deployed indiscriminately. Skilled people remain jobless and unskilled people occupy positions they are not fit for, and as a result, service delivery fails. In the end, the poor are the foremost victims.

The intention behind using cadre deployment to redress the injustices of the past was good, but the outcome has been disastrous. Already in its early stages, cadre deployment became inextricably linked to large-scale corruption by officials. Furthermore, the income of municipalities is burdened by an over-employment of people, which means that the remuneration component of these structures is so large that there is no money for real service delivery. The policy also failed to balance deployment with effective training and the development of the skills of newly employed people. Many workers at the level of municipal service delivery are just not able to do their jobs because their skills have not been developed; they are

not trained. Cadre deployment should be replaced by a policy of training and employment at levels that municipalities can afford. Service delivery to the citizens should balance the taxes they are paying for services. It is of no use to lift the dignity of workers by employing them indiscriminately and at the same time violating the dignity of citizens in townships by leaving them with leaking sewerage systems, contaminated water, no electricity, poor transport and impassable roads. Since 2010, the ideal of socialist social engineering with the aim of state-controlled employment has shifted suffering from one sector to another. It has had little effect on solving the national problem of poverty and unemployment.

Makole (2022) offers valid and valuable proposals for how the damage of cadre deployment and service delivery can be addressed. He recommends that:

> Cadre deployment practice that encourages political patronage for unskilled deployees should be jettisoned in favour of merit and a competency-based appointment system that set performance management standards and insist on professional accountability in South Africa public service. South Africa should develop a new transformational cadre of professionals who are characterised by moral ethical behaviour, conduct themselves in an altruistic manner, and comprehend complexities of leading public sector institution in the 21st century. These cadre of professionalised public servants and leaders should demonstrate a culture of servanthood, caring and should be beyond reproach in their daily operational conduct and serve in the interest of the public than personal interest. [*The*] South African government should also invest on professional training and development of public service and administration leaders and officials to become new knowledge workers who can improve quality of service delivery. Professionalised technical training and development approach should build social capital which is currently lacking and avert future threats posed by continuous community protests due to poor quality service. (p. 36)

The system of state social grants to the poor is and will continue to be an indispensable part of the struggle against poverty. Since South African social problems are unique, as explained before, social grants are an essential part of the unique solutions we are pleading for. Pockets of mismanagement and corruption have been detected and addressed in the administration of the grant system, but these were far less than the corruption accompanying black economic development and cadre deployment. The management can be improved, but the government can be commended for the grant system which prevents poor people from falling into famine. South Africans are duty-bound to support grants to the poor because in this way the government fulfils their moral duty to feed the poor.

The same can be said of the free tertiary training established by former President Zuma in 2017 before he relinquished his office. Because of the unique reasons for poverty in South Africa, whole generations are impoverished because of the lack of opportunities for the youth in poor communities. In this way, poverty is perpetuated. The parents are jobless

and because of a lack of financing, children cannot afford tertiary education, and they therefore remain in the cycle of poverty and joblessness. This lack of opportunities has forced many young South Africans into low-skilled jobs with no real prospects of improving their predicaments. This situation was addressed with the establishment of the new aid, NSFAS, which (Bursaries South Africa 2022):

> [*W*]as formed in terms of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. On 16 December 2017, former president, Jacob Zuma, announced that the South African government would phase in fully subsidised free higher education and training for poor and working class South African students. (p. 1)

The funding was phased in over a period of five years. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Bursary Scheme was established, and over the past five years, the state invested billions of rands in this scheme. Many young people from circumstances of extreme poverty and hopelessness have graduated from South African universities and become part of the economic progress. Thus far, the scheme has been well-managed with respect to the timing of payouts, and it has remained free of the corruption that has contaminated other governmental financial schemes such as BEE and cadre deployment.

The NSFAS scheme is also 'colour blind', and in this respect sets an example of a South African scheme for South Africans – a non-discriminatory, unique solution for one of our unique problems. Proponents of neoliberal economics criticise the scheme as an unsustainable project in financial terms but offer no other effective and immediate solutions. From a moral perspective, our aim should be to prioritise the plight of the poor in all economic planning and to do what is best in a particular time and space. To my mind, the NSFAS scheme and the social grants scheme fit our moral agency regarding poverty alleviation. South Africans ought to support this scheme politically and financially. Both the corporate sector and civil society can render a huge service to South Africa by joining in solidarity with the state to manage and finance the project to the benefit of the South African youth, and through them, the whole of society, especially the poor. The next generation will reap the fruits.

What about AA is a unique solution to the unique situation South Africa inherited? How should we evaluate AA today, almost three decades after its inception? The policy of AA in South Africa is founded on Article 9(2) of the Constitution (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1996), which reads as follows:

> Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. In order to reach the goal of equality, legislative and other measures can be taken that are designed for the protection or development of persons, or categories of persons, who were wronged by unfair discrimination. (p. 7)

South Africa created a legal foundation for all forms of AA with the promulgation of the *Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998*, which was implemented on 09 August 1999. The law was amended by the *Intelligence Services Control Amendment Act 66 of 2002*, the *Electronic Communications Security (Pty) Ltd Act 68 of 2002* and the *General Intelligence Laws Amendment Act 52 of 2003* (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2003). Another law central to the AA programme is the *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000* (see Terreblanche 2002, p. 47). The aim of the first-mentioned law is threefold. Firstly, the law wants to forbid discrimination. Secondly, the law aims to rectify the situation for the victims of unfair discrimination, and thirdly, it aims to create substantive equality (see Dupper 2000, p. 187).

In a previous book, *Christian Attitude in the South African Liberal Democracy*, published in 2007 (see Vorster 2007, pp. 77–94), I evaluated AA from a Christian moral perspective within the framework of the following moral principles: equity, justice, love, reconciliation, forgiveness, vocation, compensation and outcome. Within this framework, a valid case could be made for a policy of AA to deal with the injustices of the past. In many instances in the modern world, AA was and is still applied to address injustices resulting from certain historical factors. A good example is the policies of AA in the USA. Affirmative action in the South African context is thus not unique or novel. The policy has succeeded in rectifying the injustices caused by the colonial job reservation policy and brought thousands of employees into the fold of decent jobs in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the policy enhanced economic growth in poor communities and restored the dignity of many people plagued by the damaging sense of unworthiness. The policy itself and its application over the years can be commended from an ethical perspective.

However, AA in South Africa also had a negative side. Firstly, the policy lacks a sunset clause. If argued based on the moral theories of consequentialism and situation ethics, AA could be morally right in a certain situation with a certain goal that will eventually serve the common good. However, fair discrimination cannot be applied infinitely, because then it will lose its moral ground. Fair discrimination without a fixed sunset clause becomes unfair discrimination. Also, AA should not serve a negative outcome, for example, by damaging the economy to the detriment of the whole society. Although AA served many South Africans by introducing them to decent job opportunities, raising their sense of dignity and worthiness and paving their way to a better life, it also contributed to the huge brain drain South Africa experienced since 1994. Approximately 1 million skilled people left the country to seek employment elsewhere. One-third of these are professionals. However, Crush (2022, p. 149) explained that the trend of emigration among professional people,

especially medical experts, engineers and lawyers, is also because of the 'poaching and raiding' policies of countries such as Canada, the UK and Australia. For these countries, it is much cheaper to poach professionals than to train them. Even when considering other factors, it is still fair to conclude that AA furthered the disturbing brain drain of highly qualified professional people. This brain drain hampered economic growth and job creation and caused a lack of skills in areas that are indispensable for economic growth.

In his recent column in the national Afrikaans Sunday newspaper *Rapport*, a former judge of the South African Constitutional Court, Judge Van der Westhuizen (2022, p. 36), opines that AA is constitutionally permitted discrimination to foster equality. However, the policy cannot be applied arbitrarily. His main concern is the question of how long this policy should apply. Is it still worthwhile, seeing the immense brain drain and loss of skills that are currently needed for economic development? His question is to the point. The emigration of well-trained South Africans is detrimental. Family structures are disturbed, patriotism is fading among young people, and the migration out of the country means a shift in accumulated funds and job losses among people employed in the businesses and households of the skilled people leaving the country.

I would argue that AA is no longer necessary in South Africa. South Africans can now enter the market on an equal basis, and the only criterion should be merit. Nowadays, AA, just like the policy of indiscriminate cadre deployment, spreads havoc in the South African economy and obstructs sound economic growth. This policy has lost its moral ground and should thus be abolished. In any case, no redress policy will work if it is not accompanied by solid economic growth. To redress in real terms is to generate economic growth with a free market and the social arm of the state to assist the poor so that they can become involved in the economic current of growth. For this reason, South Africa needs its professionals and talented young people.

Despite corruption, poor management, nepotism and other deficiencies in the application of the redress policies in South Africa since 1994, it is fair to conclude that these policies intended to rectify the injustices of colonialism. The intention is morally sound, given the inherited circumstances. The social arm of the state has been successful in the grant system, free tertiary education and the initial AA policy. Cadre deployment proved to be disastrous and BEE turned into elitism and failed to trickle down to the poor. It seems necessary to continue the grant system for some time to come, as well as free tertiary education. Affirmative action has lost its moral ground and could be replaced by a meritocracy. Cadre deployment turned out to be unfair and immoral because of its definite part in the country-wide implosion of service delivery, which impedes

human dignity and causes violent civil unrest. This ill-managed policy does not inspire real economic growth and prevents South Africans from enjoying a decent life in humane environmental conditions. Cadre deployment failed as a redress policy.

A definite moral case can be made for the social arm of the state in a free market system. However, the social arm of the South African state should be revisited continually from an economic and ethical perspective and be realigned to develop the positives and do away with the negatives explained above. Revisiting the policies of redress entails a modus operandi of extending the freedom of the market economy and gradually withdrawing the social arm of the state.

■ Education and training

The golden thread in this survey of attempts to address inequality and poverty in South Africa is the need for effective, all-encompassing education and training. Lack of training has destabilised many honest attempts to alleviate poverty and to develop a society with dignity and hope. The failures of cadre deployment and AA are mainly because of the absence of training and education before deployment and appointment. The political leadership of the new democracy in 1994 voiced their preferences for education and training as the foundation for economic planning. These voices led to positive results. Any academic at a tertiary education institution (TEI) can testify that the financing of research and tuition has improved remarkably. Academics are better able to do research abroad and to attend and partake in conferences all over the world to further research projects benefitting South Africans. Top scientists in the world can work in South Africa and apply their research here, and many young academics reap the fruits of high-quality scientific knowledge. The universities of the colonial era that were based on racial separation were re-arranged into effective non-racial managerial, sustainable institutions with a clear focus on the needs of South Africa. The recently published ranking list of the Centre for World University Rankings (2022) rates seven South African universities among the top 1,000 universities and six others among the top 2,000. The University of Cape Town (UCT) is rated as the top university on the African continent. Compared with earlier rankings, universities in South Africa have progressed outstandingly. The NSFAS programme of free tertiary training for students from lower-income households has enabled many young people to share in good education. Furthermore, South African universities render services to the whole continent of Africa by doing research on African issues and accommodating many researchers and post-graduate students from other African counties.

The scenario looks good, but certain constraints can also be identified. The biggest constraint is ideological in nature. Firstly, the much-discussed language policies could be raised. The universities who identified as Afrikaans universities in the time of the colonial era campaigned for the maintenance and safeguarding of the Afrikaans language for tuition and research. Two of them have turned to English because a policy of Afrikaans would have hampered the growing demand created by English-speaking candidates. Two others achieved policies of using both Afrikaans and English as the demand and the situation permits. Still, individuals and civil societies driven by ethno-cultural paradigms pressure university councils to safeguard Afrikaans because it is globally recognised as a 'scientific' language able to accommodate scientific discourse and because these traditional universities developed over the previous century with an ethos of Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture. The question arises: What should drive tertiary education in South Africa besides excellence and quality? What should be prioritised? Within the context of our heritage of inequality and poverty, my response is that tertiary education should also prioritise the poor. What universities plan to do, what they construct, what researchers discover and apply should, in the end, be for the benefit of the poor. Universities must be service-orientated and not agents of ethno-cultural ideals. However, they could manage these ethno-cultural demands in such a way that they answer the needs of all students, that they accommodate rather than exclude, to provide access to new knowledge in such a way that all students can benefit and eventually reach the goal of prioritising the poor. It seems that they are succeeding in this venture, and this should be commended.

Another ideological current that became prominent in the sphere of university tuition is the demand to 'decolonise' curricula. The idea of 'decolonisation' of university curricula emerged among minorities in the Northern hemisphere (Charles 2019, p. 1). Minorities such as descendants of immigrants from former European colonies, female students, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI+) groups and others started to question the 'whiteness' of the curricula and the colonial taste of all knowledge. According to the Keele University's (2022) 'Manifesto for decolonising the curriculum', decolonising the curriculum means:

> [...] creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all members of the university on how to imagine and envision all cultures and knowledge systems in the curriculum, and with respect to what is being taught and how it frames the world. (p. 1)

Colonialism and the colonist mentality had severe effects on the colonised, of which dehumanisation was the worst. Anything that revives this onslaught on the dignity of people in former colonies should be resisted.

However, when a symbol or structure portraying colonial times portrays it in such a way that the injustices and inhumanity of colonialism are also revealed, it could have a positive effect. Such a portrayal can feed remembrance, particularly the resolute intention that such a dehumanising and oppressive policy should never again plague humankind. The decolonisation of curricula could be evaluated within such a moral framework. When the colonial heritage seems to be destructive and still impedes the dignity of people, then decolonisation of curricula is the answer. Three areas of such destructive remnants of colonialism persist. Firstly, the language of tuition and reporting of new knowledge could be destructive and dehumanising when English, the major colonial language, becomes the only proposition. Despite the wise South African policy of eleven official languages, English has become the dominant language at universities even though the mother-tongue English speakers in South Africa are a small minority. By far, most South African students must study in a second language. More spoken languages, such as isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans, are abandoned in favour of English as the language of tuition and reporting of research. If the dominance of English with its inherent colonial baggage limits and deters South African students and researchers, it is destructive. In this respect, the urge for decolonisation will be valid.

Alternatively, English opens the door to international scientific knowledge and enables South African researchers to share in the pursuit of new knowledge. In this respect, the use of English is a valuable instrument for use in South African education. Education and training in South African conditions focusing on community development and prioritising the poor are of the utmost importance. Decolonisation pertaining to language is a positive movement when approached from the moral theory of situation ethics. To my mind, indigenous languages must be used as far as possible in education and training, and learners must have the widest range possible to gain knowledge in their mother tongue. Discoursing, reflecting, pursuing knowledge, analysing and reporting in a language of personal choice, not by force, are liberating, joyful, inspiring and dignified. On the other hand, South Africans have the benefit of being able to also master English and thus participate in the global search for new knowledge when they move to higher levels of education, such as master's (MA) and doctoral (PhD) studies.

The second area where decolonisation is relevant is the perception that 'white' knowledge or knowledge from the Northern hemisphere is the only reliable or superior knowledge. Colonialism undoubtedly ignored or deterred knowledge developed in the colonies. Still today, researchers of the Southern hemisphere find it difficult to publish in Europe or the USA. International conferences are biased towards white academics. This is also the case regarding the choices of the authors in Global North-based

scholarly journals. Presenting African knowledge to a European journal is a daunting task. The dissatisfaction of decolonisers in this respect is comprehensible. Decolonisation aims to include, for example, African knowledge in curricula and enable students to appreciate the knowledge that comes from their roots. They have a vast heritage of knowledge in the field of African philosophy, theology, the humanities, literature, oral history, natural sciences and medicine. Why should a module about the history of philosophy follow the line of ancient Greek philosophy and exclude African philosophy? Not only does this position entertain the Northern hemisphere's delusions of grandeur, but it is also pure academic negligence. In South Africa, the reasoning of decolonisers could be welcomed and steered in a beneficial direction.

However, decolonial extremism that aims to phase out all Northern hemisphere knowledge, destroy all symbols and structures and disregard what they define as 'white' knowledge, will have a detrimental effect on the development of society and on prioritising the poor. In the end, all knowledge belongs to humanity for the benefit of all. Our learners in South Africa should have access to all knowledge and be able to pursue new knowledge in cooperation with researchers worldwide in the language of their choice.

Thirdly, decolonisation pursues equal accessibility and support for students. In this respect, South African universities are an example of good and responsible open access. The dehumanisation of the past created a sensitivity about the rights of all people, and although human dignity is sometimes ignored, for example, in poor service delivery, tertiary educational systems are at the front line of executing a policy of equal access. However, AA policies regarding quotas in certain areas of training, such as medical schools, cast a shadow over the laudable practice of open access.

Primary education and secondary education still have many deficiencies that impede the preferential treatment of the poor. Qualitative research within an interpretative paradigm done by Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) on a rural area in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa arrived at disturbing findings regarding rural education. They claim that their research portrays a picture of the situation country-wide in rural districts. Some schools, although in principle accessible to all learners, still have restrictive measures that have a negative effect on poor learners and impede their scholastic development. Teachers are not adequately educated and cannot find employment elsewhere. Well-qualified teachers are often not interested in rural education because of financial constraints. Teachers are overburdened with overcrowded classrooms and do not have the luxury of teaching smaller groups of children as the science of education proposes from

global research over many years. Undisciplined teachers in urban areas with better equipped and managed schools are redeployed to rural areas and there they just continue their bad behaviour. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) also found other detrimental issues. Among these are concerns such as language policies where English is forced on children and on teachers with an indigenous vernacular. The use of English becomes a barrier to teaching and learning. Other distressing factors are high school fees, lack of parent involvement and interest, a lack of transport and poor after-hours help with difficulties in the curricula. In townships and rural areas, many schools have very poor and inefficient infrastructure with no sanitation, running water or electricity. In many cases, schools are overcrowded and ill-equipped, and learners must travel (or walk) long distances to school. Because of the poverty in rural areas, learners have no access to electronic media and information platforms. These predicaments cause these schools to have poorer results, as is evident from the annual matric results. These many deficiencies in rural education, as revealed by the research of Du Plessis and Mestry, fuel perennial inequality and poverty because inequality in primary and secondary education leads to inequality in later study and employment opportunities and inhibits a dignified life. The cycle of poverty remains intact and rural children remain disadvantaged.

Education and training should prioritise the poor and not stimulate perennial poverty. South Africans have a moral obligation to address the dire position of education in rural areas. We must raise awareness among parents about the importance of their involvement in their children's education, create dignified environments for teaching and learning and appoint political officials that care. In this respect, citizens can do much more to hold the government of the day responsible for holding to their part of the social contract, but even more important is elevating education and training out of the doldrum of petty politics to the level of common concern for all social role players. We are all responsible for providing our children with a future of decency, opportunities and a flourishing life. To hand the education of our children over to the state and walk away is immoral and a rejection of parental responsibilities essential for building a community of character.

At this point, offering learners training in ethics can be part of the discussion. Children are trained in all the disciplines necessary for their development and future skills. But what about ethics? A moral compass is indeed all about ethics, and so is the building of a community of character. Ethics is related to worldview and religion. The outdated positivist notion of objectivity and neutrality persists in South African training and education. It features in the argument that the link between ethics and worldview inhibits neutrality and objectivity and should therefore not be a subject

in schools. This argument lost its plausibility with the new post-modernist view of science and education that posits that all research and teaching are paradigm-driven. Furthermore, the one place in the humanities and religion where there can be agreement on fundamentals is ethics. All religions and schools of thought in philosophy and behavioural science adhere to and propagate the 'golden rule' (in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you). They do the same with Aristotle's pursuit of happiness as a fundamental in moral reasoning and agency (Aristotle 1998). The ethics of the Ten Commandments is to be found in virtually all other religious traditions, and so does Jesus's call for love as the Great Commandment of love for the neighbour.

Education can draw on these global ethics to enrich the teaching of children in the basic moral principles for a decent life and moral agency. Every person needs a rule-based condition for life, and this condition should be part of learners' training. Can anyone raise an eyebrow when learners are taught to treat others with respect and to honour their dignity, not to steal or to bribe, not to engage in sexual immorality, not to resort to violence to solve problems, to honour their parents, to be good citizens and to be responsible and accountable? Many children in South Africa are exposed to destructive conduct like violence, even murder, domestic violence, gang violence, looting sprees, ill-treatment of women and children, sexual immorality, littering and other forms of misconduct. These conditions shape their value systems. In the classroom, they could build the new value system they need to be decent flourishing moral agents so needed in our society by way of moral instruction from their teachers. If we want to find a moral compass for the way forward, ethics training in schools is indispensable.

Good education and training in practicable educational institutions is of the utmost importance when we want to prioritise the poor. But it is also true that ineffective training in indecent environments leaves the poor in undesirable and harmful predicaments and lets them descend deeper into despair and hopelessness.

■ Clean governance

The empirical study of Justesen and Bjørnskov (2014, p. 106) on the relationship between bureaucratic corruption and poverty indicates that corruption in the public sector increases poverty, and it is the poor that suffer most in a situation of endemic public corruption. South Africa is a very good example of the scientifically proven thesis of these two authors. The corruption investigated by the Zondo Commission (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2022b) revealed that about ZAR50 billion was

embezzled because of state capture and corruption by high-ranking political officials. In a country where the social arm of the state is indispensable in alleviating poverty and enhancing development, such a loss is a disaster. This corruption impacts heavily on the laudable social programmes of the democratic government. These include the system of social grants, free tertiary education, and education and training. Corruption means less money for rural schools to address the undignified bucket toilet systems, access to running water, electricity and information technology, and to improve infrastructure and the standard of learning. The corrupt official steals the possible better future of the poor child. The lavish lifestyle of the fraudulent civil servant boils down to the sewerage in the street, along which the poor child must walk to an overcrowded school. The opulent prosperity and luxury some politicians gain by illegal and immoral misuse of taxpayers' money impede the well-intentioned projects to lift the impoverished communities out of their perennial despair and hopelessness. Furthermore, the large bailouts provided to the ill-managed and corruption-infested semi-state organisations mean less money for social projects and investment in infrastructure, which could create jobs in rural communities.

The study of Justesen and Bjørnskov (2014) found that bureaucratic corruption at the local level of service delivery is especially injurious to poor communities. The members of these communities must often pay extra or pay bribes to corrupt officials to receive basic services. In these areas, it is then the traffic inspector, the police agent, the municipal employee and even the teacher who benefits from bribes and other illegal payments to fulfil their duties to the citizens. Investors are also expected to pay bribes to these corrupt officials to be allowed to do urgently needed development in rural areas. Many farmers and owners of small businesses will testify to this extremely frustrating and deplorable situation.

The reports of the Zondo Commission on corruption and state capture in South Africa raise hopes that judicial processes can curb the spate of corruption and that the government and civil service of South Africa can be rid of the many high-ranking corrupt officials. Looking at the effects of corruption on the poor, it becomes evident that clean governance is essential if South Africans are serious about alleviating poverty. If the present government hesitates to clean up the decay that runs from the top to the bottom of civil services and to hand out the stiff sentences corrupt officials deserve, the wave of immorality and exploitation of the poor in South Africa will gather impetus and role on to cause greater and wider poverty.

Swift legal action must be taken, but there is more to do. What is also needed is moral infusion. Politicians and civil servants must be constantly reminded of what service entails and that they are bound by a code of conduct and the social contract between the citizens of the country.

Batho pele [the people first] is a good reminder of the ethic of service delivery. When prospective politicians and civil servants lack this most basic moral code and a good conscience, they must not be deployed by political parties and implied organisations. When elections come, the electorate should put moral standing high on the tick list when evaluating the candidates. Honesty, moral standing and skills are more important than ideology, relationships and the eloquence of prospective candidates. Hopefully, these attributes will feature prominently in the campaigning of political parties for the next general and local elections.

■ Civil society

A study by several researchers from Germany and South Africa focused on the public role of civil societies in promoting justice for all in times of transition (see eds. Welker et al. 2017). The study examined Germany and South Africa because of Germany's two transitions after WWII and South Africa's transition from colonialism to democracy. The aim was to establish what South Africans can learn from the German experience. Welker (2017, pp. 1–14) explains that in Germany, there is a well-balanced symbiosis between the state, the market, and civil society. This symbiosis is mutually inclusive and supportive and creates a fine balance between the actions of the state, the quests of the market and the widespread interests of the vast array of civil societies. On the one hand, the power of the state is kept in check by the interests of the market and the activities of civil society, and on the other hand, civil societies render an immense service in the development of the broader society by being both watchdogs and agents of all kinds of service delivery. The state, markets and civil societies keep each other intact without manoeuvring each other out of action.

Over the past decade, there has been a surge in the formation of civil societies in South Africa, mainly because of the incompetence of the government. Several civil societies came into being to protest corruption, abuses of power, violations of the right of minorities and labour issues. Civil societies use the Constitutional Court with success to prevent various abusive intended actions by the government. Looking at the impressive role of civil societies in Germany, this development in South Africa is very promising. Civil society in South Africa could play a huge part in the alleviation of poverty and the pursuit of economic justice. Three important interventions by civil society come to mind in this regard.

Firstly, civil societies can fuel a constant awareness of the predicament of the poor in South Africa. They can cast the eyes of South Africans on still prevailing injustices that are often obscured by politicians to hide their own incompetence. In this respect, local churches bare an immense responsibility. Churches function at the grassroots level of all communities – rich and

poor, developed and underdeveloped. They hear the voices of the marginalised, witness the violation of human dignity, see the corrupt officials, work in places with plundered infrastructure and malfunctioning schools and improve the fate of undernourished families. Churches are in a position and have the ecumenical channels to inform all South Africans about what is happening within the borders of the country. Like the prophets of old, churches could be the voice of the poor to the conscience of all. With certain exceptions, churches seem to prefer piety and soul-winning and moving into the orbit of the 'spiritual', clapping hands for Jesus and comforting the poor with heavenly things, but they fall silent when they could inform South Africa about the predicament of the poor.

Secondly, civil society could feed the poor. In this respect, the diaconal projects of many churches and the work of organisations like Gift of the Givers, Afriforum Helpende Hand [Afriforum Helping Hands] and other smaller non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are setting a good example and should be supported by all South Africans, especially by the corporate sector. The vast contributions of big corporations and civil societies to the government's Solidarity Fund, created on 23 March 2020 to assist people during the COVID-19 pandemic, proved that the symbiosis of state, market and civil society in Germany could also be attained in South Africa, and that moral agents in leadership positions have a huge responsibility to establish such a model here.

Thirdly, civil society could shape the moral conscience of the South African community. They can assist training and education by nurturing compassion and love, honesty and responsibility, stewardship and servanthood and other moral principles in all sectors of society. Training in ethics at schools can be complemented by civil societies along their own channels of communication and agency. In this respect also, churches can fulfil their fundamental duty to testify about the morality of the kingdom of God and the calling of all Christians to be moral agents wherever they function in the sectors of society. Preaching and testimony must equip Christians to hear the voice of the poor and, together, civil societies can be a bastion against corruption and exploitation and a potent force in pursuit of clean government, morality in leadership and solving the plight of the poor.

◼ Résumé

Democratic South Africa inherited gross poverty among a large part of the population because of the social stratification and economic injustices of colonialism. The intentions of the new democratic governments to address poverty and inequality through redress policies can be commended.

However, many of these policies failed because of a lack of planning, training and skills development, as well as the incompetence of officials and the venom of eventual corruption and state capture, which contaminated the political corpus from top to bottom and left the poor in the toxic waste of hopelessness and despair.

What can we do? The moral compass points in the following direction:

- All moral agencies in South Africa must prioritise the plight of the poor and make every effort to advance economic justice.
- Neoliberalism with a social arm of the state seems to be the best way to deal with poverty in future South Africa. While the markets create wealth and jobs, the state could take care of the poor.
- Redress policies as unique solutions are commendable in the unique South African context.
- The commendable redress policies over the past 22 years have brought progress in some areas, but also have many serious deficiencies because of bad management, corruption, negligence and irresponsible planning.
- Because of its inherent inadequacies, BEE could be replaced by a programme of entrepreneurial training and skills development accessible to all South Africans.
- Cadre deployment has failed miserably and must be replaced by a programme that develops a new transformational group of professionals who are characterised by moral behaviour, conduct themselves in an altruistic manner and comprehend the complexities of leading public sector institutions in the 21st century.
- The state must continue with the policy of social grants until unemployment falls to a level manageable by normal market processes.
- Free tertiary education must become an innate part of the long-term quest for economic justice.
- Affirmative action must be replaced by an employment policy based on merit.
- Education and training of children and students in decent and respectable circumstances must be enhanced. This process must be driven and managed by professionals qualified in the science and art of education and training. Obstacles should be managed in such a way that all learners can have access to institutions and can be tutored in the language of their choice.
- South Africa urgently needs clean governance because the perennial corruption in recent and contemporary governance is a huge distraction in the pursuit of economic justice and addressing the plight of the poor.
- A fine and practicable symbiosis between the state, the markets and civil society must be found. This will enable these sectors to act in unison to address corruption and immorality and to nurture an ethic of

stewardship, honesty, respect and other moral codes conducive to the alleviation of poverty and the upliftment of the marginalised.

Economic upliftment will be of little use if it is not accompanied by a healthy and powerful reconstruction of family life because families remain the fibre of a broad society. Let us then discuss the state of family life in South Africa and consider how this fibre could be reinforced and braced to underpin our nationhood and flourishing life.

Chapter 6

Making family life the moral seedbed of our society

■ Introduction

Over the centuries, family structures have been the building blocks of stable societies. Family structures took on many forms, depending on religious, cultural and socio-political codes and economic realities. South Africa has a vast array of family structures, such as monogamous, polygamous, single-parent, absent-parent and replaced-parent families. Irrespective of the different cultural views and economic forces on the perception of what a family is and should be, families have been perceived by theorists as spheres of socialising, procreation and the protection and moral formation of children. Witte (2022, p. 17) refers to several influential historical depictions of the multidimensional character of the marital family. He indicates that 'Aristotle and the Stoics' called the family the 'foundation of the polis'. The church fathers and the medieval Catholics spoke about the family as 'the seedbed of the city'. Protestant theorists defined the family as a 'little church and a little commonwealth', which is where the idea for the title of this chapter originated.

The innate link between the health of a society and the health of the family is nowhere better stipulated than in the African proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child'. The phrase developed in tribal life and boils down to the message that it takes a close community of people (Reupert et al. 2022):

> [*T*]o provide a safe, healthy environment for children, where children are given the security, they need to develop and flourish, and to be able to realize their hopes and dreams. (p. 1)

Societal arrangements and rules considered the health of the family and the safeguarding of children. The 'village' was responsible for the character formation of families, and the moral codes of the family built the morality of the 'village'.

I would like to elaborate on the village concept at this early stage of the argument. In African tradition, the proverb refers to a small rural village where people with similar customs and structures of authority and responsibility lived together. This village was responsible for raising the children. The village was their in-group where their values and security were shaped. Modern research uses the concept to refer to the village as any grouping of people who influence the children in the group by the group's overall conduct, values and customs (see Reupert et al. 2022; Witte 2022). The group is the 'village' that renders good (or bad) formative services to the children within the group. The group can be a church, a kindergarten, a class at school, a sports club, a neighbourhood, peers, marital family, extended family or any group of people where children are an in-group with a we-feeling. The village concept in this modern and broader meaning is used in this study to explain the positive role an in-group community can play in character-building and the moral formation of children.

When a society's family life is disturbed, it affects the whole society, because when stable and fixed family relationships are disturbed, the basic social morals of the society are infringed. Broken families cause broken morals in any society. South Africans have different traditions of family structures, undergirded by different moral codes. In tribal traditions, family structures were patriarchal, mostly polygamous, heterosexual and focused on authoritative relationships that created an environment where children could be educated in the values and customs of the tribe. The formation of the levels of authority between parents and children of different ages was essential for the health of the tribe. Children, especially sons, constituted the wealth of the father.

Colonialism introduced other structures, of which the Christian view of marriage as a monogamous, heterosexual relationship (also patriarchal) was the most influential. Muslim customs also entered the stage with the influx of slaves from Dutch colonies in the Far East and Indian labour in the

sugar industry after the British colonisation of the Cape Colony and Natal. Although all these traditions were inherently different, they all viewed the family as the building blocks of a stable, orderly and peaceful society. But South Africa also has a legacy of severe family disruption, which had an enormous influence on human development, stability and the recurrent dehumanisation of people (see Budlender & Lund 2011, p. 295ff.). The most potent force of this disruption was the migrant labour system, which took fathers from the stability of their rural families to join the mining industries. These labourers were separated from their families for long periods, and they were accommodated in men's hostels with inadequate facilities and inhumane conditions. Many families in modern South Africa are still experiencing the detrimental effects of the migrant labour system. These effects are explained by Sooryamoorthy and Makhoba (2016, pp. 309–321) in their assessment of recent research on this topic. Among the detrimental effects were the workers' tendency to start new families in mining areas and to neglect their rural families, leading to the impoverishment of the rural families under single-mother care. The hostel life caused many social problems, such as alcoholism, prostitution and criminality, and deformed the social and moral fibre of families in both the rural and industrial areas. Furthermore, South Africa witnesses the rise of single-parent families and grandparents raising grandchildren because of several circumstances, such as the loss of both parents because of AIDS-related illnesses or when the parents are forced elsewhere due to poverty, joblessness and other economic disturbances. These families are usually among the poor.

Changing global patterns in family life have also challenged modern South African family patterns. Browning (2001a, p. 243) refers in this respect to growing divorce rates, out-of-wedlock births and father absence, as well as new patterns such as cohabitation for short periods of time and same-sex marriages. In another well-documented research report, Browning (2001b, p. 4) finds that the phenomena of modernisation and globalisation are at the root of these disrupting forces in patterns of family life. Already in 1981, Hauerwas (1981, p. 155) asked whether these developments should be perceived as immoral or as normal cultural patterns in a changing society. Are they merely an indication of changes in family life, or can they be regarded as part of a crisis? Browning refers to recent publications dealing with these questions and concludes that there has been a worldwide transformation in the attitudes towards these family changes (Vorster 2016):

> [...] within the social sciences [...] since the late 1980s. He says that sociologists, psychologists and economists are [*now*] much more willing to acknowledge that these developments have been damaging to large numbers of people. Changes in family patterns have contributed to the declining well-being of children and they have been concomitant with the 'feminisation of poverty' (the shift of poverty from the elderly to single mothers and their children) as well

as the 'feminisation of kinship' (the trend of women sustaining families alone, without the help of fathers and husbands) [...] Although most social scientists now concur that these changes have been costly to individuals and society, they disagree about whether they can be reversed or whether they must simply be accepted in the hope of mitigating their negative consequences. (p. 6)

However, at the root of these changing patterns of family life in South Africa is the dissipation of the 'village-family' concept in whatever form the village presents itself. Reupert et al. (2022) report that:

[...] the village, in many countries today, is dissipated and fragmented and individuals are increasingly isolated and are not eager to ask for, or provide help to, others. Family breakdown, economic pressures, long working hours and increased mobility have all contributed to families feeling less connected to extended family members and others around them'. (p. 3)

Adherents of all worldviews in South Africa will concur with the following assessment by Witte (2022):

The family is thus a distinct institution in its own right deeply interwoven with other institutions. Modern schooling, work, leisure, consumption, worship, legal regulation, and public administration all shape and colour the ways we court and marry, bear and raise children, make and break family bonds. At the same time, most people see marriage and family life at the heart of what makes life worth living and essential to a society worth living in and working for. Marriage and family life not only realise romance but also inspire hard work and justify key aims of public policy and provision. In this sense, it does take a society, with all its diverse institutions, to raise a family. And the breaking down of the family causes severe private and public harms that rapidly ripple through a community. (pp. 25–26)

I am unable to evaluate tribal family structures and customs or the views of the other religious traditions in South Africa because I am not adequately informed about these noble traditions. Suffice it to say that all these traditions value healthy family life and lament the historical and current demise of family structures. They all agree that broken families inhibit social cohesion and the formation of orderly and peaceful broader social structures. They all concede that broken families lead to broken morals and cause major disruptions in social structures. They all long for a moral compass that could guide all of us to a future where South Africans appraise sound family life and enjoy the fruits of this nucleus of human relations. All these traditions concur that a sick society such as the current South African society can find the way back to moral health when taking cognisance of the foundational principle of societal growth, namely, that healthy families are the building blocks of a healthy society. Sound family values further sustainable public morality.

In this chapter, I present a moral framework for a sound and healthy family life from a Christian Reformed perspective in the hope that this view can contribute to the establishment of a sound family life conducive to the

much-needed moral development of South African society. In two previous books, I touched on family values (Vorster 2007, pp. 169–184; 2021, pp. 107–120). Some of the views presented in these books are revisited, expanded and applied in this chapter to the current South African context, with the aim of framing moral standards for sound family life within the present context of fragmented families and the disturbing consequences of the phenomenon. I argue that the Christian view of marriage and family, among other things, can change marriage and family life in contemporary societies for the better. For this purpose, I offer core biblical perspectives, not only to indicate what a healthy marriage and family entail but also how this model could be a remedy for the damage caused by the current fragmented patterns. The chapter firstly presents the most important biblical perspectives on marriage and family. Secondly, it expounds on the implications of Christian moral agency for marital and family relationships within a broader social context. The explanation will indicate that marriage and family together form a unique societal sphere of close relationships driven by loving, caring, compassionate, trustworthy and altruistic attitudes. Nurturing these attitudes enriches family life in general and could assist South Africans in searching for direction out of the moral crises of their society.

■ Moral tenets of marriage and family[6]

The biblical idea of marriage and family has God's creational order as its foundation (Köstenberger 2004, p. 31, 61). Several principles founded on the creation of humankind have meaning for the construction of family life in a biblical sense. The narrative about creation in Genesis 1–3 can be regarded as a description of the prototype of marriage, and although other forms of marriage are described in the Bible, a survey of the biblical data regarding marriage reveals that the creational order constitutes the ultimate structure of this relationship. Marriage is rooted in God's creation. Both Jesus and the apostles refer to this order in their teachings about the essence of marriage and the responsibilities of husband and wife. For the purposes of this chapter, I offer a short summary of the main principles of marriage and the important ethical norms.

God establishes marriage as a monogamous, heterosexual marriage – an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman (Douma 1993, p. 113). Although polygamy was present in Old Testament times, as is evident in the description of the lives of Lamech (Gn 4:19), Ezau (Gn 26:34), Abraham, David and Solomon, monogamy was the creational order. This principle also forms the foundation of marital relationships in the

6. This section of the chapter represents a substantial reworking of Vorster (2008, pp. 463–481).

New Testament (1 Cor 7:2; Eph 5:28–33; Col 3:19; Tt 2:4). Scripture deals with polygamy in a descriptive way, while it deals with monogamy as prescriptive, in other words as the will of God. Marriage should therefore be a monogamous heterosexual relationship between husband and wife. The purpose of marriage is primarily mutual help and guidance (Eph 5:23–25), physical and spiritual fulfilment and the prevention of immorality (1 Cor 7:1–7).

Köstenberger (2004, p. 98) suggests that procreation could also be considered as an integral part of God's plan for marriage. He refers, among other things, to Genesis 1:28, 9:1 and 35:11. However, this position can be questioned from a moral stance because the childless marriage cannot be perceived as inferior or incomplete. Procreation is of secondary importance; a childless marriage is also a blessing, as Douma (1993, p. 123) rightly argues. A couple can even choose not to have children in circumstances where the forming of a family may be detrimental to the well-being of the marriage or the society. Hauerwas' (2002, p. 512) view that Christians are called to marriage to build up the church is also problematic, because such an ulterior motive for marriage could then also be translated to ethnic, racial and other contexts so that the purpose of procreation becomes the strengthening of certain groups over others or where children serve as the sign of the father's wealth. The same argument can be raised regarding Douma's (1996, p. 253) opinion that voluntary childlessness conflicts with God's intention for marriage. Douma contends that those who marry must be willing to have children. I would rather argue that the idea that the primary purpose of marriage is procreation, even for the sake of the church, reduces marriage to the sphere of the biological and inhibits Christians from fulfilling a responsible calling in society. Marriage is more than this. It is a sphere of an equal and committed relationship between loving partners where they can live a flourishing life in a profound spiritual relationship with God. When planning a family, the well-being of the future children, the marital relationship, the future of the church, the health of society and the well-being of the earth are all factors that should be considered. For example, there is no sense in having children to subject them to a life of poverty and perennial despair or to have children when the parents are not equipped nor fit to raise and educate the children. When family planning, including the number of children, is morally justifiable as Douma argues, then planning for no children will also be morally justifiable. However, this planning should be executed responsibly in the light of the broad biblical perspective on marriage and family and the divine vocation of a family. The marital relationship should be an intimate relationship on both the spiritual and physical terrain. Husband and wife become one flesh, and this metaphor implies that two people share in each other's lives in a complete and dedicated manner. I will not deal here with the moral issue of abortion on request and related concerns because I have dealt with these moral

questions in a previous publication (see Vorster 2021, pp. 36–55). Suffice it to say that prevention is better than cure. In family planning, preventive measures are sufficient and more moral than treating the outcome of an unwanted pregnancy with all the harmful effects attached to abortion.

In my discussion of an ethic of flourishing personhood in a previous book (Vorster 2021, pp. 109–120), I explained the core tenets of the marital relationship. Firstly, marriage is a covenantal relationship between husband and wife and God. In all the traditions of Christian ethics, marriage is deeply rooted in the present reign of God and must answer to the moral standards of his reign because marriage is the building block of a sound society. Douma (1993, p. 266) is correct in his assessment that, according to scripture, living together as husband and wife always affects the broader community. Secondly, marriage represents an equal relationship between husband and wife. They are created equal (Gn 1:27; 2:20) and are equals in Christ (Gl 3:28). Women are not inferior. Biblical theology sometimes refers to the patriarchal patterns in ancient culture but consistently prescribes equality between men and women in social spheres and in marital relationships (Vorster 2021):

> The Dutch Old Testament scholar, Vriezen (1966, p. 446), concluded convincingly that all forms of patriarchism in Old Israel and in the time of the New Testament resulted from evil and do not reflect the creational order. (p. 114)

Equality in the marital relationship is a particularly important principle that should be accentuated in our efforts to build sound family life in South Africa. The feminisation of poverty, single-parent households and the domestic violence we are dealing with could largely be ascribed to remnants of patriarchal cultures and the sacralisation of male dominance in all spheres of life.

Thirdly, the marital relationship is a marvellous relationship (Vorster 2021):

> [*A*]s a covenantal relationship, marriage can be described as a marvellous relationship that ought to be treated as such in Christian moral agency. Part of this marvellous relationship is sexuality [...] Scripture depicts marriage as the sphere of sanctified sexuality. Sex is not the free exercise of human desires and the satisfaction of bodily lusts, but an intimate, loving union of husband and wife with mutual consent in a permanent relationship of mutual trust and love. The same principles apply to men and women who prefer a *de facto* marriage. This devoted and physical act expresses the deep spiritual nature of the covenantal marriage. (pp. 115, 186)

Marriage is more than mere sexuality. It implies a deep spiritual connection because it is a triangular relationship between husband, wife and Christ (Eph 5:21–33). Sexuality is also more than *eros*. It pertains to the deepest levels of our personality, entails a psychological, spiritual and biological dimension, influences a human being's every act and determines our total response to life. Sexuality is therefore *eros* and *agape*. Where *eros* and

agape merge, the highest form of love grows. Therefore, sexuality without love and the security of the marital relationship can be a violation of human dignity. This biblical perspective on sexuality reaffirms the notion that sexuality can only function in its true meaning within the confines of a marital relationship, that is, a covenantal relationship characterised by faithfulness and permanence. In their sexual relationship, a husband and wife express not only their mutual love but also their mutual partnership in the body of Christ (1 Cor 6:12–20). Their bodies are part of the body of Christ, and loveless sex violates this spiritual relationship.

Marriage is also more than a mere legal contract because it is a covenant between husband and wife before God and is an indication of the covenant between God and his people (Douma 1993, p. 114). Marais (2022, p. 320) notes how Calvin moves from marriage explained in legal rhetoric as a 'legal contract' to marriage explained in religious rhetoric as a 'sacred contract'. This move is because of his understanding of the covenant according to Proverbs 2:17 and Malachi 2:14–16. The covenantal 'sacred contract' contains much more than a mere secular contract. The covenantal character of marriage entails that it is a sacred bond that is characterised by permanence, commitment sacredness, intimacy, mutuality and exclusiveness (Köstenberger 2004, p. 91). Taking a woman as wife and a man as husband involves promises and duties towards each other before God, and only then can the faith community sanction the marriage. This intimate bond is also necessary before there can be a sexual union. The bond of marriage grows out of love between husband and wife, and the bond is maintained by love and faithfulness. Only love will make it possible for a couple to be compassionate, caring, committed, self-denying, selfless and forgiving.

Western secularism introduced the idea of free sexuality that emanated from the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Entertainment media portray casual non-committed sex, pornography and sexual promiscuity as a normal way of life, and the thrust of the sexual immorality of Western secularism has become powerful in South Africa. In this movement, the female body, especially, is portrayed as something cheap and useable for pure lust, like a commodity with no value. The sexual abuse of women and girl children has become a plague in South Africa. Teen pregnancies have increased because of the idea that sex is leisure and a normal way of life. It often happens without the consent of the female teenager and under pressure that it is the socially 'in' thing to do. Modern liberal education propagates 'safe sex' by young people practising 'free sex' but does not promote the idea of abstention until they are married in a mutual relationship of trust, permanence and commitment. These principles (Vorster 2021):

> [*A*]re the essentials of marriage as a covenant, and therefore Christian ethics runs against the trends and patterns of sexuality in modern Western societies. Because of the essentials of the marital and familial relationship [...] Scripture

constantly denounces the ill-treatment and [*dehumanisation*] of spouses, wilful desertion, divorce, [...] adultery and sexual promiscuity. (p. 186)

Fourthly, marital and family relationships require thorough commitment from all the parties involved. People should be committed to their families and execute their duties as husbands, wives and children, respectively. The development and education of children is the primary task of the parents. They cannot hand over the moral education of their children to the state or civil societies. In broken families, this commitment is more often disturbed, resulting in a growing number of homeless children who must struggle with meeting their basic needs on the streets (mostly through petty crime), the humiliation of begging and drug abuse. They are vulnerable to abuse and violence. Every homeless street child has a background of a heartless and apathetic family. Many civil societies render great services to unwanted and abused children, but, in this respect also, prevention will be better than cure.

Because of the covenantal character of marriage, the Christian tradition discourages separation and divorce because of the fundamental value of the permanence of the marital relationship. The divine foundation of marriage means that divorce mostly runs against the will of God. Furthermore, divorce violates the promise of commitment and the covenantal character of marriage, which is witnessed by God and other people (Douma 1996, p. 266). Separation and divorce entail the breaking of a vow between the spouses and before God. Therefore, God forbids adultery in the seventh commandment. This prohibition includes divorce. But the seventh commandment and parallel passages should not be interpreted in a literalist way because God also made provision for divorce under certain circumstances. One reason for divorce is when the man finds something indecent in his wife (Dt 24:1). Owing to the fundamental equality between husband and wife, this provision will also apply to the wife finding something indecent in her husband. This 'indecency' probably refers to sexual immorality, and it concurs with the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, which reads (Mt 5):

It has been said, 'anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce'. But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (vv. 31–32)

Adultery signifies the breaking of an obedient relationship with God and another human being (Bosman 2004, p. 274). Adultery has both religious and ethical consequences and therefore serves as grounds for the annulment of a marriage. However, other reasons for divorce can also be gathered from other biblical themes, read within the context of congruent theology. Wilful desertion can be regarded as a valid reason for divorce (1 Cor 7:15–16), because desertion is a *de facto* breaking of a promise and of the covenant. Another reason for divorce will emerge when the actions of one partner inhibit the other partner's obedience to God (Ac 4:19–20).

These passages need further ethical reflection. Firstly, it does not mean that adultery must always lead to divorce. Forgiveness and reconciliation are possible and must be pursued. Secondly, remarriage should be possible after repentance and forgiveness. If not, other teachings in scripture regarding forgiveness and reconciliation will be violated. Thirdly, when the conduct of one partner – for example, addiction to alcohol and drugs, psychopathy, violence, sexual abuse and constant humiliation – inhibits the other partner's relationship with God, divorce may be permissible when all other remedies have failed. However, Douma (1996, p. 275) warns correctly that divorce is always regrettable and surely remains an extreme measure.

These biblical values regarding marriage and sexuality are important to revisit in our time of sexual immorality, violation of the dignity of females and children, domestic violence and all other forms of destruction of marriages and the negative effects on the psyches of males, females and children suffering under bad relationships. The number of homeless street children in South Africa can be directly ascribed to a lack of understanding of the moral foundation of marriage, sexuality, parenthood and responsible family planning. Marriage counselling and sex education should start by highlighting values like these. All moral agents involved in education and human development could contribute to the healing of marital life by asserting these core values of marriage instead of treating only the consequences of broken and ill-conceived relationships like loneliness, feelings of rejection and guilt because of cheap exploitation.

■ Steering towards healthy family life in South Africa

Let us then focus on the tasks laid upon all the role players in the healing of family life in South Africa. This includes the father in his relationship with his wife and their children, the mother in her relationship with her husband and their children and the children in their relationships with their parents and each other. What could we do to prepare a fertile 'seedbed for a moral society'? Some remarks about this question will close this chapter. I start with the moral agency of the parents and close with the moral agency of the state, not vice versa, because people do not belong to the state, but the state belongs to the people. A healthy state does not breed healthy family life, but healthy families constitute a healthy state.

Where do we start? Jesus reminds us of the Great Commandment of love (Mt 22:34–40; Mk 12:28–34; Lk 10:25–28). In view of this Christian dictum, Post (2022) has written a remarkable article with the title: 'Love begets love, and it all starts in the family'. He says (Post 2022):

> [...] where families are characterised by the vision of love, harmonious relationships, and wisdom, their children are more likely to be caring,

compassionate, and morally creative. The love of a harmonious couple is the foundation for the development of a loving child. (p. 127)

Love is the bottom line of a healthy marriage and a healthy family. A happy family 'cannot live well in the absence of love, and it is the most important gift we can give our children' (Post 2022, p. 137). Love is the soul of the family – not prosperity or education or status – but love, which is not expensive, scarce, nor difficult to grasp. All people have the innate ability to love, irrespective of circumstances, and this basic value must permeate marital and family life. On this foundation, we can start to propose values for the different relationships in family life.

◼ Husband and father

The concept of the father figure is highly contested in contemporary societies. Modern secular thought has caused scholars to do away with functional differentiation in gender roles and even the concept of a father and a mother. This 'degenderisation' of society is driven by the paradigm of the sameness of all human persons and the basic right of the human person to choose their own gender and other traits. This new paradigm is a reaction against all the forms of dehumanisation of the past. We can appreciate that the human rights discourse exposed violations of the rights of women by traditional and modern forms of androcentric social structures, cultural customs and human behaviour. Male domination featured in virtually all traditions and social structures and women were relegated to inferior positions and lower income. Feminism uncovered the age-old paternalism and led the quest for equality in all spheres of life. Furthermore, society was prone to homophobia as part of many other forms of discrimination and abuse. But the new paradigm is an overreaction that is not founded on natural realities or solid scientific proof. The role of the father figure in family life cannot be denied or neglected. The father plays a huge part not only in the well-being and flourishing of the family but also in the unhappiness that could follow the demise of family life. This role must therefore not be belittled but be constantly scrutinised for the sake of the moral compass of society today, especially in South Africa.

A recent study by Parent et al. (2017, p. 1259) indicates that social scientific research about the father's contribution to child psychopathology in the past was inhibited by the hesitance of fathers to take part in empirical studies in this field. In a time of huge changes in the role of the father and increasing complexity in this regard, they plead for more research into the role of the father in the modern household. Their plea is indeed important for modern family studies. Communities proposed age-old moral standards for the role of the father in the past. Some of these standards have faded away because of the development of new family structures, contexts

and requirements. However, where old values enhanced happy families and human flourishing, these values could be revisited and translated into directives for society today.

The household codes in the New Testament and the wisdom literature in the Old Testament provide several indications of what the role of the father and the husband should be. These guidelines also reverberate in most religions and cultural customs. Although the ancient biblical authors addressed families that lived in an ancient context, the principles underlying the obligations of the husband and father in biblical times can be translated into contemporary norms for the obligations of husbands and fathers today if they answer to the foundations of biblical anthropology, such as human dignity, equality, servanthood and, especially, the Great Commandment of love. A good example of the value of such a translation is the recent article of Stewart (2022, p. 29) about Proverbs in the biblical wisdom literature and its relevance for the 'infodemic' of our time. The term 'infodemic' refers to the phenomenon of misinformation, conspiracy theories and unfounded medical advice about the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Stewart's article explains how biblical proverbs translated into a modern code can be used to deal with the infodemic in a corrective way. We could do the same with biblical instruction regarding marriage and family. We cannot reconstruct modern society according to the ways of living in ancient times, but we could infuse biblical moral principles into modern society in such a way that they will still fit the idea of a covenantal family. Many studies in the field of psychology, sociology and ethics have done this in a responsible and principled way, and I would like to refer to some of them.

The South African community, guided by the democratic government, is moving out of the old androcentric patterns, behaviour and all other forms of male domination and female submission. Furthermore, the requirements of modern life make views such as 'the father as breadwinner and the mother as caretaker of the home and the needs of children', with the father as the decision-maker and the mother as an obedient and submissive follower, redundant. In modern society, women have entered positions of leadership and decision-making in all spheres of authority, from courts of law to politics, from big corporations to the highest levels in academic fields and from leaders in business to the highest ranks in the police service and the military.

The first step the husband should take is to accept that husband and wife are equal partners with equal responsibilities and equal commitments. They can both be breadwinners, and both are caretakers of the needs of children. They are both servants and decision-makers. The old-fashioned idea that wives should be subordinate and obedient still leads many husbands astray and results in destructive domination of the family. Instead,

the husband should appreciate and respect his wife as a person with gifts and talents and create the space for her to use her gifts and make the most of her talents. This will enrich the marriage and the children will reap the fruits of a flourishing mother. The 'village' (close communities) can also benefit from her gifts and contributions. Husband and wife can change roles according to the conditions of the time and the environment. The wife could also provide for the income of the family while the husband could be the caretaker of the home and the children. Nowadays, many professional women follow life-long careers while their husbands see to the needs of their children. Male dominance in a modern society with a growing economy inhibits not only the healthy development of the marital family but also the development of society by way of the growing inclusion of women in the economy and the labour market.

The continuous involvement of the husband and the father in the affairs of the rest of the household is of the utmost importance, especially in the South African context of widespread father absence because of migrant labour. Freeks (2022) does research on father absence in South Africa and has gathered valuable statistics about the scope of this phenomenon in South Africa. He reports that (Freeks 2022):

> The rate of father absence in South Africa is exceptionally high. Thirty per cent of children are relatively born into single-parent households according to statistics. In communities of predominantly black people, this figure is even more alarming where it increases to 68%. A clearly devastating trend is that fatherlessness is affecting children of all races, which means it is a social ill that harms all families in the South African context. In 2015, 1.1 million births were registered, and 64% of mothers showed no history about the birth father. In addition, 50% of the women who went into labour were single mothers who had no support from the birth father. It is approximated that in South Africa 2.13 million children are without fathers and vast majority of them are younger than five years. (p. 2)

Knijn and Patel (2018, p. 250) report that almost one out of two fathers do not live with their children. In another research article, Freeks (2021, p. 2) refers to various studies by sociologists and psychologists and concludes that children in South Africa 'who experience father absence are at a higher risk of becoming victims of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, crime, risky sexual involvement and AIDS'.

Fatherless families are a direct result of the sexual immorality of our secularising society. With sex outside of marriage having become a 'normal' way of life, men engage in short-term sexual relations without responsibility and commitment. When the female partner becomes pregnant, he moves on without any form of further involvement. The female partner is left with either the disturbing decision of abortion or with raising the child alone, most of the time with lacking resources. This social phenomenon is growing in our country. Solutions such as safe sex, contraception and abortion on request are promoted by the government and some civil societies caring

for the social, physical and spiritual health care of women. But in the end, the real answer lies in sexual morality. Men ought to be reminded that sexual activity belongs to the safe and secure sphere of marriage. Women are not sex objects but persons with personhood and dignity. Free and uncommitted sex and abandonment when a child is born is a brutal violation of the human dignity of a woman and the child and a deed of self-centred avarice. Moral agents are duty-bound to promote sexual morality among men and to remind them of the basic value of responsibility.

The quality involvement of the responsible husband and father in the marital family is the real remedy for the South African crisis of disturbed family relationships. A wife in a secure and safe marriage is a happy wife and a loving mother who could generate human flourishing in her home and in broader societal spheres. A child who perceives their father as a role model of a chaste and decent life will never resort to a life on the streets with all its detrimental effects. Father involvement does not appear of its own accord. It needs planning – planning for quality time, recreation, vacations and doing things together. It needs sacrifices – sacrificing time with friends and peers, time spent on hobbies and extra after-hour work. It also needs restraint when it comes to the use of alcohol and other dangerous substances.

Husbands and fathers are the major perpetrators of domestic violence. Although females can also resort to tacit forms of violence, such as verbal abuse, emotional denigration and humiliation, males are the main driving forces of physical violence. Domestic violence plagues South Africa. Fapuhunda et al. (2021) refer to research that reported:

> [T]hat out of 1,394 men that partook in the 2016 representative sample of the South African Demographic and Health Survey, 50% of them were perpetrators of domestic violence in their own homes. (p. 653)

Many factors are responsible for this state of affairs. Research in the social sciences discovered factors such as male unemployment, poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, low self-esteem, mental illness and others. From a moral perspective, the issue of paternalism can be added to the list. Husbands and fathers who clothe themselves with the status of the sole authoritarian of the household and who are set on ruling autocratically with an 'iron fist' are prone to view and use violence as a justifiable way to stamp down authority. Sometimes, this autocratic conduct rests in erroneous religious views about the necessity of male domination for a sound family and social life.

Violence against a spouse can in no way be justified in a decent society. No good effect or positive outcome for the marital relationship can be attached to the use of violence in whatever form. Violence injures, causes pain, humiliates, breeds counter-violence and damages

relationships severely. To inflict pain does not improve character but instils fear. A person must not do good out of fear of pain and humiliation but out of inner conviction nourished by the responsible authority. As equals, husband and wife must engage in a cognitive process to deal with differences and avoid circumstances and attitudes that can endanger a rational approach and can breed violence. Such circumstances include stress, anger, mutual humiliation and the use of substances, all of which impede a calm, rational conversation aiming at solving the problems at hand.

What then about corporal punishment to raise a child? In the past, most traditions viewed corporal punishment as a justified way to establish discipline in the home and in schools and jurisprudence. In some instances, this action was justified by selective readings of the Bible, for example, Proverbs 29:15, where the rod is linked to discipline. However, corporal punishment has been banned in 128 countries (Gershoff 2017, p. 137). Corporal punishment has also been outlawed in all South African educational institutions. It is regarded as a criminal act based on the Bill of Rights in the new Constitution. All forms of violence run against the foundational value of human dignity. This prohibition is a welcome development, because there have been many violent abuses of learners by teachers in the past, especially in colonial times. Furthermore, this form of punishment is beyond any notion of justice because the teacher acts as the prosecutor, the judge and the executor of the penalty. Corporal punishment in schools was determined by the one person in charge, and the extent of the punishment, the severity of the offence and the amount of pain inflicted were for the one person to adjudicate.

Corporal punishment is still prevalent in homes, and discourse about the morality of this form of punishment and its effects is still ongoing in the field of ethics and psychology. To my mind, the ethical question must engage only one issue: Is corporal punishment harmful or could it have positive results? The much-discussed and cited research report of Gershoff (2002, pp. 539–579) at Columbia University in the City of New York, United States of America (USA), about corporate punishment by parents and associated behaviours and experiences provides essential results that should be considered when dealing with this question. She revisited 88 studies on the topic of corporal punishment over the last 62 years and did a meta-analysis of the following behaviours and experiences that are usually associated with corporal punishment:

- immediate compliance by the child
- moral internalisation
- aggressive behaviour by the punished child
- delinquent criminal and anti-social behaviour
- disruption of the parent–child relationship

- inference on the mental health of the child
- the child becomes abusive in a later stage of life
- the child becomes a victim of physical abuse.

Gershoff (2002, p. 554) also analysed other factors related to corporal punishment. She points out that the act of corporal punishment varies, and parents differ in how frequently they use this punishment and how potently they administer it. Also, their own emotional state should be considered, in other words, 'how emotionally aroused they are when they do it' (Gershoff 2002, p. 554). Do they combine corporal punishment with other disciplinary techniques? She insists 'that each of these qualities of corporal punishment can determine which child mediated processes are activated and, in turn, which outcomes may be realized' (Gershoff 2002, p. 554). Her scholarly meta-analysis of the 88 studies reveals that (Gershoff 2002):

> [*P*]arental corporal punishment is associated significantly with a range of child behaviours and experiences, including both short- and long-term, individual- and relationship-level, and direct (physical abuse) and indirect (e.g. delinquency and anti-social behaviour) constructs. Although it can cause immediate compliance, corporal punishment is associated with 10 undesirable constructs. (p. 551)

In 2013, Gershoff (2013, p. 133) published additional newer research and concluded that spanking a child is undesirable. Scientific research and human rights-based research after 2002, when she initially analysed the large corpus of research, brought her to the conclusion that corporal punishment is not only ineffective but also inherently abusive. Spanking is hitting, hitting is violence and violence is immoral. Just as violence between adults should be disapproved, violence from the parent to the child should be condemned. Corporal punishment harms a child, and good and wise parenting will refrain from this abusive form of punishment. Alternative ways to discipline a child with the aim of forming character and building the child must be considered. Moral agents, especially those dealing with the health of the family such as churches, other faith-based organisations, civil society and educational institutions, could help in this regard. They can aid family construction and enrichment when they engage with the development of sound and healthy means of raising children in all spheres of South African life, especially in areas where parents have little access to information, training and guidance.

A central component of fatherhood is the exemplary conduct of the father. If the father lives a decent life, he will inspire children to follow in his footsteps. Decency breeds decency. A good character conveys high moral standards to others, especially when the person is a leader people look up to. For young children, the household is the education centre where values are cultivated, not only by educating children but especially by example. Young children imitate their parents. From a young age already, they can discern how to act and react according to what they see in the conduct of

their parents. If the father is abusive and acts violently against the mother, they tend to accept that abuse and violence are the normal way of life and they try to find their way by being abusive. When the father is engaged in debauchery and an immoral life, the chances are great that the children, and especially the sons, will choose the same way of life. Alcohol abuse triggers alcohol abuse and dishonesty gives rise to dishonesty. When the father is corrupt, the children will usually follow in his footsteps, and when he lies and cheats to find his way in life, the children would see such conduct as a normal means to live a life.

The crisis of family life in South Africa and its destructive consequences for society at large will change for the better when all moral agents encourage and support responsible and decent fatherhood. They should assist parents with moral education and founded research to infuse the concept of responsible fatherhood into our broken society.

■ Wife and mother

The cliché 'good wife and good mother' is commonly used in family ethics but is heavily loaded by ideological metatheories. Robinson (2014, p. 12ff.) indicates in her research about attitudes to motherhood and working mothers in South Africa how ideologies influence ideas about the 'good wife and mother'. Her findings are to the point. We can indeed ask: When is a wife a 'good' 'wife'? Patriarchists and traditionalists will argue, with reference to ancient sources, traditions and cultural customs, that the 'good' wife is the quiet, submissive wife who respects her husband as the head of the household and finds her solace in being subordinate and raising the children. This ideology causes negative attitudes towards the wife who works outside the household. Feminist ideologies reject these ancient traditions and call for the liberation of the wife and mother from such subordinate positions. Extreme feminism even questions the whole idea of functional differentiation in the marital roles of husbands and wives and the whole concept of a separate space called 'motherhood'. Both these positions are driven by ideologies and not by good scholarly research. Ideologies are usually infected by anthropological presuppositions and have an inherent power drive because ideologies tend to control people and force them with spiritual, emotional and structural violence into modes of living and attitudes. Marriage, family and the cliché 'good mother and wife' are not immune in this respect.

Ideologies (paradigms) fade away when they can no longer exert their power over people. The changing patterns of life because of the incremental growth in human knowledge cause shifts from one paradigm to another. We now live in a modern world with rapid changes. Despite large pockets of poverty, humankind is much more prosperous and developed than five

centuries ago. Therefore, it is impossible to resort to the values and customs of ancient times. As said earlier, it will be more beneficial to translate the values of the past into modern codes that can be infused into modern life. The fact is that women liberated themselves from the old patterns. They studied and entered the markets on equal footing with men, and their skills are needed just as much as those of men. Their skills are needed for community development. We should rather ask what the 'good wife and mother' in the South African environment is at this point in time. From my own background as a Christian, I would venture to say that the 'good wife and mother' in South Africa is the woman who enjoys flourishing personhood and, within this sphere, partners on equal footing with her husband and introduces her children into her life space of joy. Whatever the couple decides, plans and does may not inhibit her flourishing personhood and the spiritual and emotional well-being of the children.

Against this background (also ideologically defined!), I would argue that most of the aspects of the discussion in the previous section ('Husband and father') about the role of the husband and the father pertain also to the role of the wife and the mother. This includes the principles of the equality of husband and wife in all aspects of marital and social life and the fact that the roles of mothers and fathers can change according to the changing societal structures and the professionalising of the education, gifts and talents of women. As in the case of the husband, the wife should also refrain from domestic violence by way of physical, verbal or emotional 'violence' and refrain from creating situations that can create violence, such as substance abuse. She also has the responsibility to refrain from corporal punishment and to seek responsible, non-violent ways of imposing measures to discipline children. The responsibility to lead by exemplary conduct is just as much her task as it is the task of the father.

Still, the involvement of mothers in certain stages of the life of a child is important, irrespective of the changing roles. In this regard, radical feminism's drive to abolish the concept of motherhood, as described by Elshtain (2022, p. 200), can be challenged as modern psychological research has proven it unrealistic. The gift of motherhood cannot be replaced by the father or other substitutes, especially in the first three years of the life of the child. The same goes for the time of puberty of the female child and the later stages of child development. The 'natural' must not be destroyed for the sake of ideological preferences. Elshtain (2022, p. 203) refers to Bonhoeffer, who said: 'If we destroy the natural, we destroy freedom. If we misuse or distort nature, we misuse freedom', and applies this viewpoint to motherhood as the 'natural' condition that cannot be abolished by ideological preferences. It is important to reflect on this aspect of the role of the wife and mother because of its definite effect on the whole of family life. Firstly, the mother's experiences before, during and

after childbirth should be dealt with, and secondly, her important role in the first three years of the child's life.

Preparation for childbirth and the first year after childbirth takes the mother, and especially the first-time mother, through many psychological, emotional and physical experiences. Some are positive experiences and others are negative experiences. Views on childbearing differ between communities based on religious views, social pressures, economic situations and perceptions. For example, a mother driven by a secular-materialist persuasion can have negative experiences because of worrying about the financial burden the child will bring. A mother driven by a religious persuasion can regard childbirth as a positive experience because she values the child as a gift from God and does not concern herself with a possible financial burden. The experience can be negative if a woman has a suspicion that the father does not want the child or when the child is fatherless and she does not look forward to the burden of raising the child alone. The experiences of mothers in the developed world may also differ from the experiences of mothers in the developing world, where medical care and social services are lacking. Therefore, studies must take these contextual differences into account when evaluating the experiences of mothers with respect to childbearing. Most such studies have been done in the Western European and Northern American contexts and do not always fit South African conditions.

The Iranian research article of Javadifar et al. (2016, p. 146) on first-time mothers in the Iranian context is perhaps relevant for South Africa. The investigation into the experiences of mothers in this study exposes 'that during the first days and weeks postpartum mother experiences contradictory emotional states which indicate her incapability of perceiving her current situation and circumstances, and her new maternal role' (Javadifar et al. 2016, p. 146). The research found that the mother often feels that she is not prepared enough 'to face the new situation as a mother and feels confused and bewildered, constantly thinking that her status is inconsistent with her former expectations' (Javadifar et al. 2016, p. 146). The new role of the mother, especially on the birth of her first child, 'confronts the mother with new expectations which can, in turn, contribute to this feeling of unpreparedness' (Javadifar et al. 2016, p. 146). She faces her own expectations and the expectations of the other members of the household and easily develops a sense of inadequacy. Furthermore, the research reveals that the 'feeling of inadequacy in controlling affairs especially during the first days and weeks after birth is outstanding among mothers' experiences' (Javadifar et al. 2016, p. 146). A mother often enjoys a normal life before pregnancy and childbirth, but this normal life is suddenly interrupted and she may feel a loss of control over her life and her security. As a result, the mother 'develops a deep sense of inconvenience

and trouble accompanied by a feeling of incapacity which derives from lack of self-assurance' (Javadifar et al. 2016, p. 146). Also, fear and anxiety about her child's health and their future, on the one hand, and concerns about the ineptitude of her emotional state and approaches to the child, on the other hand, contribute to this lack of confidence (Javadifar et al. 2016):

> New moms experience a sense of neediness more than any other time. This feeling of neediness especially a desire to receive social, emotional, and practical supports is another indication of decreased control over the new circumstances. (p. 148)

The importance of good professional assistance to mothers with these difficulties cannot be overemphasised. In South Africa, with so many unwanted teenage pregnancies and children born to single mothers, professional assistance is very important and should be available at all state clinics. If these experiences plague mothers in normal households where there are family members who care, how much more will it affect teenagers and single mothers? Spjeldnæs (2021, p. 406ff.) reported that many of the mothers in the socio-economically marginalised communities in South Africa are forced into lone mothering, absent, replaced and shared mothering, marginalised mothering and disrupted mothering. As said before, abortion on request, even at fourteen years old, is not an answer, and distributing condoms to young people promotes sexual promiscuity and the erroneous notion of free sexual activity. The answer is sexual education, and especially the call to sexual morality. Moral agents involved in education have a huge task not only to promote sexual morality but also to help young single mothers handle their negative experiences and fears after childbirth.

The importance of a mother's presence and care in the first three years of the life of the child has been proven by many studies after comprehensive research. The American psychoanalyst, Komisar (2017), published a widely acclaimed book covering this research and giving her own inputs within the context of the modern American professional mother and the varying roles of parents. In that context where mothers tend to spend four months after birth with their babies and then 'go back to work' with the perception that they have a bond with the child and created a good mother–child relationship, Komisar (2017, pp. 32, 144) explains the negative results of mother absence during the first three years. They only tend to appear at later stages of the child's life. These are feelings of insecurity, depression, anxiety, loneliness, aggression and difficulties socialising. Mother absence also inhibits emotional bonding with the mother. She proposes that thorough and quality mother presence is mandatory for at least the first three years of the life of the child (Komisar 2017, p. 200).

South Africa has a growing number of professional women who are mothers and mothers-to-be. Komisar's advice is relevant to them. However,

most young mothers in this country work in low-income occupations to survive. They work as domestic workers, farmworkers, industrial labourers and in the mining industry. They have no choice but to be absent after the birth of their children. In many cases, they are forced and exploited by employers. According to Komisar's analysis, this predicament of South African mothers must lead to many disturbances in the later stages of the children's lives. The search for a moral compass for South Africa cannot disregard this dangerous and volatile predicament of mothers captured in a systemic quandary. Role players should make hard choices in this domain. Firstly, the father and mother must plan for this essential mother presence in the first three years of the life of their child. Secondly, the mother should prioritise quality presence. Thirdly, employers are duty-bound to arrange the space and time for the mother to fulfil her responsibility, and fourthly, moral agents could raise much more awareness about the decrepit state of motherhood in various spheres of South African life. The government did well with the necessary legislation pertaining to labour in general and maternity leave in particular. However, many employers of low-income employees, especially women who work as domestic workers and farm labourers, do not respect the rights and dignity of working mothers. Moral agents must appeal to them in particular.

Most important when dealing with the perils of lone motherhood in South Africa is the African value expressed in the dictum: 'it takes a village to raise a child'. There should be a village for the lonely, abandoned and marginalised mother. The village can be neighbours, a church, a group of friends or any surrounding and comforting group of people. Western individualism has penetrated the South African psyche to such an extent that the value of African communalism has become obsolete. The involvement of the peers of the marginalised mother can help where there is an absence of professional mental health care in rural areas and vast numbers of mothers in the situation of lone mothering; absent, replaced and shared mothering; marginalised mothering; and disrupted mothering. The restoration and expansion of the African value of communal responsibility have the potential to mitigate the detrimental consequences of lonely motherhood. As a South African community, we all have a duty to form the villages for these mothers and to resist the imported idea of individualism, privatism and materialism. Churches, extended families, neighbours and small care groups of ordinary people can realise and further the value of community that can shape and enrich the lives of lonely mothers and their marginalised children. Active and enriching 'villages' strengthen the moral fibre of society, and we are duty-bound to invest in this age-old natural source of African spirituality.

In the mother–child relationship, conversation is important for many reasons. A study undertaken by Recchia et al. (2014, p. 34) on the value of

mother–child conversation reveals that conversations about conduct across childhood and adolescence have a huge effect on moral formation and character-building. Children who experience a healthy conversational relationship, especially with the mother, find moral agency easier than children with a poor conversational relationship. Mothers are able to convey values about hurting and helping through direct conversation about the feelings and experiences of children. The need for mother involvement in the first three years of life has to do with security and safety, but the later conversational relationship secures moral agency and healthy socialisation. This kind of conversation, these authors propose, cannot be replaced by substitutes like teachers and friends because they do not really penetrate the deeper layers of feelings and experiences – good or bad. This prominent observation is even more a reason for South Africans to opt for social structures that allow space for mothers to relate effectively with their children.

Women are rapidly entering the corporate world and the markets as opportunity, education and skills improve or because of financial burdens. This progression will not change. Ancient views and ideologies that define a role for women as homemakers and mothers alone violate the dignity of women and continue female inferiority and subordination. Many women have shown that they can be professionals and mothers and can manage their roles to the benefit of their families and society. However, a moral society will be an accommodating society, open for women to flourish as happy workers and relating mothers. These mothers will nurture much-needed moral agents for our society.

Another crucial moral development in South Africa centres on the voice of women. Women were very much involved in the process of bringing democracy. They protested the pass laws of the fifties, the security laws of the seventies, military conscription, domestic violence and the recent corruption and state capture. While dealing here with the family and the role of the wife and mother and recognising the professional role of women today, I want to make a case here for giving women and mothers a stronger voice in our dilapidated society for two reasons. Firstly, women had a double dose of oppression and dehumanisation; and secondly, they have an innate 'double dose' of compassion. At the outset of the history of this country, they were the victims of patriarchal structures that inhibited their ability to live a flourishing life with dignity and personhood. This age-old predicament was worsened by the colonial rule that enforced an even more systemic patriarchy. Being black and female was a heavy burden to bear, and the effects thereof still reverberate in modern times, especially in the silencing of the voice of the mother (see Lues 2005, p. 132). Also, women are by nature compassionate and have an eye for suffering, pain and distress. Men tend to look at things, women tend to look at people with feelings. Men talk, women do.

Our society needs the voice of mothers if we want to make progress in our journey to find a moral compass for our society. They can express the agony of suffering under poverty and undignified circumstances because of poor service delivery by uncaring officials. They are there. They can lament the poor treatment in state hospitals because they and their loved ones face it. They can testify about exploitation in the corporate and private sectors because they are the low-paid domestic workers, farm workers and seasonal labourers. They are the heart of the teaching profession at primary schools; they are forced to deal with children from poverty-stricken and broken homes with single mothers who cannot feed them. If there are people who could be effective and convincing whistle-blowers about the human cost of the many ills of our society, it is indeed the females.

They can turn us into a compassionate society. Because of their experiences and knowledge of the predicaments of so many mothers, the public voices of females, especially mothers, can generate a culture of compassion among all ranks of society. They can call on officials to attend to the shortcomings of service delivery that harm households and children. They can reach out to failing hospitals and clinics and bring compassion back to these structures. They can focus the eyes of society on the needs and struggles of confused street and homeless children. They can voice the agony of households suffering under domestic violence and call for help. The voice of women is a potent force in conscientising society and in inculcating compassion in a society that tends to be so hardened by brutality that it resorts to denial and insensitivity.

■ Children and the village

Children, throughout the different stages of childhood, belong to four 'villages'. This reality gives them childhood experiences that influence their character-building and moral formation. These villages are the nuclear family, the circle of friends with which they surround themselves, their peers with which they socialise and, for 'Generation Z' of the 4IR, popular culture. Elshtain (2022, p. 203) explains that popular culture is presented to them 'through all the media they are exposed – television, music film the internet'. All these spheres of life function as villages that could mould a child into an inspired moral agent with vision, a lonely uninspired person without a vision or a social delinquent with an asocial, destructive attitude. Keeping a child away from popular culture completely in contemporary society is not realistic, and engaging in pop culture bashing is not helpful because the modern spread of information reaches all domains – even in remote rural areas. Although many parents and role players fear, often with good reason, that they 'are losing their children to an excessively materialist, frequently violent and hypersexualised culture' (Elshtain 2022, p. 203), isolating them is not helpful.

The more profitable approach would be to introduce and accommodate the child in the in-group sphere of family life to create a village with a we-feeling. In South Africa, this approach meets with many challenges, such as the absence of one or both parents, poverty, neglect and the other challenges discussed in the previous sections. Many children do not have a nuclear family context to engage with. In such cases, the other in-group village(s) should fulfil the role of parents and take over the important role of character-building and moral formation. The child must relate to the nearest group – either the family or the village as the substitute, ideally both – where the child can experience a we-feeling and sense of belonging and safety. Relating to others is the earliest skill a child must be taught. As children grow up, they can learn and experience the value of close relationships. Creating this close circle of warm and comfortable relationships does not need education or professionalism but can be achieved by any nuclear family or by any of the many other villages in the domain of childhood. The group can give the child a hint of where to go when disappointed, stressed, lonely or afraid and can serve as the accommodating haven for the child in despair.

These two basic relational spheres create the best environment for educating children on their responsibilities. In these spheres, they learn obedience to their parents and respect for them, the basic virtues of character formation. They can also construct a model of their own moral agency and enrich the moral fibre of the sphere of relationship. Roehlkepartain (2022, p. 157ff.) reminds us that development occurs through relationships. The author proposes five steps to create a developmental relationship that will fit any sphere of relationship between parents and children – thus also the village in the South African context. The first step is to express care. 'It focusses on the emotional bonds of mutual enjoyment, self-disclosure and trust, reinforcing that one person matters to another'. This step 'as mutual and reciprocal relationship between parent and child' (or the village) nurtures care, compassion and empathy and strengthens the mutuality of the group – mutual trust, mutual listening and mutual encouragement. The second step is to challenge growth where the parents (or the village) and the children hold each other accountable while 'also helping them to learn from mistakes'.

The third step is to provide support. This support 'focuses on instrumental support or the practical ways people help each other to get by, overcome obstacles, and work towards goals' (Roehlkepartain 2022, p. 157ff.). It means monitoring and mentoring, setting boundaries and developing discipline and ways of humane punishment. Discipline and punishment 'focus less on immediate behaviour and more on the person's long-term development'. The support provision is not only top-down, from authority to subject, but also mutual within the sphere of experience of

the parent–child relationship. The mutuality of providing support strengthens the effect of the modelling and monitoring role. The fourth step is power sharing. Roehlkepartain (2022, p. 159) regards this step as 'the least expected and potentially the most transformative of the five elements within the Developmental Relationships Framework'. Every relationship has a power dynamic, which in the traditional views of the authority of the father and the authority of the parents often led to abuse and conflict. Husband and wife should share power according to their time, space and innate gifts and talents, and as parents, they must give space to their children to accept more and more responsibilities and make their own decisions in the process of growing up. Sharing power in the decision-making process empowers all persons in the relationship. 'Children learn to collaborate, participate in decision-making, solve problems together, lead projects or activities and participate in reflecting and learning from those shared experiences' (Roehlkepartain 2022):

> Fifthly, expanding possibilities is a step that focuses on the opening of pathways by: [/]nspiring young people to see new possibilities for themselves, exposing them to new ideas, experiences and places and to introduce them to people who can help them to explore and grow. (p. 160)

Young adults are sometimes scared of venturing into spaces where they can grow, but they are more willing to do so when they are assured by someone they trust that it will be a good thing to enter such spaces. They can, in this way, be confronted with new ideas, different people and different views. Simultaneously, they can enrich the family (village) with what they have experienced because of the expanded possibilities. Being enriched and enriching others in the relationship of family or village then also becomes a further source of confidence, moral agency and stewardship. It gives a sense of meaning, especially to young people in the desperate situations so common among the South African youth.

The broken homes in South Africa and children's poor relationships and loneliness as a result cannot be restored in the short- or even medium-term. There is no quick fix. But what can be done is 'village forming'. We can create close communities, especially stable and happy families. Youth in healthy spaces can provide asylum for broken families and give them refuge in the village so that they can all benefit from the active and compassionate space of mutual enrichment by adults and children on the way to moral formation and character-building. Considering the dark side of our mutual history, which distorted family life and caused so much despair, we owe it to each other to become part of a safe, protective and compassionate village for broken families so that they also can be equipped to find the moral compass we all need.

A very important sphere of influence on children is their interaction with peers, which also serves as an in-group village with a we-feeling.

An individual will adopt the conduct of the group with which they socialise. The village is the friends at school and the friends in the neighbourhood, streets, clubs and places of recreation. Often, the conduct of their peers runs against a young person's deeper convictions and upbringing; it can push against their character and moral formation, but it takes them captive because of the strength of the exposure to the group and its pressures. Group pressure can be positive or negative in moral formation or character-building. The group can construct or destruct. Group forming cannot be avoided. However, it can be managed by the parents and the village. Children should be engaged in groups that can play a positive role in the process of character-building and moral formation. Any moral agent involved in youth work can render a great service in this regard by introducing children to groups that can influence individuals for the better. Churches, youth clubs, sports clubs and many other groupings in civil life can take special interest in involving lonely children, rejected juveniles and street children into healthy and formative groups. Teachers at primary and secondary schools are very important agents in character-building (or twisting) and the moral formation (or corrupting) of groups. A lazy, undisciplined and corrupt teacher can hardly raise a group that can exert a positive influence on individuals. However, the role of teachers in sound group formation has been proven. In the new democracy, millions of children have access to schools and the classroom becomes the village of most children without a functional, two-parent family. In this respect, the teacher is the agent who can fashion and manage the group in such a way that the group can become a healthy space for socialisation and concurrent character-building and moral formation. Are they trained to fulfil this valuable and important task?

How can we guide the youth through the wave of popular culture transmitted to all corners of the world by electronic information technology? Just criticising popular culture is not helpful. Avoidance and the isolation of young people are not realistic. To create alternatives is a huge endeavour that will be difficult to arrange in the current environments of the South African youth, because every domain of information carries with them the basic tenets of popular culture. The most practical and effective way to deal with the influence of popular culture is to empower young people to identify, understand and manage these influences. The first step in the management of this issue is to establish moral sensitivity. At a young age, children can be instructed by the village that violence is wrong and that the dehumanisation of others by way of bullying, hate speech, humiliation and verbal abuse runs against the values of decency and humaneness. They can take ownership of a lifestyle of bodily integrity and sexual morality and respect the dignity and privacy of other sexes, especially the vulnerable female children.

Many children in South Africa are exposed to violence, lawlessness and crime and are losing their sensitivity to life. Furthermore, they witness sexual violence and sexual immorality. They are exposed to adults engaging in substance abuse and drunkenness. They become victims of rape and abuse. For many, the lawless and immoral life is the normal and natural way of life. They have no moral sensitivity and direction. When this insensitivity is further fuelled by electronic media, their character-building and moral formation will be deeply and permanently disturbed. Rather than distancing them from the wave of popular culture, their 'villages' can empower them with moral sensitivity to enable them to distinguish between right and wrong, avoid the wrongs of popular culture and employ the good in their pursuit of flourishing life. They need a moral compass to navigate them through the currents of popular culture.

The traditional concept of the African village is the best answer to our problem of broken families and disenchanted, depressed and lonely children who are alone in their struggle for physical survival, a meaningful life and happiness. Humans have the innate urge to relate. Fulfilling this human urge by forming villages with a strong we-feeling and accommodating and embracing children in the in-group are not only satisfying because of the splendid feeling of belonging and being needed but also awe-inspiring because of the exciting feeling of being deeply involved in character-building and the moral formation of young South Africans. It takes a village to raise a child. Village formation for this purpose will indeed help us in the search for a moral compass.

◼ Being the fertile seedbed

If we can succeed in a goal-orientated and sustainable way with character-building and moral formation within families in South Africa, we will be well on our way to becoming the community of character we all long for. If a farmer aspires to harvest healthy and nourishing food, the seedbed must be well prepared to be fertile and produce in abundance. Healthy and happy families create healthy and happy societies. The opposite is also true, as we can see from the history of South Africa. Healing our families does not require a major investment in expensive professional, educational and social services, but rather the will to compassionately reach out by way of forming and being villages for broken families and lonely children. Loving people is natural, and where people are, love can be provided to the vulnerable. We can all be involved in the healing of our families. The healthy 'village' forms the healthy family, irrespective of the structure of the family. Being monogamous, polygamous, single-parent, absent or replaced-parent families, the healthy 'village' will exert a positive influence on the family because it gives children a we-feeling and assists real or replaced parents

with the tools and values necessary for family development and formation of character.

When families in our country develop into the seedbeds of the nation, so many other moral challenges can be addressed as part of our search for a moral compass. We will be more aware and better equipped to deal with poverty, search for social justice and make progress with nation-building, forgiveness, restoration and rehumanisation. We will be morally vigorous in our struggle against the damaging and socially destructive forces of power abuse and corruption. All we need to reach this point is to focus our national mind on the restoration of our battered and decrepit family life.

■ Résumé

To recapitulate:

- South Africa has a legacy of severe family disruption, which has had an enormous influence on human development, stability and the recurrent dehumanisation of people. The most potent force in this disruption was the migrant labour system, which took fathers from the stability of their rural families to the mining industries. Still today, many families in modern South Africa experience the detrimental effects of the migrant labour system. One of the detrimental effects was the tendency for workers to start new families in mining areas and to neglect their rural families. This resulted in the impoverishment of rural families under single-mother care. The hostel life caused many social problems, such as alcoholism, prostitution and criminality and deformed the social and moral fibre of families in both the rural and industrial areas. Western secularism also contributed to the demise of traditional family life.
- Family is the seedbed of society. When family life in a society becomes disturbed, it affects the whole society, because the fixed family relationships brought about by a stable family in each community are disturbed and the basic social morals of the society are infringed. Broken families cause broken morals in any society.
- 'It takes a village to raise a child'. Modern research uses the concept to refer to the village as any grouping of people who influences the children in the group by the group's overall conduct, values and customs. The group is the 'village' that renders good (or bad) formative services to the children within the group. The group can be a church, a kindergarten, a class at school, a sports club, a neighbourhood, peers, marital family, extended family or any group of people where children are an in-group with a we-feeling.
- Marriage is in essence a heterogenous monogamous equal relationship of husband and wife and is founded in mutual love, compassion, help,

and the promise of permanence, fidelity, trust and commitment. The family flows from this relationship and is a sphere of love and security where parents can bring up their children in a safe environment conducive to character-building, moral formation and a flourishing life.

- A responsible marriage and fatherhood require a husband to view his wife as an equal partner with mutual responsibilities in all aspects of their marital life. Their roles can switch according to space, circumstances and time. He must refrain from unnecessary absenteeism, dominance, violence, and corporal punishment and be an example of a decent life. Through servanthood, he can fulfil his obligation regarding the character-building and moral formation of his family.

- A responsible marriage and motherhood require a wife to accept that most of the aspects related to the role of the husband and the father also pertain to the role of the wife and the mother. These are the notions of the equality of husband and wife in all aspects of marital and social life, the fact that in the modern environment, the roles of mother and father could change according to the changing societal structures and the professionalising of the education, gifts and talents of females. Still, it is important to acknowledge that the involvement of mothers in certain stages of the life of a child is crucial, irrespective of the changing roles. The gift of motherhood cannot be replaced by the father or other substitutes, especially in the first three years of the life of the child and during the puberty of the female child and the later stages of child development. The 'natural' must not be destroyed for the sake of ideological preferences. Firstly, the father and mother must plan for this essential mother presence in the first three years of the life of their child. Secondly, the mother should prioritise quality presence. Thirdly employers are duty-bound to create space and time for the mother to fulfil her responsibility, and fourthly, moral agents could raise much more awareness about the decrepit state of motherhood in various centres of South African life.

- Children are involved in various villages throughout their childhoods. These villages offer experiences that influence their character-building and moral formation. These are the nuclear family, the circle of friends in which they find themselves and their peers with which they socialise. They must be introduced and accommodated in the in-group sphere of family life as the village with a we-feeling. However, many children do not have a nuclear family context to engage with. In this respect, the other in-group village(s) could fulfil the obligations of parents and take over the important role of character-building and moral formation. The child must relate to the nearest group – either the family or the village as the substitute, ideally both – where the child can experience we-feeling and a sense of belonging and safety. And as children grow up, they can

learn and experience the value of close relationships. The group can give the child a hint of where to go when disappointed, stressed, lonely or afraid and can serve as an accommodating, safe haven for the child in despair. Their 'villages' are also capable of empowering them with moral sensitivity so that they can distinguish between right and wrong, to avoid the wrongs of popular culture and to employ the good in their pursuit of flourishing life.

• Healing our families does not require a major investment in professional, educational and social services but the will to compassionately reach out by way of forming and being villages for broken families and lonely children. Loving people is natural, and where people are, love can be unleashed on the vulnerable. We can all be involved in the healing of our families. If families in our country can develop into the seedbeds of the nation, so many other moral challenges can be addressed in our search for a moral compass. We will be more aware and better equipped to deal with poverty, search for social justice and make progress with nation-building, forgiveness, restoration and rehumanisation. We will be more vigorous in our struggle against the damaging and socially destructive forces of power abuse and corruption. All we need to reach this point is to focus our national mind on the restoration of our battered and decrepit family life.

The moral compass we found thus far directs us to another huge barrier on our journey to become a community of character and decency and that is the perennial culture of violence that engulfs our daily lives and scorches the soul of the nation. If we do not smother the heat of violence, our journey to newness will be futile. Let us then reflect on how to extinguish the fires of violence.

Extinguishing the fires of violence

■ Introduction

South Africa has a history of violence. Violence here mostly took the form of skirmishes about land as first the Dutch and then British colonisers seized the land of indigenous peoples. There were also skirmishes between African tribal groups and kingdoms. The discovery of South Africa's rich minerals intensified the British Empire's use of violence in their effort to get hold of the wealth of the country, resulting in the two wars between Britain and the Afrikaner republics. All South Africans suffered because of these wars and their consequences. The 20th century became known for the struggle for liberation, and although a low-intensity struggle with low fatalities in comparison to the European wars, much harm was done, as described in Chapters 1 and 2.

It will not be unfair to say that we live in a culture of violence even though the political reasons for violence have faded away (see Hoosen et al. 2022, pp. 1–3). South Africa is a modern democracy and a constitutional state in the full sense of the word. We have a recent history of six free and fair elections and limitations put on the abuse of power. Still, violence often flares up during protest marches. People seem to think that violence is the best way to solve a social problem. In July 2021, violent protests against

former president Jacob Zuma's imprisonment took more than 300 lives and cost billions in damages because of looting, arson and property damage. Recently, other protests erupted into violence because the fuel for violence in the hearts and minds of many citizens is quick to ignite and easy to see. Added to this is the extreme violence accompanying criminal activity, the high rate of murder, assault and rape and the wide presence of domestic violence, especially violence against women and children. Children who are exposed to constant violence are prone to developing serious psychologic problems and can become desensitised to violence and may themselves resort to violence when confronted with a problem.

We have to resensitise our desensitised community to combat the ill effects of violence for both the perpetrator and the victim. Violent behaviour degrades the perpetrator so that such an individual becomes a person with no self-esteem, stressful relationships, fear, feelings of guilt, loneliness and, worst of all, an agent of hatred and aggression who inflicts pain – a despicable person with no moral fibre. The perpetrators' violence comes back to them in the form of rejection and abhorrence by others. The victims are dehumanised, suffer high levels of post-traumatic stress, are injured physically and spiritually and usually lose their sense of dignity and ability to enjoy life. A society with high levels of violence cannot become a healthy society with moral strength and flourishing personhood.

Dealing with the perennial culture of violence is a long-term endeavour that will rely heavily on scholarly research in many fields in the humanities and health sciences. Such studies have been conducted, and the increasing interest of South African scientists is a good sign and bodes well for the future. But the inclination to violence is also a fundamental moral question because violence is inherently evil. In the past, moral theorists have made a case for justifiable violence, and over the years, the boundaries between justifiable violence and destructive violence have faded because of opposing ideological presuppositions. Justifiable for the perpetrator is seldom justifiable for the victim. The violence of the Holocaust is despicable, but was the violence of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki any better? The argument of justifiable violence tends to soften a community's stance against violence. Furthermore, a person's violent actions are often ascribed to, even excused by, the person's difficult past or present circumstances. Violence is then perceived as a negative but unavoidable outcome, and the perpetrator should not be blamed. Such a qualified approach to the moral question about violence often leads to an ambiguous and confusing stance about violent actions. Perpetrators then argue: 'We had to use violence otherwise they would not listen'; 'We had to use violence to earn their respect'; 'We had to use violence to get the necessary publicity for our course'; and 'We used violence to stamp down our better pattern of reasoning and conduct'. At the micro level of small

circles of relationships, some parents claim: 'We use violence against children to establish respect' (in such cases, fear is simply mistaken as respect). Teachers can excuse their use of violence by arguing that violence is the only language some children will understand. Violent conduct and its justification are not uncommon in our highly competitive sports environment. The boundary between playing physically and intimidating the opponent, on the one hand, and using violence to injure an opponent, on the other hand, is sometimes very vague and relies on the eye of the beholder. We need a strong moral stance. The use of violence, except for self-defence, is evil and destructive and has no positive outcome.

With this unequivocal denunciation of violence, I would argue that moral agents in South Africa could turn around the ongoing culture of violence by actively preventing the resurgence of a spiral of violence, revisiting the moral justification of liberating violence, rejecting the notion that violence can be a legitimate way of problem-solving, abstaining from violent language, controlling gun ownership, refraining from implicit fuelling of violence and promoting and facilitating dialogue as the way to defuse conflict.

■ Preventing a spiral of violence

A publication by Camara (1971) brought the idea of spiralling violence to the attention of moral theorists. The background and driving force behind his theory was the limited freedom and political abuses of the fascist regimes in Latin America at that time. In his view, the beginning of the spiral is the systemic violence of these regimes. The regime was oppressive by firstly instituting societal structures that trampled on liberty and basic human rights. The regime enforced its will with state violence, such as police brutality, killing of opponents by security services and the use of the military against concerned citizens. The spiral makes its first turn when the people revolt with forms of violence against the state, such as violent protests, sabotage and the bombing of symbols associated with the regime. The regime then reacts with more and more violence, which is, in turn, answered by more and more violence from the citizens. The spiral develops and sucks the whole population into a civil war and a lawless society. One of the groups may be vindicated, but the damages usually take a long time to repair, and it takes even longer for the people on both sides to regain their humanity.

Such a spiral of violence has controlled life in South Africa for a long time, especially from the seventies until the dawn of the new democracy in 1994. The apartheid system and the struggle against it pushed the South African community into such a spiral of violence that it led to a racial civil war between the law enforcement arms of the state and the military on the

one hand and citizens in townships on the other. Great harm was done to both sides – to infrastructure, human life and, especially, relationships and trust. People in power and their subjects can easily fall into a spiral of violence. The spiral does not only pertain to the macro-level of politics and governance; all domains of authority can initiate the spiral, and it can take many forms: physical violence, emotional violence, verbal violence, bullying, unfair treatment, power abuse and humiliation. It can erupt in big corporations and small businesses, in big institutions and small interest groups, in big schools and in one class, in a church community or in a single congregation, and in a labour union or in a small interest group within the corps of labourers. It can erupt in an extended family or in a household.

We can learn a lot from our recent history of spiralling violence in South Africa and our knowledge of how easily it can erupt. Well-planned protests based on good intentions for or against a cause or for better labour conditions can erupt into violence, counteraction and responding action in a flash, with damaging and even devastating consequences. Many protests in South Africa follow the route of spiralling violence. In their research about violent protests in South Africa with reference to other exponents in social and health sciences, Sikweyiy and Sebenzila (2017, p. 1) found that in comparison with protests in other countries, protests in South Africa are characterised by extreme violence. They lay this phenomenon at the door of socio-economic inequalities and poor conditions because of the government's inadequate service delivery. Also, South African protests may be violent 'because they are gendered as they often appear male-dominated regarding participation and leadership' (Sikweyiy & Sebenzila 2017, p. 2). They found that in media representation, 'women are either almost absent, or marginally represented in mass protests'. Where females give the impression that they visibly participate in public protests, 'they tend to be represented as less vocal and radical in their demonstrations and appear to attract much less attention from the media than men'. The absence of females increases the chances that a male-dominated protest would resort to violence.

In addition to the findings of this research, one can add that males are more prone to violence than females and that criminal elements find protests attractive as they misuse them for crime and lawlessness. When the police try to apprehend criminals, they often find it difficult to differentiate between protestors and criminals and often use force against protestors whom they perceive as criminals. During violent protests, police also fall victim to violence and can act with excessive force because of anger or fear. Confusion can also perpetuate violence between police and protestors. A clear example of how easily police violence can flare up when they lose control of a protest was the Marikana incident on 16 August 2012, where the police shot 34 protestors. According to the report of the Commission of Inquiry, some SAPS

officers became confused about orders and started shooting (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2015, p. 144).

Systemic violence is usually associated with exposed violence within social structures. Torres, D'Alessio and Stolzenberg (2021, p. 144) use the concept in this sense. Exposed systemic violence, such as the discriminatory laws during apartheid, was easy to detect and address. But this definition does not cover the seemingly insignificant forms of systemic violence that are not obvious but just as dangerous in the long run. In some cases, liberating violence removes the rulers but not the rules, and the system remains prone to ongoing injustice. Let us call it disguised systemic violence, because it refers to the unnoticed violence that can penetrate systems in many obscured and masquerading forms, and it is not always discernible or easy to detect. Disguised systemic violence attacks patterns of authority and contaminates relationships between leaders and subjects and is not unambiguously violent. However, it is just as toxic as exposed systemic violence.

Preventing the development of a spiral of violence should start at the beginning, which is to root out the exposed and unambiguous forms of systemic violence in the macro, meso and micro domains of the administration of authority. It is usually the misuse of authority that embeds systemic violence in the form of unfair rules and regulations, treatment, expectations, remunerations, benefits and other obnoxious conduct by the commanding person(s). It is important that people in authority nurture a culture of listening, as well as listening to the right people at the right time. In their assessment of the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the shooting by the police at Marikana, Power and Gwanyanya (2017, pp. 61–69) indicate that the executives of the relevant mines did not really listen to the complaints of the workers. Their measures to answer the grievances fell short and were perceived as mere window-dressing to create the impression that they were doing something. Hearing people is not always the same as listening to people, and hearing without listening and then reacting with 'cheap' answers and inadequate actions is disrespectful and dishonest and raises more rage.

The most telling example of distorted and dishonest attempts at 'listening' was the attempts of the apartheid government (1948–1994) to give a moral foundation to their policy of separate development. Over and over, they pacified the white electorate by saying that they were listening to leaders of African communities and that these people wished for a dispensation where they could have self-rule in their traditional areas and where they could flourish with their own culture, language and tribal customs. Some of these 'leaders' were appointed as 'prime ministers' in Western style. The problem was not listening, as such, but it was listening

to the wrong people or to the people whom they knew beforehand would say what they wanted to hear and ignoring the critical voices of struggle leaders. They would claim to have listened and would then clothe their efforts in the garment of listening and acting on behalf of the African people who purportedly longed for their separate ethnic states. They claimed the 'moral high ground' and the right to decide for the vast majority of South Africans in a partisan way. The statement 'we listen to them and we can therefore decide what will be their best interest on their behalf' became a prominent dictum to gain support for apartheid.

The two foundational potent forces of spiralling violence were embedded in apartheid right from its inception, and spiralling violence was unavoidable. These were unfairness in the execution of white authority and the false efforts to listen. Where one-sided, unfair and abusive patterns of authority are laid down and the process of hearing does not entail listening to the right people about the real issues, the dry veld lies ready for the smallest spark to ignite an uncontrollable fire of violence. That is exactly what happened in South Africa. The phenomenon of a spiral of violence is not only a concerning trend in political governance but can also penetrate other domains of authority. Systemic violence can be infused into all kinds of relationships where there is authority. It can contaminate power relationships in labour unions, churches, educational institutions, schools, civil societies and corporations – everywhere where there is some form of authority at the helm. Underlying the poor execution of authority is usually the inability or unwillingness to explain to subjects why the rules are being implemented and why they are needed. Why is it important for the subject to accept and respect the authority? When authority is enforced without explaining the need for certain rules and subjects are supposed to follow those rules on the foundation of blind trust in the leaders and the system, they tend to experience systemic violence and become prone to resistance, which can spill over into violence. Furthermore, when the execution of authority is not transparent, suspicion tends to creep in and all kinds of questions, valid or invalid, arise; and when corruption, nepotism or maladministration are sensed, violence can erupt. Systemic violence could seep into a system in such a disguised way that agents are not aware of its presence in the system and they fail to treat it as a potential and dangerous threat to relationships. Systemic violence can be diffused by listening with real intent, reassessing the structure of authority – including codes of conduct, the rules and regulations, the obligations of people in authority and the subjects – and mutual involvement and decision-making. This can create healthy spaces in relationships to manage responsible authority as well as satisfactory and peaceful submission.

When exposed or disguised systemic violence is diffused, the necessity of violent counteraction should be assessed. Counteraction entails strikes

with a very high possibility of violence – at least in South Africa – as well as civil disobedience and other forms of opposition against systemic violence. Just as the persons in authority must listen honestly to the complaints and proposals of the subjects, the subjects could start by speaking honestly about what they perceive to be latent systemic violence. They must also speak with the right people at the right time. Subjects tend to invite outside forces to assist them. Many of these outsiders have ulterior motives and are eager to use labour complaints to stir up violence and then use the unrest to commit crime and enrich themselves by driving lawlessness.

Furthermore, using strikes, civil disobedience and tacit forms of resistance to create a platform to speak or to form a force with grievances who can threaten and demand is not useful in dismantling systemic violence when it is still in an early stage. The problem must be addressed as early as possible by honest dialogue and mutual commitment to solving the problem. Systemic violence has the potential to bring immense disruption in relationships which can be hard to repair because of persistent distrust, enmity and anger. The social and human cost is high for many, but so much more for the poor, who are always the victims of social distress. The July 2021 civil unrest in South Africa is a good example of what systemic violence, unwillingness to listen and rampaging criminality could lead to. All the negative aspects related to systemic violence were present – corrupt politicians, ambitious youth leaders, anarchists, criminals, looters and killers who justified their deplorable actions with the 'noble' deed of protesting the imprisonment of the former president, Jacob Zuma. Stopping systemic violence requires a mutual commitment by authority and subjects to eradicate its earliest appearance by listening and speaking in an honest dialogue.

■ Revisiting the morality of liberating violence

The idea of a just war has always been a hot topic in theological ethics. Arguments about the morality of warfare and the involvement of Christians varied from justification of war under certain circumstances to total pacifism. Developments in the idea of just war in the Christian tradition were steered by the ethics of Augustine. Langan (1984) reminds us that the Augustinian moral theory of war had eight elements, namely:

> [A] punitive conception of war, assessment of the evil of war in terms of the evil of attitudes and desires, a search for authorization for the use of violence, a dualistic epistemology which gives priority to spiritual goods, interpretation of evangelical norms in terms of inner attitudes, passive attitude to authority and social change, use of biblical texts to legitimate participation in war, and an analogical conception of peace. (p. 19)

In his recent thorough and acclaimed study of the ethics of Augustine, Van Wyk (2018, p. 181) indicates that Augustine's introduction of the just-war theory [*bellum iustum*] must be evaluated within the context of his preference for justice and his view of the state as the champion of order and justice. Furthermore, Augustine preferred the control of the Roman leadership over and against the Germanic tribes who rampaged Roman territories from time to time and threatened peace. Also, his sense of responsibility for the social order and the promotion of peace all influenced his pattern of reasoning about just war. The purpose of war should be peace. Van Wyk (2018, p. 182) describes Augustine's reasoning within the latter's philosophical and social milieu, as well as his biblical interpretation, and then explains that Augustine proposed three conditions for a just war, namely, that such a war should be conducted by a legitimate government [*legitima auctoris*], must have legitimate cause [*Iustia causa*] and must be executed with the right motive [*recta intentio*]. Augustine thus approved of the moral right to engage in war [*ius ad bello*], but this must be driven by justice in warfare [*ius in bello*].

The Christian tradition held on to Augustine's theory, as is evident in the theology of Aquinas, Luther and Calvin. Certain alterations have been made in modern times, but on the same foundational presuppositions. The idea of complete pacifism emerged, especially in the anabaptist traditions after the Reformation and again because of the threats of nuclear weapons after WWII. Weapons of mass destruction are a real threat to the idea of a just war. Richard Niebuhr, Yoder, Hauerwas and, to a large extent, Pope John Paul raised theological arguments against all forms of violence as contradictory to the ethics of Jesus, who accentuates love, compassion and peace (see Cahill 1992, pp. 262–263).

The Second World War and its aftermath of the arms race during the Cold War, terrorists and criminals' easy access to modern destructive weapons and the rapid spread of conflict because of global treatises and globalisation all have a bearing on the just war theory in the Christian tradition. Pacifism became more popular with its claim that it is better to live in dire circumstances than to be destroyed. Anti-arms race protestors in Europe during the Cold War used the slogan: 'Rather red than dead'. They explained that it would be better to live under Soviet communism than to be exterminated by a nuclear war. It is not clear who coined the phrase. Also, the political theologies that protested against colonialism and dictatorships added a new dimension by arguing that liberating violence is justified violence because it is defensive and strives for peace and hope for oppressed people (Fierro 1977, pp. 201–207). Such violence is justified with arguments that it can prevent greater violence and even full-scale war by overturning oppressive regimes.

Liberating violence was romanticised by the struggle in South Africa. Unfortunately, it created a culture of violence against everything perceived as systemic violence. Liberating violence against the apartheid dispensation was understandable because most of the population did not have franchise in the areas where they resided. They could not vote, form political parties or effective labour unions, take part in the planning of their futures, own property outside the homelands designed by the white government, or enjoy freedom of movement. They could not form effective political opposition. Because of stringent security legislation as the struggle intensified, they had no voice as the press was gagged and organisations that voiced people's concerns about the injustice of apartheid were banned. With the demise of the one-dimensional apartheid system in 1994 and the emergence of liberal democracy with a Bill of Rights and a Constitutional Court that can protect citizens against power abuse, the systemic violence ended and all South Africans received open access to all forms of political protest – freedom of speech, freedom of movement, a free press, academic freedom and the means to oppose. If new forms of systemic violence emerge, liberal democracy provides all the means of peaceful protest and jurisprudence. The new liberal democracy diminishes the need for liberating violence.

Mainly because of the moral justification of liberating violence and its success in bringing changes in South Africa, many citizens, especially members of labour unions, still perceive the use of violence to force change as a rightful means of protests and opposition. From January 2013 to December 2017, 4,391 incidents of protests and collective violence were reported (Lancaster 2018, p. 34). The idea of liberating violence is often the reason why so many protest marches spill over into violence and anarchy. Negotiators in labour disputes sometimes stir violence to convince employers that the protestors are indeed a factor to be taken seriously. They will also threaten more violence if their demands are not met. The costly labour strike at Eskom, the South African national electricity generating and supply enterprise, in July 2022 is a good example of such reasoning. The strike was illegal and Eskom was facing enormous financial difficulties, but with arson, violence against the workers who did not strike and sabotaging of infrastructure and machinery, the strikers got what they wanted, and with threats of even more violence, they avoided legal action. Furthermore, they had no regard for the millions of people who suffered under constant power cuts and the predicaments of hospitals, businesses, transport services and the economy of the country.

The justification of liberating violence in South Africa today should be revisited, and the moral agents of the past who made a case for the legitimacy of using violence for the good cause of liberating the oppressed

can help in this process. Violence for self-defence can be justified, but violence to serve peace, as Augustine argues, raises many questions. Whose peace? Russia invaded Ukraine to 'deliver peace' to the Ukrainian population by devastating means. Who decided that Ukraine needs this 'peace'? What are the limits and conditions of the offered peace? The winner usually decides when the peace has been reached, what the conditions are and who should pay the cost. The peace of the winner is not the peace of the victim. The same arguments can be raised regarding liberating violence in a liberal democratic setting. All forms of systemic violence, disputes, political ideals and cultural concerns can be addressed using the system and the legal protection of rights. Violence can no longer be justified in South Africa for liberation or to state a case, prove a point or as a show of force. All these preoccupations can be served by peaceful means in our new democracy. If we want to find a higher level of morality, we must define violence for what it is, and that is pure evil.

■ Rejecting violence as a means for problem-solving

Violence as a means to solve a problem plagues humanity irrespective of social, cultural and moral developments. The duels so prominent in movies set in the past and the associated heroism linked to the winner of the duel are still with us, just in a more discreet form. Beating someone to silence them is still prevalent in domestic violence, skirmishes between individuals and school bullying. Gangsters offer protection to small businesses at a price, and if they fail to pay, they are assaulted and their property damaged. Gangs answer threats or opposition with violence. These gangs form separate security or protection groups that solve problems with violence. They form a force parallel to the protection laws of the state but with no legal framework. Violence is their law. These forms of violence occur especially in countries with a violent past where the sensitivity to violence is still underdeveloped or where violence has a religious or ideological foundation. In South Africa, violence as a means of problem-solving is still widespread. Violence as a means to solve a problem is especially a behavioural model among youths who have been exposed to violence.

The well-known saying of Martin Luther King Jnr in a sermon in 1967 gives much food for thought when one contemplates the use of problem-solving violence. He said (King 1967):

> Through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that. (n.p.)

His argument is to the point, because violence cannot solve problems but only shifts the problem to another arena. Violence cannot lead to character-building and moral formation. The moral compass we need must direct us away from the mindset of justifying violence when it appears to be an answer to a certain problem.

Violence is something that people learn and can 'unlearn'. People can be educated to be non-violent. An official bulletin of the United States (US) Department of Justice, written by Shure (1999), reports that her research indicates that children who resort to violence as the means to solve a problem can effectively be turned around by using models to develop their thinking skills to introduce them to consequential thinking and 'alternative solution thinking'. Consequential thinking leads them to think about the consequences of the violence they consider before they proceed with the act of violence. 'Alternative solution thinking' equips them to consider solutions other than using violence. This skills development can be internalised by a person so that it becomes the first response to a challenging situation.

The research done by LeBlanc et al. (2011, p. 353) suggests that family communication is another important ingredient in the development of problem-solving skills. They found that family communication 'might serve a protective function for adolescents, thereby decreasing psychological distress in the face of school and neighbourhood violence exposure'. Considering the reality of street violence during protests, domestic violence and mere criminal violence in South Africa, the exposure of children to violence is alarmingly high, and they learn from experience that violence can be a solution. In this respect, the family communication model proposed by these researchers is a valuable and potent tool to unlearn violence as problem-solving behaviour. The positive role of the village in character-building and moral formation, discussed in Chapter 6, adds additional value to family communication as a skill to prevent resorting to problem-solving violence. The village idea expands the communication to all the groups to which the person prone to violence belongs. 'Village communication', which includes the development of 'alternative solution thinking' and 'consequential thinking', offers a mighty alternative to the myth that violence solves problems.

Village communication can be inspired by a national debate about violence in general and its different manifestations. The history of violence in South Africa includes not only wars about land, wars between races and inter-racial wars but also institutional violence, such as corporal punishment, capital punishment and other forms of institutional violence. Our recent history with a civil war on the streets of cities and villages and the war on the borders of our country brought violence into our homes. Young men

sacrificed years of their lives because of conscription and others joined the liberation struggle, leaving families behind. The whole society was a militarised society, with safety, security and defence high on the agenda of the state and civil disobedience, disruption and necklace murders seen used to discipline collaborators in open spaces. Over the long period of colonialism, South Africans seem to have developed a genetic inclination to violence. This inclination may explain the continuation of violence after liberation and democratisation. This era of institutional violence and racial strife ended in 1994, but political killings between rival factions in the ANC continued and violent crimes increased over the years. We mentioned the violence associated with protests. The whole population was exposed to violence, and most citizens became desensitised.

Addressing the history of violence and the seemingly genetic inclination to violence will take nothing less than a broad national dialogue about the evil of violence. Such a dialogue can be initiated by the government in close cooperation with civil society and the corporate sector. In the past, there have been such dialogues about racism with good effect, and the same can be achieved with violence. Such an initiative can help the village develop the consequential thinking and alternative solution thinking of the youth. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has initiated many of these kinds of national dialogues with good results. South Africans cannot ignore the continuous (and expanding) culture of all forms of violence, expose the youth to it and then expect a decent future.

■ Abstaining from violent language

Language can incite violence. The history of the world is full of examples of fiery orators who incited angry groups to act violently against a common enemy. Today, this kind of violent talk is often more polished and subtle. It is not just fiery speakers who incite violence among mobs ready to act but also leaders in the domain of politics. They sow the seeds of violence in well-planned smooth talk by constructing an enemy they claim threatens society and should be torn down. Both loud orators and polished speakers with violent language are at work in our community. Violent language was part and parcel of the history of violence in South Africa and rose to a dangerous level in the decades before democratisation. Van der Merwe (2013b) comments in his study about violence as a form of communication:

> South Africa's history of violence has developed a repertoire of communication that threatens to trump other forms of non-violent communication when it comes to addressing serious problems of crime and revolting living conditions. Excessive reliance on these old repertoires of violent communication has

created a form of cultural violence that legitimates and celebrates violent communication and violent identities at the expense of exploring new forms of communication. (p. 65)

Although the violent language during the time of apartheid and the struggle has subsided because of the new dispensation, it is still present in both forms, and it flames up from time to time. When murder suspects, especially those suspected of committing a crime that has the ring of racism, appear in court, crowds gather outside courthouses. Inciting orators wave symbols of gallows and symbols of capital punishment and mob revenge, and in some of these cases, the suspects are ultimately found innocent and acquitted. The language of violence precedes the outcome of such cases, and the principle of not guilty until proven guilty is obliterated. Also, the uncalled-for language in these cases has the real potential to incite violence elsewhere. It seems that certain political leaders use these events unashamedly to fuel hatred and enmity all over the country through news broadcasts on television. Language of violence is also common at labour protests and is particularly directed at the 'white monopoly capital', a slogan developed by the Zuma regime to hide his collaboration with the agents of state capture. In a country still prone to political and racially motivated violence, these actions are very dangerous.

Various laws in South Africa prohibit the incitement of violence that can stir up genocide. According to Van der Merwe (2013a, p. 1), one example is the *Riotous Assemblies Act 17 of 1956*. Incitement to violence is also a crime under the *Implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Act 27 of 2002*' (the ICC Act) as well as 'a crime under customary international law pursuant to section 232 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* [*Act 108 of 1996*]'. Still, incitement to violence in South Africa seldom reaches the courts. Vhumbunu (2021) wrote in the *Accord* of 10 December 2021, just a few months after the nine-day riots, that while at that stage:

> [*A*]ssessments to determine the extent of the damage that occurred during the nine days of protest and unrest are ongoing, the effects have been tremendous in both scale and intensity. (p. 2)

It was indeed tremendous in loss of life and monetary cost. He added (Vhumbunu 2021):

> The protests resulted in the loss of properties, business stock, employment, livelihoods, and essential services, such as medical and pharmaceutical supplies (in hospitals and clinics), farming, financial services facilities, telecommunication facilities, food distribution centres, and seaports. (p. 2)

All this took place at a time when the country was under severe restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic; these restrictions were ignored, and the negative consequences of that cannot be calculated. Although the

riots were stopped, it is still not clear at the time of the writing of this book how many of the instigators, arsonists or looters were apprehended, prosecuted and convicted. It seems to be only a few.

Protests over poor service delivery in most municipalities often develop into violence because of the incitement of activists. They easily succeed in fuelling violence against the police and innocent citizens. Isolated incidents of racism at schools are frequently abused by radicals to incite racial hate speech and violence and the stereotyping of people as racist. Paret's (2015, pp. 120–121) research on the increasing violent protests in South Africa draws on reports and opinions in newspapers and other media and finds that 'it shows that violence is both ambiguous and deeply entangled with democracy'. For some sectors, violent practices are still used as 'a tool of liberation, promoting democracy by empowering marginalised groups'. But others argue that even democracy may become a tool of domination when it undermines dissent 'by constituting as violent those persons and actions that deviate from formal institutional channels'. He proposes a more nuanced approach in considering the morality of using violence as a tool in protests. This position can be questioned. In the struggle against the apartheid state, liberation groups resorted to violence from the grassroots level up, with the aim of making the country ungovernable. They had no other means. Why should this liberation thinking still drive protests in the new democratic dispensation? It is true that the new dispensation has not improved the lives of the masses, but does the problem lie with the Constitution or rather with bad political management? Why endeavour to use violence to make the country or parts thereof ungovernable when the channels to get rid of incompetent mayors and counsellors and corrupt officials are available in the form of grievance procedures and the ballot box? We cannot continue with liberation thinking when evaluating the use of violence. We must move the argument forward to democratic thinking about change. The continuation of liberation thinking has caused a strange resistance and voting pattern to develop in parts of the country where people suffer because of poor service delivery by elected leaders. The strange phenomenon in South Africa is that people will protest violently against the failures of city councillors and will attempt to make the region ungovernable by blocking freeways, roads and other amenities, but when it is election time they will vote for the same party and the same candidates again because their choices are still driven by liberation ideology and not the deficiencies in governance. Democratic thinking will imply that people use their democratic right of choice to replace a poor and corrupt government in a non-violent way. Because of this persistent liberation thinking of violence, it often happens in times of elections that the same incompetent candidates use old liberation rhetoric and racial stereotyping – and even threats of a new violent struggle – if the people vote for change.

Liberation thinking is kept alive by revolutionary factions in the ANC. But the most prominent political grouping guilty of constant innuendos and often blatant calls for violence is the leaders of the EFF under the leadership of the 'Commander-in-Chief', Mr Julius Malema. The renowned investigative journalist, Ferial Haffajee, wrote a column in the *Daily Maverick* of 13 September 2020 where she described the many instances where the EFF incited violence by unrestricted violent language on many public platforms, even at schools. The concept of 'fighters' in their name and the title 'Commander-in-Chief' for the leader, as well as their unruly behaviour in Parliament and other open public spaces, have the ring of militancy. Speaking of nuances in the consideration of violent language in South Africa takes us back to the pre-democratic liberation pattern of reasoning. This argument is no longer plausible.

In the free society in which we live with all the means necessary for criticism, opposition, academic freedom, press freedom and freedom of speech, there can be no nuanced argument to justify some forms of violent language, such as liberation thinking. The laws against incitement to violence must be applied with no excuses, justification or mitigating circumstances. Instigators of violence must be brought to book and leadership in South Africa is far too lenient on agents flourishing on extremism and radicalism in a society that is still prone to violence, such as the EFF and their collaborators in labour unions and radical civil societies. South Africans should show their utter disgust with these irresponsible instigators of violence under the holy guises of noble causes. To get a firm grip on the moral compass that could lead us out of the culture of violence, we must unite to protect and defend our Constitution, which provides ample non-violent means to replace bad and incompetent leadership. The young democracy must develop an ethos of true democratic thinking and acting.

■ Controlling gun ownership

When speaking about violence, gun ownership and gun control cannot be ignored. The world has been shocked by many mass shootings over the past two decades, some by terrorists with extreme ideological and religious reasons, for example, the shootings in New Zealand, Norway, the UK, France and Germany. Mass shootings in the US are exceptionally high, and a vigorous debate about gun control is the order of the day. South Africa has become free from mass shootings for political or ideological reasons and is not targeted by global terror groups. But hate crimes and all other forms of criminality reveal a high incidence of shootings, mostly with firearms that are not legally owned and appropriately registered. The statistics of violence involving firearms are alarmingly high. Also, in a country prone to violence with latent remnants of a long history of structural violence and

liberating violence, easy access to illegal firearms is a matter of concern, and a vigorous debate about gun control such as the one in the US is much needed in this country.
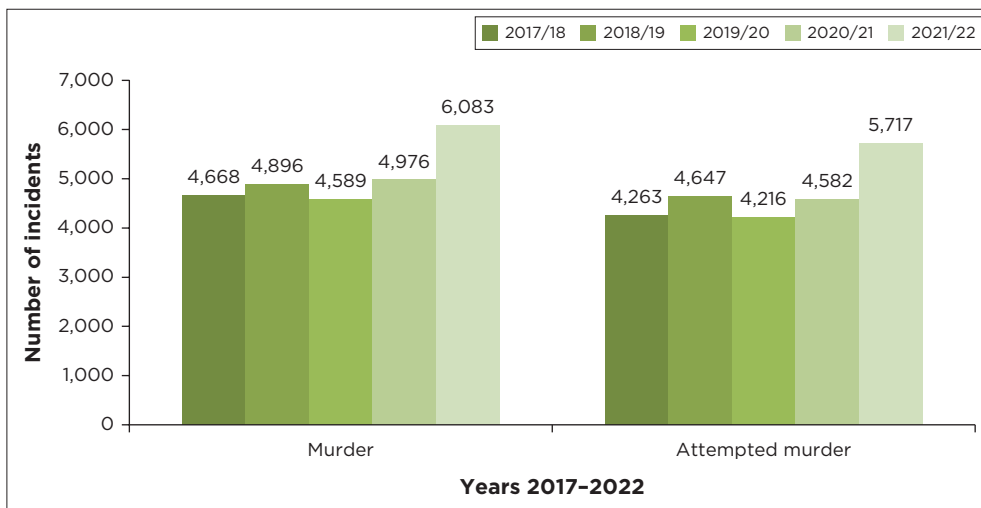
South Africa is grappling with a surge in gun violence irrespective of stricter gun control and many periods of amnesty for people to hand in legally owned guns as well as guns that were illegally obtained. The 15 June 2022 briefing of the civil society Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) (2022a, p. 1) indicates that violent crime continues to rise. The organisation expects that gun sales can increase because of this disturbing trend and the 'weak' criminal justice system. Despite proposed amendments to tighten gun control, the firearms industry forcefully markets guns as effective for self-defence. With an increase in gun sales will come an increase in the culture of violence. Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 show the graphs presented by the organisation to portray recent crime statistics where violence with the use of firearms occurred.

Furthermore, GFSA (2022b, pp. 1–3) reports on ongoing thorough quantitative research using the testimonies of convicted perpetrators. Ninety-five percent (95% of perpetrators use firearms that are easy to conceal when robbing or threatening victims. Most deaths and injuries of victims occur during the initial phases of the criminal activity, and virtually
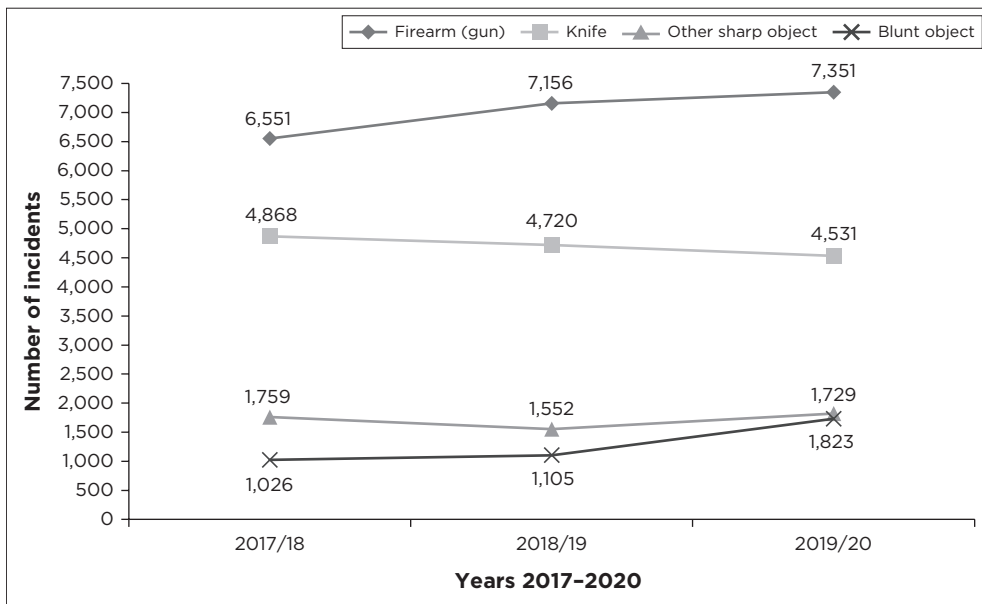
Source: Gun Free South Africa (2022a, p. 1).
Key: SAPS, South African Police Service.

FIGURE 7.1: SAPS annual crime statistics – most common weapon (object) used to commit murder and attempted murder in the period 01 January–31 March from 2017–2020.

Key: SAPS, South African Police Service.
FIGURE 7.2: SAPS annual crime statistics – murder and attempted murder in the period 01 January–31 March from 2017–2022.

all the questioned perpetrators reported that they would rather shoot the victim than risk the possibility of being injured or apprehended (GFSA 2022a, p. 1). This finding is interesting and may perhaps explain why victims are sometimes shot for a minor theft, such as a mobile phone or something of little value. The research also interpreted research done by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), UCT and the Medical Council. These entities analysed 68,801 robberies reported to the police between 2003 and 2014 where violence was used. The victims who were shot were mostly elderly men defending themselves against the violent attacks. They discovered several noticeable facts and risk factors. Although robbery-related murder is relatively rare, the risk is the highest in business and house robberies in the early hours of a weekday, where a firearm is present, where the firearm of the victim is stolen, and mostly where the victims are old, white and male; however, there are other people who are also at 'above normal' risk (GFSA 2022a, p. 3). The study notes certain limitations, the most important of these being the lack of research about the use of guns in transit cash robberies where modern high-calibre military-grade weapons and explosives are used.

The arms industry is a large global enterprise, and with the fast developments in technology, very sophisticated weapons are manufactured. The Russian invasion of the Ukraine and the destruction caused by modern weaponry show how devastating modern arms are. Recent mass shootings in the US, such as the incident at Uvalde, display how modern automatic firearms can kill or injure many people in a very short time. In a briefing

paper on behalf of and for the Australian Government, Holtron and Pavesi (2018) report on the global small arms trade and the different levels of transparency in countries manufacturing and trading in small arms. Although levels of transparency are very high in some countries, it is not satisfactory in others. Lack of transparency and control enable illegal trade in small firearms. Add to this the trade of modern military weapons on the black market, easy access to these weapons from places in turmoil and war and covert supplies of arms to revolutionary groups for political reasons, and access to illegal arms is easy. The strict gun control policies in South Africa can be circumvented without many difficulties. Most violent crimes are committed with stolen or illegal small firearms that can easily be concealed.

Gun Free South Africa (2022b, p. 1), 'a South African NGO committed to reducing gun violence through public policy advocacy, education, awareness and community mobilisation', aims to promote very strict gun control and has made fair strides in this direction. Criticism of their campaign for very strict gun control usually comes from farmers, the hunting industry and the arms traders who emphasise the use of arms for sport, hunting, self-defence and, in the cases of farmers, for protection against dangerous animals. Some of these points of criticism are valid, especially in the case of farmers, sport and hunting. But these cases are more dependent on rifles and not concealable small firearms. Hunting rifles are seldom used in violent crimes. Modern illegal military weapons are used in transit robberies. The arguments about small arms for self-defence are dubious, because the legal possession of these arms often results in the theft of these guns during burglaries and the use of guns against the legal owners. Because of the high levels of violent crimes in South Africa, members of the police must be armed with the type of weapons necessary for doing their duties.

I venture to raise the argument that except in the case of the police, the legal possession of all concealable small arms could be phased out. It is of little use for self-defence, seldom used for hunting or sport and very potent and easy to use in crime. Modern small firearms can fire many times in a short space of time, can easily be reloaded with magazines taking numerous rounds of ammunition and, most importantly, can be concealed in such a way that a robbery can take place without people noticing that the perpetrator is carrying a gun. Rifles used for hunting, protection on farms against dangerous animals and for sport cannot be easily concealed. A person with the aim to commit a violent crime with a gun cannot conceal a rifle easily, can be spotted by people around, and cannot fire numerous rounds in succession. Furthermore, if limitations can be put on the magazine of a rifle for a maximum of two bullets, the quick use of the rifle for a violent crime will be very difficult. A hunter, a farmer and a person using

the rifle for sport have enough time to reload. The violent criminal does not. Ownership of any form of military weapons by the public is illegal and should remain so, and civil society must support the government with vigour in the struggle to rid our streets of illegal firearms, black market military arms, and, according to the example of GFSA, motivate the population to adhere to the efforts for gun control and not evade the law in this regard.

■ Refraining from implicit stimulation of violence

In general, leadership in South Africa is not in good health. We mentioned corruption and the accompanying atrocities of leadership in the public and private domains. The role of leadership in our quest to find a moral compass is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. However, when dealing with the reduction of the culture of violence in South Africa, a short discussion of the duties and responsibilities of leaders in this regard seems necessary.

We could start with political leaders. It is, unfortunately, commonplace in South Africa for some influential political leaders to stir racial tension in a blame game. When criticised about policies or poor governance, some black politicians refer to the injustices of apartheid and the racial conduct of white people in those days. Although there may be traces of truth, these references are used to cover up poor governance today, and, in the process, white people are stereotyped as the enemies of reconciliation and nation-building. On the other side, some radical white political leaders consistently complain about restitution policies and raise suspicion that these policies are racist and aimed at marginalising white people. This racial blame game in Parliament, on television, in the media and in public spaces makes no sense whatsoever for the building of a South African nation where diversity is seen as an asset and not a liability. The only effect of this childish behaviour is to fuel suspicion between black and white citizens and to restrain the drive to cure the culture of violence. Children especially are affected by racist speech by their leaders and grow up with suspicion and anger, which could spill over into racially motivated violence at schools. Furthermore, for a leader to tell needy or marginalised people that people of another race are responsible for their predicament is extremely irresponsible within a society inclined to violence. Fuelling violence in such a tacit way is beyond the most basic norms of responsible and edifying leadership.

The influence of civil societies is growing rapidly in South Africa. This development is very positive, because civil societies not only limit the

possible power abuses by the state but also serve as the voice of people neglected by the state. The leaders of many of these civil societies are respected opinion-makers and have an ardent following. Among these are leaders of labour unions and interest groups relating to culture and language. They have the same responsibility as political leadership when it comes to language and conduct that may fuel violence. It is of the utmost importance that leadership in South Africa comes to an agreement to abstain from fuelling violence by using aggressive language.

■ Promoting dialogue

Abstaining from fuelling violence in an open or tacit way depends on an important corresponding action and that is the promotion of dialogue. In the period 1990–1994, South Africa astonished the world by reaching an agreement on a new democratic Constitution when most people expected a revolutionary racial civil war. Since then, the backbone of the foreign policy of the South African government has been to opt for dialogue where unrest and war occur elsewhere. This is a laudable position. But the promotion of dialogue inside South Africa is of equal importance. To refrain from fuelling violence in any way, leaders are duty-bound to promote and facilitate dialogue wherever and whenever they can. The positive experience of dialogue could trickle down to all areas of conflict.

In this respect, the role churches can play should be addressed. Christian congregations are arguably the most influential component in the country because they operate at the grassroots level in all living spaces – from the wealthy estates to the informal settlements among the poor. They deliver spiritual encouragement and many diaconal services and care. During the mandatory lockdown period during the COVID-19 pandemic, the influence of congregations even increased as they resorted to electronic media (see Magezi 2022). Their care and feeding schemes in these difficult years were remarkable. They are involved in schools, hospitals and other civil societies, and they reach out to all people irrespective of race, gender, age or social stance. They have in their area the voices and listeners, and unlike political leaders, spiritual leaders have, to a large extent, the trust of the people. The essence of congregations' messages is reconciliation with God and, because of the relationship with God, new relationships with others in all the domains of human relationships. The message of reconciliation underlies the promotion of dialogue when relational problems arise. Pastors are in an excellent position not only to preach about reconciliation but also to sensitise society to the value of dialogue to solve interpersonal or inter-group conflict and to teach people to steer away from all forms of violent language.

■ Résumé

South Africa is a modern democracy and a constitutional state in the full sense of the term, boasting six free and fair elections and limitations on the abuse of power. Still, violence often flares up during protest marches. People seem to think that violence is the best way to solve a social problem. Protest marches often devolve into violence because the flammable fuel for violence in the hearts and minds of many citizens is easy to ignite. Added to this is the extreme violence accompanying criminal activity, the high rate of murder, assault, rape and the widespread presence of domestic violence, especially violence against females and children. Children who are exposed to constant violence are prone to serious psychological problems, can be desensitised to violence and may themselves resort to violence when confronted with a problem. Dealing with the perennial culture of violence is a long-term endeavour that will rely heavily on scholarly research in many fields in the humanities and health sciences. Such studies have been conducted and the increasing interest among South African scientists is a very good sign that bodes well for the future. It is essential that we address the culture of violence if we want to progress as a nation. The moral compass we are looking for should guide us out of the perennial bursts of violence in so many areas of social life.

To this effect, I engage with valuable research and venture to recommend that:

• South Africa has a long history of spiralling violence between the apartheid regime and the struggle. This spiral ended with the new democracy. However, a spiral of violence does not only pertain to the macro-level of politics and governance; all domains of authority are prone to inciting the spiral and the violence. It can take many forms, such as physical violence, emotional violence, verbal violence, bullying, unfair treatment, power abuse and humiliation. Democracy is not always immune to systemic violence, especially the seemingly insignificant forms of systemic violence that are not obvious but just as dangerous in the long run. In some cases, liberating violence removed the rulers but not the rules, and the system remains prone to ongoing injustice. Let us call it disguised systemic violence because it is the unnoticed violence that can penetrate systems in many obscured and masquerading forms. It is not always discernible and easy to detect. Disguised systemic violence attacks patterns of authority and contaminates relationships between leaders and subjects and is not always unambiguously violent. Preventing a spiral of violence should start by rooting out the exposed and unambiguous forms of systemic violence in the macro, meso and micro domains of

the administration of authority. It is usually the misuse of authority that embeds systemic violence in the form of unfair rules and regulations, treatment, expectations, remunerations, benefits and other obnoxious conduct by the commanding person(s). It is important that people in authority nurture a culture of listening by listening to the right people at the right time. Besides listening with real intent and listening to the right people, a constant reassessment of the structure of authority, like the required codes of conduct, the rules and regulations, the obligations of people in authority and the subjects, and mutual involvement and decision-making may serve the cause of defusing systemic violence. It can create healthy spaces in relationships to manage responsible authority and satisfactory and peaceful submission. Just as the persons in authority must listen honestly to the complaints and proposals of the subjects, the subjects could start by speaking honestly about what they perceive to be latent systemic violence. Here also, they must speak with the right people at the right time. Subjects tend to invite outside forces to assist them. Dialogue at an early stage by complaining to the right people at the right time and serious listening and rectification could break the tension of spiralling violence and the different form of violence it enhances.

- Agents of the struggle in South Africa romanticised liberating violence. Unfortunately, it has become a culture of commending violence against everything that is perceived as systemic violence. Many citizens, especially members of labour unions, still perceive violence as a rightful means of protest and opposition. The notion of liberating violence is often the reason why so many protest marches spill over into violence and anarchy. The justification of liberating violence in South Africa today should be revisited. The moral agents of the past who made a case for the legitimacy of using violence for the good cause of liberating the oppressed can assist greatly in this process. Violence for self-defence can be justified, but violence to serve peace begs many questions. Whose peace? What are the limits and conditions of the offered peace? The winner usually decides when the peace has been reached, what the condition are and who should pay the cost. The peace of the winner is not the peace of the victim. The same arguments can be raised regarding liberating violence in a liberal democratic setting. All forms of systemic violence, disputes, political ideals and cultural concerns can be addressed through the system and the legal protection of rights. Violence can no longer be justified in South Africa for purposes of liberation, to state a case, to prove a point or as a show of force. All these preoccupations can be served by peaceful means in our new democracy. If we want to find a higher level of morality, we must define violence for what it is, and that is pure evil.

- Violence is something people learn and that people can 'unlearn'. People can be educated to be non-violent. Research indicates that people can learn skills, especially to introduce them to consequential thinking and 'alternative solution thinking'. Consequential thinking leads them to think about the consequences of the violence they consider before they proceed with the act of violence. Considering the reality of street violence during protests, domestic violence and mere criminal violence in South Africa, the exposure of children to violence is alarmingly high, and they learn from experience that violence can be a solution. In this respect, the family communication model is a valuable and potent tool to unlearn violence as problem-solving behaviour. The positive role of the village in character-building and moral formation adds an additional value to family communication as a skill to prevent the resort to problem-solving violence. The village idea expands the communication to all the groups to which the person prone to violence belongs. 'Village communication', which includes the development of 'alternative solution thinking' and 'consequential thinking', offers a mighty alternative to the myth that violence solves problems.
- Language can incite violence, and the history of the world is full of examples of fiery orators who incited angry groups to act violently against a common enemy. Today, this kind of violence talk can be polished and subtle. South Africans are still victims of violence language, as many reports indicate. The continuation of liberation thinking and violence language has resulted in a strange resistance and voting pattern in the parts of the country where people suffer because of poor service delivery by elected leaders. In the free society, we are living in with all the means necessary for critique, opposition, academic freedom, press freedom and freedom of speech; there can be no nuanced argument to justify some forms of violence language such as liberation thinking. The laws against incitement to violence must be applied with no excuses, justification or mitigating circumstances. Instigators of violence must be brought to book. South Africans should display their utter disgust with these irresponsible instigators of violence under the holy guises of noble causes. To get a firm grip on the moral compass that could lead us out of the culture of violence, we must unite to protect and defend our Constitution, which provides ample non-violent means to replace bad and incompetent leadership. The young democracy must develop an ethos of true democratic thinking and acting.
- There is a high incidence of hate crimes and violent crimes with the use of weapons, mostly with firearms that are not legally owned and appropriately registered. Also, in a country prone to violence and latent remnants of a long history of structural violence and liberating violence, easy access to illegal firearms is a matter of concern, and a vigorous debate about gun control is much needed in this country. South Africans

could consider that, except in the case of the police, the legal possession of all concealable small arms could be phased out. It is of little use for self-defence, seldom used for hunting or sport, and very potent and easy to use in crime. Rifles used for hunting, protection on farms against dangerous animals and sport cannot be easily concealed. Furthermore, if limitations can be put on the magazine of a rifle for a maximum of two bullets, the quick use of the rifle for violent crime will be very difficult. Ownership of any form of military weapons by the public is illegal and should remain so, and civil society must support the government with vigour in the struggle to rid our streets of illegal firearms, black market military arms, and, according to the example of GFSA, motivate the population to adhere to the efforts for gun control.

- It is unfortunately commonplace in South Africa for political leaders to stir racial tension with a blame game. The only effect of this behaviour is to fuel suspicion between black and white citizens and to restrain the drive to cure the culture of violence. Children especially are affected by racist speech by their leaders and grow up with suspicion and anger, which could spill over into racially motivated violence at schools. Furthermore, for a leader to tell needy or marginalised people that people of another race are responsible for their predicament is extremely irresponsible in view of a society inclined to violence. Fuelling violence in such a tacit way is beyond the most basic norms of responsible and edifying leadership. The development of the current vocal civil society is very positive. Not only do they limit possible power abuses by the state but also they serve as the voice of people neglected by the state. Leaders of many of these civil societies are respected opinion-makers and have an ardent following. Among these are leaders of labour unions and interest groups relating to culture and language. They have the same responsibility as political leadership when it comes to language and conduct that may fuel violence. It is of the utmost importance that leadership in South Africa comes to an agreement to abstain from fuelling violence by using the language of aggression.

- Lastly, abstaining from fuelling violence in an open or tacit way depends on the promotion of dialogue. Leadership must take the lead in promoting and facilitating dialogue where tensions arise. Of special importance in this regard is the role of Christian congregations. They are involved in schools, hospitals and other civil societies and reach out to all people irrespective of race, gender, age or social stance. They have in their area the voice and listeners, and unlike political leaders, spiritual leaders have, to a large extent, the trust of people. The essence of the message of congregations is reconciliation in all the domains of human relationships. The message of reconciliation underlies the promotion of dialogue when relational problems arise. Pastors are in an excellent

position not only to preach about reconciliation but also to sensitise society about the value of dialogue to solve interpersonal or inter-group conflict and to teach people to steer away from all forms of violence language.

I hope that these proposals can be useful in the national debate about leaving behind the culture of violence with the use of the moral compass we are searching for. Where fire rages, no growth is possible, and a community of character cannot be built on a scorched earth. The following chapter pursues the forming of national unity amid cultural diversity with the purpose of framing nationhood where diversity is not a liability but an asset. As South Africans, we will take a giant step to newness, flourishing life for all if we succeed in the moral formation of unity enriched by diversity.

Achieving unity enriched by diversity

◼ Introduction

The history of the world shows the mobility of people. Over time, people formed groups with a culture and a language as a means of effective communication. They could be identified as a people with a certain identity defined by a language, culture, religion and different styles of life. Such groups became known as ethnic groups, derived from the Greek word 'ethnos', which means a people. The only difference between ethnic groups was skin colour because of where they originated and resided. Ethnic groups living in colder climates developed paler skins while ethnic groups living in hotter climates developed darker skins as a defence against the sun and the heat. Other differences were cultural and nothing more. As explained earlier, the idea of different races and the superiority or inferiority of races is an ideologically-driven idea supported by evolutionism and anthropologies in the time of modernism. These theories have no scientific proof. History reveals the ideas of ethnic groups with different languages and cultures, but that is where differentiation between humans stops.

Ethnic groups were constantly on the move, even after they had been settled in certain regions for long periods. Migration for the sake of survival and expansion of territories for habitable land were the main features of all ancient cultures. Ethnic groups developed, assimilated others and sometimes disappeared. New ethnic groups emerged by assimilation or by forced repatriation. The mobility of ethnic groups caused many wars as groups attempted to expand territory or to defend their own identity. This process is still ongoing. Colonialism reveals a history of ethnic clashes, displacement of indigenous ethnic groups by powerful forces for the sake of wealth, deculturalisation and, in the worst cases, genocide.

European countries defined themselves as nation-states from the time of the French and the American Revolutions (Wimmer & Feinstein 2010, p. 764). The nation-state has four characteristics, namely, a sovereign state with a government, a nation of people with the same origin, a national culture and a land with firm borders. In a nation-state, the citizens and the culture are congruent, and their rights and privileges are closely linked to the ethos of the nation. Because of the natural mobility of people and steady globalisation, nation-states proliferated, and the ideal of being an ethnic state became difficult to maintain. Emigration from poor to rich countries with better career propositions and a tendency to leave countries because of poverty, fleeing war and persecution, the worldwide brain drains and poaching of people with high-level training and scarce skills all weakened the concept of nation-states. All countries are now plural, with minorities claiming spaces to observe the traits of their own ethnicity, like religion, culture and language. Nowadays, the nation-state is no more than a state defined by fixed borders with citizens and open spaces for the observance of ethnic differentiation.

The borders of colonies, especially in southern Africa, were not defined along ethnic lines. These borders were agreed upon in Europe among European colonial powers by way of treaties and peace agreements. At the Berlin Conference (1884–1885), 90% of Africa was divided into 50 colonies distributed among European colonial powers with no respect for ethnicity or tribal traditions and identities (see Heath 2023). Furthermore, new ethnic groups developed in South Africa from the various groups of settlers. The Afrikaner people originated from the early Dutch colonists and later assimilated aspects of the French Huguenots, Germans, Indonesian slaves and indigenous Khoi and San people. The slaves and the Khoi and the San were the first people to speak Afrikaans. Furthermore, migration within South Africa because of economic possibilities, the migrant labour system and the search for political freedom forced the population into a melting pot with diverse ethnicities. Neither the formation of the Union of South Africa along the Statute of Westminster lines in 1910 nor the apartheid attempt to revive nation-states along ethnic lines could offer an answer to the question of how such a diverse population can live in peace and prosperity.

The Freedom Charter (FC) of the Congress of the People (COPE) of South Africa at Kliptown, close to Soweto, on 26 June 1955, proposed the formation of a South African nation, equal in all respects and sharing the wealth of the country in a fair and indiscriminate way. From that point onwards, the formation of a South African nation was on the table, and it became a reality with the new liberal democracy in 1994. Founded in the values of equality, dignity and freedom, the Constitution starts with the words (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1996):

> We, the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past; honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. (p. 1)

This was a bold step towards South African nationhood. Considering the history of racial, tribal and ethnic strife where groups grabbed and maintained power and where ethnic identities such as language were forced onto others by law, this turnabout was tremendous. South Africans accepted the idea of one nation and that this nation should be built.

Nation-building in South Africa is not easy. Generations of people, especially in the white community, had grown up with the idea of a holy ethnic identity that should be defended at all costs. In education and in the public domain, they were constantly reminded of their 'otherness'. Tribalism among indigenous African people is also an inhibiting force when it comes to nation-building and reconciliation (Baloyi 2018, p. 2). In 2015, Dlanjwa (2015, p. 5) claimed that even at that stage, tribalism raised its head, especially when officials must be appointed and when political leaders must be elected. Ethnic identities still determined political elections and the search for leadership. Many open debates and partisan programmes surface because of differences in the choice of languages of instruction at schools and universities. It is apparent that South Africans, although accepting the fact that they are now one nation, are still grappling with the task of being (and building) one nation and simultaneously managing different ethnicities and cultures. What would be a viable and enriching approach to reach an attitude that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity? I wish to offer a few ideas in this regard that can assist us in finding a moral compass toward the ideal of decent nationhood while moving forward with nation-building.

■ What is national unity all about?

National unity has an essentially political thread. A nation exists in a clearly demarcated country. The people of the land are citizens of the country, ruled by a government according to the Constitution of the country. The liberal democracy of South Africa is ruled by the will of the people as a republic with the constitutional means to elect and disband a Parliament and

other official systems by a majority vote of the electorate. Both the leaders and the citizens have rights with responsibilities attached. Government should be accountable to the citizens, and citizens are duty-bound to uphold the Constitution and the laws laid down by the elected leaders, as well as to respect the human rights and dignity of all other citizens and aliens who may live in the country. But national unity also has other threads that are important to protect and develop. This unity is symbolised in a national flag, a national emblem and a national anthem, with other symbols indicating South Africanism, like the protea and the springbok in sport. National sports teams compete in the colours of green and gold.

All these features define a South African, and along the way, they aim to build a particular South African psyche and ethos. Over the past 30 years, such a psyche and ethos have become more and more discernible, despite surges of tribalism and ethnic mobilisation by discordant and divisive forces. The way in which sport has united people in South Africa over and over is tremendous.

National unity is necessary for peace. Despite the many attempts to develop a peaceful and prosperous South Africa along the lines of a colonist mindset, sustainable peace evaded us, and sometimes, it seems that the diversities are so huge and influential that a peaceful and reconciled nation is not viable. But there is no other option. National unity must be achieved. The way forward is newness and togetherness, which does not mean sameness. What are the signposts of such a togetherness? Firstly, love for the country and the nation. When visiting other parts of the world, South Africans often admit that they miss something: it could be the open sky, the beauty of nature, animal life or the moderate climate. But it is also the buzz of street life, the cordial interaction between diverse people and the emerging stamp of South Africanness in literature and art, as well as a growing number of ordinary lifestyle expressions that are typically South African. A we-feeling is growing in our country, a common love for the country and pride when our fellow citizens achieve success. For the first time in the history of South Africa, signs of nationhood are discernible, and this movement must be stimulated by every South African. The love for the country and the emerging we-feeling remind us of the age-old characteristics of being an orderly nation, and we could translate them into our contemporary context. These are patriotism, respect for the law, respect for the human rights of others and respect for our environment.

◼ Patriotism

In easy terms, patriotism can be defined as an attitude of love and devotion to a country. However, the concept has in the past been associated with many immoral political adventures and injustices. In WWII, the Germans

were inspired by the dictum: 'Germany, Germany above all, above the world' [*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt*]. With this, Germany justified invasions and atrocities. In the apartheid society, white children were infused with the 'noble' ideal of Afrikaner nationalism, resting on the pillars of their history and struggle against British imperialism. Schools, cultural events and Afrikaner organisations nurtured nationalism and a patriotism that entailed a life in service of '*volk en vaderland*' [people and fatherland], with the people being ethnic Afrikaners and the fatherland being white South Africa. In other parts of the world, patriotism was linked to national partisan desires and ideals and was widely viewed as a negative concept that could not be reconciled with democracy in a plural society. In some cases, it has become an evil force, as Anderson (2003, p. 577) explains in his evaluation of the criticism of the concept.

To rescue the idea of patriotism from its association with extreme nationalism, tribalism and ethnocentrism, Michelman (2002, p. 253) employs the views of Rawls and Habermas and argues a case for 'constitutional patriotism', where the love for the country rests in the embracement of a just, accommodating Constitution overarching partisan interests and ideals for the benefit of the whole. This is the patriotism we need to establish in South Africa. Embracing the Constitution will flow from reflecting together on what we have in common. What do we have in common? Over the past decades, our histories were exposed as one history with many flaws of inter-group maltreatment. Out of this exposition, we are developing a common memory and a common intention of 'never again'. Add to this emerging common memory the reality of our common country and our common destiny, and we may accept the urgency of common responsibilities. In this way, we could nurture much-needed constitutional patriotism that will not revert to something negative and destructive.

We have one fatherland, one Constitution and one future, and under the banner of this overarching and comprehensive wholeness of the nation, we must manage politics, economics and social development. Patriotic actions will then be to prioritise the building, enrichment and defending of national interests. The nation comes first, and the integrity of the country is the priority. Any endeavour, investment or political policy should be driven by the question: What is in the interest of the nation? To what extent will deeds and enterprises be beneficial for the whole nation?

Let us think about constitutional patriotism in South Africa at this moment. Can it be patriotic when national interests are damaged for the sake of distinct individual or group advantages? The pro-Zuma unrest in July 2021 had absolutely no respect for the national interest. The violence, killing, looting and damaging of infrastructure did not put the nation first and dishonoured the integrity of the country. It was an act of total

partisanship with no hint of constitutional patriotism. Other attacks on the nation can be added to the list of unpatriotic actions, such as damaging infrastructure, railroads, schools, power-generating facilities, trains and places of national interest to prove a point, as well as self-enrichment by corruption related to public funds. Also, when group interests are furthered at the expense of national interests, we hear the ring of unpatriotic conduct. All South Africans must embrace the idea that the nation comes first, and the integrity of the country must be honoured.

Respect for the law

A country must not be over-legislated. Laws must serve the purpose of creating and maintaining an orderly space for people to flourish. Laws must not limit human achievements and joy but must open the road for growth and peace. Laws demarcate the road and set the limits and boundaries for human flourishing but should not erect all kinds of barriers on the road. South Africa has a long heritage of over-legislation driven by colonial interests. In the apartheid era, the government was a law-making machine to make apartheid work against the grain of morality, justice and reality. Strict laws with the heavy support of policing and jurisprudence determined where people could reside and where not, what amenities they may or may not use, occupations they may not occupy because of skin colour, where they can observe their religion and many other well-known 'petty apartheid' laws that are now incomprehensible. Laws controlling the publication of material not only manipulated the freedom of the press but even controlled the liberty of artists to publish and present their art. A Council for Censorship, containing many people with no professional expertise relating to literature and art, some of them church ministers, decided what books could be published. Good literature was often banned when perceived to be criticising the ideology of apartheid and the idea of Christian nationalism. In many other countries, a potent law machine was also at work. In the old Soviet Union, public life was smothered by oppressive and brutal legislation. Even post-colonial liberated countries in Africa fell into the grip of years and years of despotic rule. A poor and incompetent government often sees laws as the last refuge to construct a hiding place for the corrupt to enjoy their lavish lifestyles. Many theorists have warned humanity that over-regulated and over-restricting legislation leads to stalled material and cultural growth and results in anger and unrest. Before 1994, South Africa, among other countries, was a good example of such a one-dimensional, over-legislated society.

The move to constitutionalism with a Bill of Rights safeguarded South Africa from continuing over-legislation, and despite the many other

problems we experienced and are facing now, we did not fall into the trap of post-colonial despotic rule. The past four administrations resisted over-legislation and restriction and could be commended for this effort. There are pressures for land expropriation without compensation, other forms of nationalisation and social engineering by socialist groups, but these are still contained and should remain so in the future to save us from repeating the bad experiments of the failing socialist countries elsewhere. We are, to my mind, in a good place with legislation in the sense that the legislation mostly demarcates and does not block our journey to human flourishing, growth and peace. Not all our laws are necessarily good laws, but they are not blocking our journey.

However, laws are of no use when they are not enforced properly and when jurisprudence is poorly managed. The law is the law for everyone, but it is useless if it is not meticulously applied during all the phases of the judicial process. In this respect, we face tremendous shortcomings. Let us start with policing. In their qualitative research project about changes in the structure of the SAPS with the aim to create better policing, Mabasa and Olutola (2021) echo the many findings of scholars about the abnormally high level of criminality in the country because of very ineffective policing. They propose the creation of a single police force. Professionalism in the SAPS was questioned in 2012 (Faull & Rose 2012), but despite valuable recommendations by these experts to improve the situation, the lack of professionalism still prevails. Absenteeism is alarmingly high. A recent qualitative study undertaken by Dhlewayo et al. (2021) using a convenient sampling technique:

> [*F*]ound that absenteeism is not only prevalent, but has become entrenched within the SAPS, and that several institutional policies and privileges, such as sick, normal, and incapacity leave, are often abused for personal benefit. (p. 1)

Members of the SAPS encounter violence very often. They experience violence directed at them and must witness gruesome scenes, more than police elsewhere in comparable countries. They are prone to post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. In a well-researched scholarly article, Wasserman, Meiring and Becker (2018, p. 97) explain the prominence of stress in the SAPS and propose coping strategies. They indicate that a huge corpus of research about stress and its effects on police officers is available but is not being applied effectively. The corruption in the public sector also spilled over to the SAPS and political abuse by a faction of the ruling party added to the current incompetence in the domain of policing.

The justice system itself, although well entrenched in constitutional democracy, also raises concerns. Many prosecutions are hampered by bad preparation of dossiers, poor submission of evidence and lacking and diminishing scientific facilities to prove guilt. Rapes and murders show a

low percentage of convictions. In 2020, former Constitutional Court Judge Cameron (2020) remarked:

> But the fact is that our current criminal justice system's approaches to crime are so ineffective and counter-productive that we find ourselves in a frightening crisis: we are terrified of crime and yet we are trapped in our futile response. We find ourselves in a frightening vortex. If we want to curb crime, it is in our own self-interest. (p. 11)

Many researchers in the field of the science of law attend to these problems, but it seems that these valuable contributions are shelved somewhere and are not leading to prompt and effective implementation of alternatives.

Good laws can direct a society to human flourishing and peaceful coexistence. It can create the space for an orderly but not over-controlled society. But the laws must be properly applied through excellent policing and a well-functioning criminal justice system. People have respect for laws and their execution when they see positive results. If not, it is human to fall into lawlessness. Lawlessness has become a trait of South African life. People do not respect the law or fear the execution of the law for the reasons mentioned. Lawlessness is primarily a moral problem, but people cannot be expected to blindly adhere to abusive laws or laws that do not improve living conditions because of bad execution. The law is the law, and this dictum surely adds value to our moral compass, but then authorities must pay attention to the many well-researched recommendations of legal theorists and apply them. The law can be the law only when its execution earns the respect of the community as they reap the fruits of security, order and justice. Such respect feeds patriotism because subjects are proud and protective when they live in a safe and orderly society. Morals work when they are constructive. It is the same with laws.

■ Respect for the human rights of others

On several occasions in the discussion of our pressing moral problems in South Africa, the issue of respect for the human rights of others in certain spheres of life has been addressed. It includes our duty to promote economic justice; build families as the villages of spiritual, moral and educational growth; build a community of character; counter the culture of violence; and nurture togetherness. The ethic of human rights is the golden thread of communion, togetherness and moral agency. When arguing about the building of a nation of unity, this thread determines the moral fibre of the nation. If people do not respect the fundamental human dignity and human rights of others, togetherness falls apart and the community disintegrates into pockets of racist prejudice, gender inequality, power and privilege, xenophobia, tribalism, ethnocentrism and all the extremist disunities of the past.

South Africans have an excellent chapter on fundamental rights in the present Constitution, which has to date been applied with remarkable success by the Constitutional Court. This document extracts the core ideas of the modern history of human rights and includes first-, second- and third-generation rights. Like in the case of good laws, these principles have no value if they are not internalised by the community. Human rights must live in the heart before they can live in the law (Batchelor 2000, p. 4). The same sentiment was expressed by Küng (1997, p. 102) in his plea for the idea of global ethics. Respect for rights is not only a legal issue but must also live in our hearts. As image-bearers of God and as equals in the eyes of God, respect for one another cannot be limited by forms of prejudice that are usually rooted in ideologies and misuses of religions. No tribe, culture or gender can claim superiority because of the total depravity of human persons and the need for redemption by God. We should see in each other a fellow creature of God in need of deliverance from the evil of this world, just like ourselves. We need a bill of human rights to arrange our daily relationships which reflects the Great Commandment and the Golden Rule. The love of God and humankind expects us to have no social pre-conditions because 'doing to others' does not qualify the others. It refers to all others. The much-needed Bill of Rights is there to provide protection against abuses of power but will be useless if it is not embedded in love of the neighbour. A nation can thrive in unity and togetherness when neighbourly love overarches all social differences. When we restrict love only to the in-group, all kinds of divisive and even destructive self-idolisation could disrupt the growing unity. An example of such a disruption was the claim by Jacob Zuma in 2009 that he was a 100% 'Zulu boy'. The slogan was imprinted on T-shirts put on show by young people, and according to Van der Westhuizen (2009, p. 1), it caused all kinds of gender stereotyping and insulting political language against opposing political parties. A more recent example of divisive language is revealed by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (2019), which compiled the following report:

> Racial rhetoric in the run-up to the EWC decision was persistent and hostile. Whites were repeatedly accused of having 'looted' and 'stolen' the land (Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, December 2017), of having 'destroyed the asset base of the African people' and thereby caused 'the impoverishment of the black nation' (Cyril Ramaphosa, November 2017), of having engaged in 'the ruthless plunder of land and livestock' (Ace Magashule, September 2018) and of having committed 'a full-blown colonial genocide' against black people through their 'criminal' land 'dispossession project' (Julius Malema, February 2018). Mr Malema's rhetoric was particularly vituperative: 'We are cutting the throats of whiteness'. 'Whites committed genocide'. 'No white person is the rightful owner of land here in South Africa'. 'Whites are the enemy who stole our land'. (p. 1)

In the same year, several cases of divisive actions and language were lodged by white people and were published country-wide and added to this report (SAIRR 2019, pp. 2–3). Furthermore, such self-idolisation and conditional love and respect are not only a Zuma feature but are, from time to time, also discernible in extreme right-wing Afrikaner groups that still hold on to the idea of an independent Afrikaner state. The stage was set for a reversal of racial harmony.

However, the study of the Institute reported that despite these negative pockets of divisive language, racial relations have improved since 1991, and 86% of South Africans agree that white and black South Africans need each other. Racial identity has become less of a concern. The majority prefer merit as the only measure in appointments in jobs as schoolteachers and for the selection of sports teams. A growing number of people report that they experience no racism and concerns are over 'bread-and-butter' issues rather than racial issues (SAIRR 2019, pp. 6–8). The report concluded on a positive note and stated: 'The results of the IRR's 2018 field survey are mainly positive and should once again fill the country with hope' (SAIRR 2019, p. 10). The process must pick up in pace by way of all moral agents reminding South Africans that the sooner we all accept that we are one nation in one country with one patriotism and with one responsibility of overarching neighbourly love, the sooner we will set our minds on the ideal of national unity, togetherness and an all-embracing we-feeling.

■ Respect for the environment

As one nation, we are living in one country, and the current ecological crisis affects all of us. No single South African can escape the climate crisis. Floods, droughts, high temperatures, polluted air and water, and human-made hindrances in sustainable food production distort the way of living of every single South African, and the situation is becoming worse at a rapid rate. Ecocide can rightly be termed the biggest crisis humankind is facing, and we are all victims. The 'green debate' in South Africa is far from satisfactory when compared with other industrial nations. We are lagging behind because of petty debates about the necessity of the continued use of fossil fuels, mostly to serve old socialist ideas about job security in the coal mining sector. It is of little use to protect the jobs of some and at the same time create a dangerous environment for them and all of us by enhancing the pollution of the most basic needs for life, namely, clean air, water and soil. Other countries have proven that eco-friendly and far-reaching measures can be taken without job losses because the development of clean energy creates new jobs, and workers in mining industries can be retrained to fill new occupations.

South Africa ranks in the top five countries in the world with the largest emissions of dangerous materials. On behalf of the very influential and well-informed organisation, Greenpeace, Myllyvirta (2019) reports that:

> Greenpeace's updated analysis of a full year of TROPOMI NO_2 satellite data and other scientific datasets confirms that the coal-fired power plant and industrial cluster in Mpumalanga is the world's worst hotspot for power plant NO_2 [*nitrogen dioxide*] and SO_2 [*sulphur dioxide*] emissions, and overall ranks 4th for NO_2 and 3rd for SO_2 emissions in the world. It is the only place in the world that ranks among the top five for both of these dangerous pollutants. The finding is corroborated by analyses by NASA, [*the*] Netherlands meteorological institute KNMI and Eskom's own published emissions data. (p. 1)

What is very concerning is that the report states unambiguously that there is an undisputed reason for this decrepit state of affairs. That is, this region has a large concentration of coal-fired power generation and industrial capacity. On top of this, 'the emission control performance of the coal-fired boilers is dramatically worse than in other countries' (Myllyvirta 2019, p. 10). The most disturbing fact is that (Myllyvirta 2019):

> Eskom's coal-fired power plants are allowed to emit more than 20 times as much SO_2 and 15 times as much NO_x [*nitric oxide and nitrogen oxide*] as Chinese and European coal-fired plants. (p. 10)

This very concerning report deals with the disaster of fossil fuels only. To this kind of pollution could be added the pollution of water because of negligence in service delivery of local councils, overuse of chemicals by farmers, the growing number of trucks on the roads, the decline of the railway system and manufacturing of non-recyclable plastic bags and other containers. Furthermore, littering scars the faces of the countryside, beaches, roads, inner cities and towns and raises the question of whether South Africans have lost all pride regarding their habitat.

Respect for the environment requires major steps in the long run. Respect must be driven by the government and should be founded on scientific evidence and not political ideology. Such decisive action cannot afford to pamper old sentiments or to please foreign investors because of their interest in South Africa. Unfortunately, neither the present ANC government nor any of the opposition parties can present a well-documented and well-planned green policy. They are failing dismally to move beyond the general statements about the predicament of the environment and resorting from time to time to big slogans to appease concerned groups. We seldom hear or experience criticism or protest action in favour of measures to procure clean energy. People will protest against load shedding, but not against the growing pollution caused by outdated forms of power generation with the use of fossil fuels.

If we want to be one nation with a good future for future generations, the government must call on scientists to design a comprehensively

feasible, effective and sustainable policy to address pollution and to follow the examples of the initiatives of the countries that have made major strides in this direction. Civil society also has an obligation to exert pressure on the rulers of the day to take climate change seriously and protect our environment. It is of no use to build the nation and neglect its environment. What is a nation without a healthy environment?

At the micro level of ongoing pollution lies the problem of littering by the citizens themselves. Southall (2018) called the high levels of littering in South Africa, especially in open public spaces like taxi or minibuses' ranks and parks, a culture with a selfish ethos. He explains that (Southall 2018):

> Littering is an act of individual or group disposal of waste at the public expense in terms, not only of the cost of public collection, but also at worst, of public health, and always in terms of public enjoyment of the environment. (p. 2)

It is a selfish act because 'it prioritises the private interest over the public and places the burden of collection or consequences of litter on the collective' (Southall 2018). Southall's (2018) analysis leaves us with food for thought and illustrates the harm done not only to the environment and the future generation but also to our development of a proud, decent, caring and compassionate nation. Our littering impedes the movement towards moral nationhood.

Of special concern is the littering of plastic material that eventually ends up in the sea and adds to an increasing worldwide ecological problem. In a statement by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Hankel and Burgess (2018, p. 1) report that in 2010, South Africa ranked tenth among the countries who are the worst offenders of plastic waste contributing to oceanic pollution: 'Eighty per cent [80%] of oceanic plastic pollution originates from land-based sources'. Only 16% of plastic is recycled and the rest is wasted, and because of wind, rain and rivers, it eventually ends up in the sea, where it remains for centuries and serves as a direct threat to marine life. The waste consists mainly of unnecessary packaging used for fast food, groceries and things used for comfort like straws, cups, bottles and other consumer items that are easy to use once and to get rid of. All of these items can be replaced by reclaimable and eco-friendly material, but the packaging and food industries find such a move to be unprofitable. South Africa lacks the political will to make the huge changes that will fit the drive for a cleaner environment. Such changes would be the banning of all plastic material that cannot be reused or recycled and the replacement of all plastic bags with paper bags and plastic containers with reusable glass containers. The industry should take the initiative and civil society could be instrumental in the promotion of this mind shift. There are small initiatives in this regard already, and this movement can be lauded, but much more should be done if we want to turn the tide of littering.

The mind shift in the corporate world and the awareness raised by civil society are useful and advantageous, but in the end, the biggest responsibility lies with every individual citizen. Respect for God's creation, moral responsibility, love of the country, patriotism and concern about the future of children should drive every citizen to not pollute or litter. We all need to make huge changes to our lifestyle. Are we willing to travel less, consume less, change our diet radically, reduce our intake of antibiotics and other chemical substances, live modestly, resist contaminating luxuries and clean up our cities, towns, villages, rivers and beaches? Many other sacrifices can be added to the list. We must answer these questions because our decency and the moral fibre of our nation are at stake. If we want to continue the journey toward unifying nationhood, our moral compass must include our united push for eco-sensitivity because a decent nation cannot thrive in a dying environment. Respect for the environment and the potent struggle against ecocide have become a core ingredient of our nationhood. Achieving unity will come to nothing if we continue to ruin our habitat and the living spaces of our fellow creatures at the rate at which we are doing it now.

Being one nation does not mean that cultural differentiation must be rooted out. Diversity is an enriching asset and not a destructive liability. Diversity must be managed in such a way that it enriches the unity among the various cultures and subcultures in our country. History teaches us with many horrendous examples that people make war when their religion and language are threatened. How can we enrich our unity with our diversity?

■ Enriching diversity

The South African nation has a history of mobility and movement. Indigenous groups, foreign slaves, immigrants and settlers left footprints that we cannot write out of our history, cannot deny and cannot destroy. History is history and what happened has happened. I explained in Chapter 2, with reference to Fanon's analysis, how indigenous people were denigrated by colonialism and still bear the scars of centuries of oppression, the inhumanity of the British wars and the recent period of apartheid. Virtually every ethnic group can mention many hurtful and painful historic events in our history. The glorious victory of one group is a painful memory for another. Victors erect symbols of their good moments, while the defeated see their humiliation and rejection in these symbols. All over the country, there are symbols of many past events in the names of towns, villages, townships, streets, statues, monuments and others. How should we deal with these? Must we, in the spirit of '#RhodesMustFall', tear all these symbols down? Must we rewrite history, or let 'bygones be bygones'?

The ongoing debate about dealing with the past and 'the place of memories' is very important because a shared perspective on South African

history will help us to use our diversity to enrich the nation. In previous research, I dealt with memories that could be used in such a way that they improve the future. The title of the article is 'Down memory lane to a better future' (see Vorster 2009). I drew on the issue of remembrance in the Jewish and Christian traditions and attempted to grasp the reasons for the high value of remembrance in the Christian tradition. To be a Christian is to remember the scorching presence of evil and God's promises of renewal of creation. The most vivid remembrance is the cross of Christ, which is the symbol of the presence of God in this history and the radical implications of his reign for humankind, who are struggling with evil. Many symbols in ancient times and symbolism in the sacraments infuse remembrance and point to a future of hope.

■ Remembrance and symbols

What does the theology of the Christian feasts of remembrance mean for a nation struggling with the good and the bad of history and for forgiveness and reconciliation in a socio-political transition and the quest for nationhood? What are (Vorster 2009):

> What are the implications of this theology for perpetrators who preach forgetting as essential to forgiveness? What does it mean for victims with vivid memories of a past of suffering? And for the symbols created by the victors and the defeated? [*When*] taking the deeper meaning of the remembrance [*in the Christian tradition*] into consideration, it means that there can be no better future without remembrance. The road to a better future is [*indeed*] along memory lane. [*However,*] forgiveness [*and growing towards nationhood do*] not render memories invalid or unfair. No, memories give substance to forgiveness and motivate a willingness to become involved in healing the present and planning a better future. As such, remembrance is a powerful, life-giving ingredient in the process of healing [*a community that wishes to become a humane and peaceful community*]. (pp. 5–6)

To proceed to this point, we should be willing to walk down memory lane among the symbols of the past. How should we then perceive these symbols? Denial? Destruction? Romanticising? Idolising? Must they all fall like Rhodes? The debate about symbols in South Africa is vigorous and emotional. For one group, a symbol would open old wounds, and for others, the same symbol would inspire. Tearing down a symbol may bring healing for one group and hope for a better future, while such an action could create feelings of rage and alienation for others. With some reluctance, caution and with an open mind to be convinced to view the dilemma differently, I would like to offer the following outcome. My preliminary opinion is that none of the symbols should be destroyed, denied, romanticised or idolised. Two other approaches are possible.

Firstly, a symbol can remind us, as a symbol of historical events, of evils committed. Let us take the symbols that remind us of the genocide in the

concentration camps for Afrikaner women and children and black farmworkers who were used as labourers to protect the railway lines for military purposes by the British during the Anglo-Boer War. In today's terms, this conduct would have been regarded as a crime against humanity. The Hector Pieterson monument also reminds us of a horrific event where a peaceful protest by school learners was crushed by police brutality. There are also other symbols that represent equally shocking events. How should we view these symbols today? Water under the bridge, let bygones be bygones? In my opinion, these kinds of symbols reflecting the atrocities of the past should be viewed as 'never again symbols'. These symbols must bring our nation to a firm conviction that atrocities like these should never happen to anyone in South Africa again. We must develop a national agreement that can become a sacred national ethos and a code of conduct that direct us away from repeating the evils of the past. Symbols, old flags and the divisive national anthems of the past can be displayed if we view them as 'never again symbols' that have no value for nation-building today. Never again symbols are plentiful the world over, and they fulfil an important educational and directive role. How can the people of Iraq find new ideals for the future if they are not reminded by the symbols of former president Saddam Hussein's dictatorship when these symbols are destroyed? Are the Russian people too aloof to the invasion of Ukraine because the 'never again' symbols of the tyranny of Stalin have been removed?

Secondly, commemorating past events is the democratic right of every person. We commemorate family achievements, birthdays and marriages of parents and friends, and we have official days commemorating certain events, even those with a 'never again message', such as Youth Day, Freedom Day, Heritage Day, Human Rights Day and many Christian feasts like Passover and Christmas. Some groups in ethnic subcultures may commemorate events that can also hurt other groups. Remembrance and commemoration should then happen within the framework of reconciliation as the goal. Remember within the code of 'never again' and commemorate in such a way that past atrocities are not idolised and romanticised and that past evils are denied or erased from the national memory. For example, remembrance of the event of the Great Trek (1835–1840) and the symbolism of the Voortrekker Monument erected in 1949 south of Pretoria in South Africa could honour the injection of the Christian religion and certain values into our national history. But, the 'never again' motif with respect to land dispossession and ethnocentrism must not be erased in these commemorations. Remembrance must be holistic, and commemoration must reflect on the good and the bad. In this way, our history can be an asset in the process of understanding each other and our intent not to repeat the mistakes of the past while finding comfort and inspiration in the positive reconciliatory memories of the recent past, which feeds our growing 'we-feeling'. Let the extremist then sing their songs of hatred and

wave their flags, looking backwards for seeds of hope in the shadows. The growing we-feeling will soon engulf them. The symbols, honest about the past, an all-encompassing firm 'never again' attitude when remembering and commemorating could enrich our nationhood.

■ The active plural option of religious freedom as the norm for the management of diversity

The right to religious freedom enshrined in the South African Constitution and the way this right has been applied up to now is an excellent example of how diversity could be managed. Although Christianity is the largest religion, there are significant pockets of other religions, such as Islam, Hindu, various African traditional religions and the Jewish faith. Despite all the conflicts in South Africa, we have never been involved in religious wars such as the religious persecutions and wars in Europe and elsewhere. Religions have been distorted to justify colonialism and apartheid but were also major forces in the struggle against oppression and the search for liberation and democracy. Still, religions peacefully coexist and enrich the nation.

The story of religious intolerance in Western Europe and the way in which politics and religion became entangled to cause persecution and warfare is well-known (see Bonhoeffer 1995, p. 305). Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam, on many occasions, strove to stamp down their authority on states. In the early stages after the Reformation, clashes between religions were fuelled by the urge to establish theocracies in both the Christian and Muslim traditions and in these theocracies, only one religion was recognised while the other was outlawed. An example of the theocratic aspiration was the city-state of Geneva, where Calvin installed the Reformed tradition as the official public religion and where other religions and dissension from the Reformed doctrine were prohibited (Witte 1996, p. 106). Anabaptists, for their part, aimed to establish the kingdom of God by force (Warnick 2005, p. 1), and in Muslim countries, some states were organised as theocracies according to the Sharia (Blei 1992, p. 31). Various options for the implementation of religious freedom were developed after religious wars. I have discussed these in an earlier publication (Vorster 2007, pp. 149–166). For the sake of the current argument, I will just mention the options with a short definition of each. The active state religion option was a reaction to the theocratic model. This option allowed the rulers of the day to choose a certain religion as the official religion of the state and to advance this religion while neglecting others. Nations were then called Roman Catholic, Lutheran or Protestant nations, and the general ethos was developed by the doctrines and morals of the specific religion. This option is still alive in some Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan.

Developing liberal democratic countries opted for an active neutral option in a secular state. Church and state are separated. The observance of religion then moves out of the public sphere to the private domain completely. No ruler acts as the head of the national church, like in the British monarchy. The government does not choose a religion but guarantees the freedom of all religions in a Bill of Rights. Religions are deemed equal and can function freely within the ambit of the law. This option is practised in the US and is founded on the 'free exercise clause' as opposed to the monarchical 'establishment clause' that serves as the foundation of the active state religion model. In public places like state schools and institutions, religious actions like devotions and prayer are not permitted.

The liberal democracy in South Africa opted for yet another model (Van der Vyver 1999, p. 651). This model can be defined as an active plural option. The option proposes exactly the opposite of the active neutral option of the idea of a secular state. Instead of moving all observance of religion to the private terrain and keeping the public terrain 'neutral', the active plural approach moves all religions into the public terrain on an equal basis. People can observe religious practices and rites at public institutions if it is not exclusive and does not discriminate against others or force others to take part in these actions against their will. For example, if most of the members of the governing body of a school and most of the parents of the learners resolve to have a daily devotion within the ambits of a certain religion before teaching commences, they may do so, but in no way may learners be forced to attend. The same opportunity may be pursued by observants of other religions in the vicinity, and non-believers must be free to express their own ideas freely and to live according to secular moral codes if all these actions take place within the limits of the law and the human rights framework of the Constitution. All religions also have equal opportunities to testify freely on the state-run South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC). Thus far, the active plural option seems to set the stage for religious tolerance and respect, and religious strife in the country is minimal.

In this respect, South Africans are setting an example of how to manage a situation that has the potential for conflict, friction and even violence in society, as the histories of religious wars testify. People tend to respect the beliefs, rites, religious symbols and observances of others. We are not challenged with debates about 'banning the burka', banning the wearing of the symbol of the cross or customs from African traditional religions. Agents of secularism are free to voice their concerns about religion and faith, and apologists for religions are free to enter the discourse without fear of denigration or limitation of free speech. Theological training and research, religious studies and faith-based metatheories in teaching,

learning and research are tolerated in the academy based at state-funded tertiary institutions and are even subsidised by the state. In my opinion, the modern idea of an active plural option in the execution of the fundamental human right of religious freedom enriches our nationhood and can serve as a potent and powerful example of how to deal with other aspects of diversity.

■ Multilingualism as an enriching tool for nationhood

Differences in language and culture also have the potential to tear a nation apart, just like religious persecution. In this respect, history and contemporary history reveal many occasions where people resorted to protests and even violent behaviour to protect their language and culture. Discrimination against minority languages and cultures has even resulted in backlashes of nationalism that impeded the growth of nations in plural societies. Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa was a good example but was not unique in global terms. Europe, the US and indigenous minorities in old colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Latin America, serve as examples where the oppression of minority languages resulted in fiery subculture nationalisms that impeded growth toward national unity. This kind of resistance emerged to such an extent that a campaign for the recognition of the constitutional rights of minorities became an official item on the annual sessions of the United Nations Council for Human Rights (UNCHR). Revolt by minorities declined in those areas where the rights of minorities became constitutionally respected. South Africa is a good example, although some extremists unfortunately and unnecessarily feed the 'discrimination against my language' agenda.

Twenty-seven languages are spoken in South Africa. Section 2 in the 2022 Constitution Eighteenth Amendment Bill regards twelve of the most spoken languages as official languages. These are Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), Sesotho (Southern Sotho), Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenḓa, siSwati, isiNdebele (South Ndebele) and South African Sign Language (Government of the Republic of South Africa 1996, s. 6: Amendment). Recently, the San language, the oldest spoken language in South Africa, was also included. The recognition of these languages as official languages means that people have the right to use one of these languages as a way of communication in the official social domains. Although English functions as the lingua franca between the different language groups, it has no higher status than the other languages. The biggest challenge with this far-reaching constitutional principle aiming to acknowledge and manage diversity within the unity plays out in the education of children at schools, colleges and universities. Over the colonial

years, only Afrikaans and English developed as languages suitable for highly skilled training. Carrying on with the use of only these two would be a continuance of the discrimination of the colonial era and a huge impediment to nation-building and national unity. The new democratic Constitution presented a reconciliatory language system that offers primary and secondary schools the freedom to choose their own language of tuition on the condition that no person should be excluded and accommodated so that they are not discriminated against. Nowadays, learners are educated in two languages up to the level of being bilingualist, and at a later stage in the learning process, a third language could be added as an 'additional language'.

The policy of multilingualism in educational institutions is not without problems, as Nelson Mandela (Madiba) (1999, p. 59) indicated in his research three years into the new dispensation. Many schools had to resort to parallel teaching or double-medium teaching because of a lack of facilities, rapid urbanisation, ideological preferences, ill-equipment of teachers in multilingualism and all the factors mentioned earlier when poor service delivery was discussed. This has led to immense differences between the matric results of learners from well-equipped schools where they were trained in a language with which they are comfortable and the many schools with difficulties with their language policies where the teachers are not even equipped to communicate with learners in an accessible language. Many of these schools resorted to English as the medium of instruction, with moderate success in certain instances and failure in others. Educationists such as Desai (2001) and JA Vorster (2005) did empirical research at schools and concluded that learners who speak African languages experience immense difficulties when they must use another language of instruction, for example, Afrikaans or English. The difficulties are even more acute in the study of natural sciences where they do not have terminology in the other indigenous languages. Vorster found that as soon as terminology became available in a learner's mother tongue, the achievement improved dramatically. In 2018, the South African Minister of Basic Education, Angelina (Angie) Matsie Motshekga, announced that a rollout of a decolonised education system would begin in the year 2019. 'Amongst others, this announcement intensified the debates around the effective use of local African indigenous languages as languages of learning and teaching (LoLTs) in classrooms' (Msila 2021, pp. 1–2).

Msila investigated what role isiXhosa could play in this new plan of the government in education as a language of learning and teaching, especially in the primary school years. It will be fair to argue that the findings of this empirical study will also be applicable to other indigenous languages. He indicates that certain factors impact on teaching, such as the preparedness of teachers, their language efficiency, the resources used

and the socio-economic status of the learners. He maintains that: 'language is a tool that is pivotal in the classroom and the use of the learners' mother tongue is as critical as the teachers' in the process using languages, they are proficient in' (Msila 2021, pp. 1–2). According to his empirical research, the participants demonstrated that teaching practice and learning could be transformed for the better when learners can use their indigenous language as their first language. Citing other relevant research done in the field of multilingualism in teaching, he posits that practitioners have to be realistic though, because 'introducing indigenous languages will not magically improve results, but there will be improved aspects when learners learn in their mother tongue'. He proposes that teachers and DBE subject advisors (Msila 2021):

> [S]hould continuously empower teachers in translation as well as the use of novel strategies such as bilingual and multilingual classrooms. IsiXhosa, like all the other South African official indigenous languages, can play an effective role if teachers and their learners know exactly how to use these effectively in classrooms. (p. 2)

His conclusion should be taken seriously (Msila 2021):

> The résumés show that merely changing the LoLT from English to African indigenous languages will not totally transform the Natural Sciences and Technology classrooms. More is needed to improve teacher practice and content understanding because language medium is not independent of the teaching practice. The teacher limitations in such schools aggravate inequalities and social injustices in poor schools. It is apt to conclude this discussion by quoting Van der Berg et al. (2011, p. 20) who posit, 'Learner achievement data for South Africa suggest that particularly large inequalities are evident as early as the third grade and that the school system is not succeeding in closing such gaps thereafter. This points to the importance of early educational interventions'. A change to the utilisation of indigenous African languages would surely rate as one of the most critical of those interventions. (pp. 14–15)

Multilingualism at schools should not be perceived as a liability. Single-language schools promoted by parents and activists for reasons ranging from practicability to conserving certain traditions, cultures and ethnicities do not consider all the positive contributions of multilingualism. Not only does the policy adhere to the rights of minorities, but it also enhances intercultural understanding and reconciliation. Schools, especially primary schools, have become powerful agents against racism and ethnocentrism because the children develop together and learn to understand and appreciate each other. They are more likely to develop togetherness and overcome the suspicions of otherness. Single-language schools usually accommodate single cultures and further the single ethos and become islands of otherness withstanding the flow towards the togetherness essential for building a unified nation enriched by diversity. The same is true of the policy of multilingualism in courts of law. To testify in the

language of your choice, to be involved in cross-examination in your mother tongue and to be represented by a legal expert in a language of your choice is not only fair jurisprudence, but it is also an adequate presentation of human dignity and a core human right.

■ The tributaries of a unique culture

All rivers are fed by springs, fountains, streams and tributaries along the way. Every smaller tributary brings water to the big river. In the same way, cultural diversities in South Africa feed the national culture. Fashions are global, national and ethnic and are displayed alongside each other in the open spaces in South Africa. All forms of art express both unity and diversity. Music productions have the flavour of Westernism and Africanism. From the earliest days of settler presence in the Cape Colony, art was associated with European culture and heritage, and art forms of the Enlightenment featured prominently. But at the same time, African art emerged as old rock paintings and the colourful decoration of the living spaces of indigenous tribes – each with artistic references to the sustenance of nature, the essential values of life and religious symbols. The art of the indigenous tribes was overwhelmed in the colonial era by new South African art with a strong European flavour.

In his informative essay on the movement toward inclusive South African art, Pissarra (2015) explains how a new appreciation for traditional African art forms has enriched the development of art in South Africa. Black artists developed struggle art, expressing their predicament under colonial rule and their longing for freedom and dignity. This cause was taken up by white artists also, and the streams of art became a powerful channel of protest against the system of oppression. Despite efforts by the apartheid government to suppress struggle art in all genres, resistance became a popular typical South African phenomenon, and this resistance was expressed through the channels of diversity as a plea for freedom and justice and peaceful coexistence in a united nation.

The history of South African art is a good example of how diversity could enrich the higher ideal of nationhood and how we can all become Africans with a common loyalty and still direct our diversities as tributaries to the big river. If we block the tributaries, the river will become a narrow unimpressive stream. While we should do our utmost as moral agents to build the nation, to feed we-feeling and to nurture a national attitude of compassion to all, we should respect our diversities as expressed in historical symbols, customs and languages. Pursuing forms of cultural domination such as Anglicisation, globalisation, Africanism or Americanism or any other neo-colonial holistic model will rob our nation of our unique, enriching national formation.

■ Résumé

The major arguments pertaining to our moral compass leading us to one nation enriched by diversity can be summarised in the following statements:

- The nation-state has four characteristics, namely, a sovereign state with a government, a nation of people with the same origin, a national culture and a land with firm borders. However, migration patterns have weakened the concept of nation-states. All countries are steadily becoming plural, with minorities claiming space to observe the traits of their own ethnicity like religion, culture and language. Nowadays, the nation-state is a state with fixed borders and diverse citizens seeking open spaces for the observance of ethnic differentiation.
- The FC of the COPE of South Africa at Kliptown in 1955 proposed the formation of a South African nation, equal in all respects and sharing in the wealth of the country in a fair, non-discriminatory way. We should develop our country and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. This step was a bold step towards South African nationhood and should serve as our common ideal.
- However, nation-building in South Africa is not easy. Generations of people, especially in the white community, grew up with the idea of a holy identity that should be defended at all costs. Tribalism among indigenous African people is also an inhibiting power when it comes to nation-building and reconciliation. But for the first time in the history of southern contexts, signs of nationhood are discernible, and this movement must be stimulated by every South African. The love for the country and the emerging we-feeling must be stimulated by the core codes of national unity. These are patriotism, respect for the law, respect for the human rights of others and respect for our environment.
- The patriotism we need to establish in South Africa is 'constitutional patriotism'. Embracing the Constitution flows from reflecting together on what we have in common. We are developing a common memory and a common intention of 'never again'. Add to this emerging common memory the reality of our common country and our common destiny, and we may accept the urgency of common responsibilities. In this way, we could nurture the much-needed 'constitutional patriotism' that will not revert to something negative and destructive. We have one fatherland, one Constitution and one future, and we must manage politics, economics and social development within this wholeness. Patriotic actions will then be to prioritise the building, enrichment and defending of national interests. The nation comes first, and the integrity of the country is the priority. Any endeavour or investment or political policy should be driven by the question: What is in the interest of the nation? To what extent will actions be beneficial for the whole nation?

- Unity means a common respect for the law. To build this respect, a nation must not be over-legislated. Laws must serve the purpose of creating and maintaining an orderly space for people to flourish. Laws must not limit human achievements and joy but must open the road for growth and peace. The move to constitutionalism with a Bill of Rights is safeguarding South Africa from continuing over-legislation, and despite the many other problems we experienced and are facing now, we did not fall into the trap of post-colonial despotic rule. However, laws are of no use when they are not executed and policed properly and when jurisprudence is poorly managed. The law is the law for everyone but is of no use if it is not meticulously applied in all the phases of the judicial processes. In this respect, we face tremendous shortcomings with inadequate policing and jurisprudence, and as a result, lawlessness thrives. Lawlessness is primarily a moral problem, but everyone must comprehend that the law is the law, and this dictum surely adds value to our moral compass. It is of the utmost importance that authorities must pay attention to the many well-researched recommendations of legal theorists and apply them because the law can be the law only when its execution earns the respect of the community and they reap the fruits of security, order and justice. Such respect feeds patriotism because subjects are proud and protective when they live in a safe and orderly society. Morals work when they are constructive. It is the same with laws.
- Unity without a common respect for the human dignity and human rights of others is hollow. As in the case of good laws, these human rights have no value if they are not internalised by the community. Human rights must live in the heart before they can live in the law. Respect for the rights of others is not only a legal issue but a moral issue with deep religious roots. As image-bearers of God and as equals in the eyes of God, respect for others cannot be limited by forms of prejudice, which are usually rooted in ideologies and misuses of religions. The Great Commandment and the Golden Rule demand respect for the human dignity and human rights of others. The love God expects from us has no boundaries, and 'doing to others' does not qualify the others. It refers to all others. The Bill of Rights is there to provide protection against abuses of power but will be useless if it is not embedded in the love of the neighbour. A nation can thrive in unity and togetherness when neighbourly love overarches all social differences. When we restrict the love only to the in-group, all kinds of divisive and even destructive self-idolisation could disrupt the growing unity.
- The unity of a nation also lies in a mutual respect for the environment. Ecocide can rightly be termed the biggest crisis humankind is facing, and we are all victims. The 'green debate' in South Africa is far from satisfactory when compared with other industrial nations. We are lagging because of petty debates about the necessity to continue using

fossil fuels mostly to serve old socialist ideas about job security in the coal mining sector. Other countries already proved that eco-friendly and far-reaching measures can be taken without job losses because the development of clean energy creates new jobs, and workers in mining industries can be retrained to fill new occupations. South Africa ranks in the top five countries for dangerous emissions. Of special concern is the littering of plastic material that eventually ends up in the sea and adds to an increasing worldwide ecological problem. If we want to be one nation with a good future for the next generations, the government must call on scientists to design a thorough feasible, effective and sustainable policy to address pollution and to follow the examples of the initiatives of the countries that have made major strides in this direction. It will be of no use to build the nation and neglect its environment. If we want to continue the road to unifying nationhood, our moral compass must include our united push for eco-sensitivity because a decent nation cannot thrive in a dying environment.

- The South African nation has a history of mobility and movement. Indigenous groups, foreign slaves, immigrants and settlers left footprints that we cannot write out of our history, cannot deny and cannot destroy. The ongoing debate about dealing with the past and place of memories is very important because a shared perspective on South African history will help us to use our diversity to enrich the nation. There can be no better future without remembrance. However, forgiveness and growing towards nationhood 'do not render memories invalid or unfair' (Vorster 2009, p. 6). '[*M*]emories give substance to forgiveness and motivate a willingness to become involved in healing the present and planning a better future' (Vorster 2009, p. 6). As such, remembrance is a powerful, life-giving ingredient in the process of healing a community that wishes to become a humane and peaceful community. To proceed to this point, we should be willing to walk down memory lane among the symbols of the past. None of the symbols should be destroyed, denied, romanticised or idolised. Firstly, a symbol can be a symbol of historical events that remind us of evil done. In my opinion, these kinds of symbols reflecting the atrocities of the past should be viewed as 'never again' symbols. These symbols must bring our nation to a firm conviction that atrocities should never happen to anyone in South Africa again. We must develop a national agreement that could become a sacred national ethos and a code of conduct that direct us away from repeating the evils of the past. Secondly, commemorating past events is the democratic right of every person. Remembrance and commemoration should happen within the framework of reconciliation as the goal. Remember within the code of 'never again' and commemorate in such a way that past atrocities are not idolised and romanticised and that past evils are denied or erased

from the national memory. Remembrance must be holistic, and commemoration must reflect on the good and the bad. In this way, our history can be an asset in the process of understanding each other and our efforts not to repeat mistakes of the past while finding comfort and inspiration in the positive reconciliatory memories of the recent past that feed our growing 'we-feeling'.

- The application of the active plural option of religious freedom enshrined in the South African Constitution and the way in which this right has been applied up to now is an excellent example of how all other forms of diversity could be managed. South Africans can observe religious practices and rites in public institutions if it is not exclusive or discriminates against others or forces others to take part in these actions against their will. The same model is useful in dealing with multilingualism and multiculturalism. Differences in language and culture also have the potential to tear a nation apart, just like religious persecution. Twenty-seven languages are spoken in South Africa. The Constitution regards twelve of the most spoken languages as official languages. The recognition of these languages as official languages entails that people have the right to use one of these languages as a way of communication in the official social domains. The new democratic Constitution presented a reconciliatory language system that offers primary and secondary schools the freedom to choose their own language of tuition on the condition that no person should be excluded and accommodated so that they are not discriminated against.

- The policy of multilingualism in education is not without problems. Experts indicate that certain factors impact on multilingual teaching, such as the preparedness of teachers, their language efficiency, the resources used and the socio-economic status of the learners. Research shows that teaching practice and learning can be transformed for the better when learners can use their indigenous language as their first language. They propose that teachers and subject advisors should continuously empower teachers in translation as well as the use of novel strategies such as codeswitching in bilingual and multilingual classrooms. South African official indigenous languages can play an effective role if teachers and their learners know exactly how to use these effectively in classrooms. Multilingualism at schools should not be perceived as a liability. Single-language schools promoted by parents and activists for reasons ranging from practicability to conserving certain traditions, cultures and ethnicities do not consider all the positive contributions of multilingualism. Not only does the policy adhere to the rights of minorities, but it also enhances intercultural understanding and reconciliation.

- All rivers are fed by springs, fountains, streams and tributaries along the way. Every smaller tributary brings water to the big river. In the same

way, cultural diversities in South Africa feed the national culture. Fashions are global, national and ethnic and are all displayed in the open spaces in South Africa. All forms of art express both unity and diversity. Music productions have the flavour of Westernism and Africanism. Black artists developed struggle art, expressing their predicament under colonial rule and their longing for freedom and dignity. This cause was taken up by white artists also, and the streams of struggle art became a powerful channel of protest against the system of oppression. Struggle art became a typical South African phenomenon, and this resistance was expressed along the channels of diversity as a plea for freedom and justice and peaceful coexistence in a united nation. The history of South African art is a good example of how diversity could enrich the higher ideal of nationhood and how we all can become Africans with a common loyalty and still direct our diversities as tributaries of the big river. If we block the tributaries, the river will become a narrow unimpressive stream. Pursuing forms of cultural domination, such as Anglicisation, Globalisation, Africanism or Americanism or any other neo-colonial holistic model will rob our nation of our unique, enriching national formation.

When dealing with nation-building and the development of a community of character, the role of leadership must be investigated. Leaders must indeed lead us on our journey. Do we have leaders to fulfil this task? What do we expect from them? Can we trust them in view of their performance? In the next chapter, we will pore over these and other statements and questions regarding moral leadership.

Finding leaders with moral fibre and citizens engaging in moral intervention

■ Introduction

Leadership in South Africa is currently in crisis. Years of corruption at all levels of governance in South Africa created a deep and pervasive distrust in political leadership. Furthermore, the distrust is enhanced by indecisive conduct by the head of state, unfulfilled promises by government officials regarding improved service delivery, infighting among factions in political parties (especially the ANC), immoral conduct by leaders who should be examples of honesty and decency to the public, power abuse for personal political gain and irresponsible racial blame-shifting and incitement that flare up from time to time. Cases of violent conduct in Parliament, televised to the whole nation, aggravate the dismay against and distrust of political leadership. In a recent opinion paper, Naudé (2016, p. 1), a researcher in the School of Economics at Stellenbosch University, laments the leadership crisis in South Africa and provides plausible reasons for his concern about the degeneration of political leadership since the high-quality leadership of Mandela and Mbeki. It is worthwhile to discuss the diagnoses and analysis

provided by Naudé. He opines that 'the simplest model of leadership works with three dimensions: vision, values and execution' (Naudé 2016). He argues that (Naudé 2016):

> If a business or a country does not have a clear vision of what is to be achieved, the danger exists that it becomes stuck in the operational problems of 'today'. It runs from one urgent matter to the next, working frantically to keep its head above the water, but in the meantime, it has lost direction, but would not know it. In today's competitive environment, a lack of a clear future shape will almost inevitably mean others will overtake you as they orientate themselves toward opportunities not yet seen by yourself. I am not talking feel-good, fuzzy vision statements that appear on marketing material: I am talking hardcore vision, backed by clear implementation plans that stretch everyone far beyond their current comfort zone. (p. 1)

Furthermore, Naudé concedes that South Africa's recently announced NDP (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2014) could be lauded by some as the map towards fulfilling a vision. They can be justified in holding this point of view and are convinced that this plan is a positive and visionary step most reasonable South Africans should buy into. But it will be of no use if the second dimension of leadership does not follow, and this includes: 'leadership, execution, deeds, tangible results, operational efficiency, project management within budget and on time, expertise to actually do the job'. The lack of execution is, in his opinion, 'the weak spot in our system' (Naudé 2016, p. 1).

South African political leaders are more than willing to construct plans: 'and our government loves indabas and breakaways to think up new plans and appoint commissions to oversee their development'. Unfortunately, these plans come to nothing, 'because of no leadership execution – mostly due to incapabilities and incapacities'. Naudé does not refer to the Ramaphosa presidential leadership since 2017, but his policy of taking the long way with respect to the Zuma age of corruption fits the growing suspicion of indecisive leadership. It is slowly eroding the trust he re-established with the commencement of his presidency, during what was called 'Ramaphoria'. The songs of praise for 'Ramaphoria' have become silent because of his inertia of authoritative and decisive action. The result of his indecisiveness is that we are standing still, and, in some cases, going backwards. Naudé (2016) is convinced that:

> [P]lanning is not the problem. Money is not the problem. The people who should do the job are the problem. They draw payment each month. They are quick to demand more. But they fail in action. (p. 1)

The third dimension of leadership is values. Naudé talks about moral and work values. 'A moral value like honesty or trustworthiness means nothing unless it determines and shapes conduct' (Naudé 2016, p. 2). Values are much more than written codes of conduct. Values are not written codes

shaped in skilful phrases and gripping language. Values must be seen in the actions and conduct of leadership (Naudé 2016):

> You do not know the values of a local government or business by reading their so-called values-list. You 'see' the values in your interaction with them. You know quickly whether they walk the talk. (p. 2)

Naudé (2016) concluded that the fact:

> [7]hat South Africa and the world live amid a value crisis has been noted by many. The moral character of our leaders is questioned as newspapers week after week tell us the stories of self-enrichment and corruption. (p. 3)

Naudé focuses on the crisis of political leadership. But it is not only political leadership that fails to inspire confidence in contemporary South Africa. The prophetic voices of religious leaders are quiet amid our moral crisis, and it seems that academic leaders have little interest in speaking out against moral decay other than just researching the state of events. Leaders in civil society are active in the causes they pursue but cannot claim to promote visionary leadership across the board. Corporate leadership has pockets of leaders aiding political leaders in planning and executing, but infighting between political factions within the ideologically divided ANC is smothering their suggestions on a regular basis.

A nation without moral and inspiring leadership cannot reach greatness. Inspiring leaders, such as Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Paul Kruger, Nelson Mandela, FW de Klerk, Beyers Naudé, Desmond Tutu, Anton Rupert and others made bold decisions in difficult times, and their transformational and inspirational leadership shaped the history of the country for the better. They are remembered for visionary leadership, moral inspiration and giving hope. They proved that moral leadership is essential for a nation to become a community of character. The quality of leadership in South Africa should be elevated alongside the willingness of citizens to engage fervently in moral agency. None of the things addressed in the previous chapters can be achieved if not founded on a good and sound moral order. The moral compass we are seeking must comprise moral leadership and a citizenry that is captivated and participating in moral intervention wherever the need arises. For this reason, I venture to argue what I regard as essentials when it comes to defining moral leadership and moral agency.

■ Leadership and stewardship

No community can find its way without leaders. Over the centuries, monarchs led their subjects according to certain customs. There were Caesars and kings, self-appointed dictators and despots, presidents

(some for life) and prime ministers. Sometimes, a religious leader acted as the political leader, as was evident in the Caecaro-papacy in the Middle Ages. The method of periodisation in historiography using the reign of leaders or dynasties to define historical phases (e.g. the Victorian era, French Revolution or, nearer to home, the timespan of apartheid) is very popular because of the influences of leadership. More often than not, historians will identify and define a period according to the influence of leadership at a certain point in time. The idea of a Mandela era in South Africa will certainly feature prominently in the historiography of South Africa because of the major paradigm shift he brought about. Some eras were very dark, such as Hitler's national socialism and the Stalinist communist rule of terror.

Nations depend on their leaders in whichever way they function. Leaders have led people to safe havens and prosperity, as well as to wars and destruction. South Africa is a good example of how bad leadership can lead a nation into turmoil in one decade and how many citizens can follow bad leadership to the dungeons of despair. Leadership is necessary but can become very dangerous and suspect. People cannot function without authority, but authority can lead them to the good or the bad. Building moral leadership in South Africa requires answers to two fundamental questions: Where does authority come from? And what is the essence of leadership? I engage with these two fundamentals from a Christian perspective with the conviction that what Christianity teaches about leadership resonates with other traditions in global ethics. Kessler and Kretschmar (2015, p. 2) are correct in their assessment that the Christian ethics on leadership comprises not only Christian studies but also studies in other disciplines and applies to leadership in general. The foundational teaching in Christianity is that all human authority comes from God. Leadership is a gift from God. God consigns authority to humans to enable them to rule with the aim of keeping order and justice. Scripture has an abundance of passages and references on the responsibilities and conduct of good leadership. Subjects should see in a leader an appointee of God. The fifth commandment in the Bible reads: 'Honour your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you' (Ex 20:12; New International Version [NIV]). The synecdochic character of this command endows this commandment with all authority. Therefore, in the elucidation of the fifth commandment, the Heidelberg Catechism explains the range of the commandment as follows:

Q & A 104
Q: What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?
A: That I honour, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I submit myself with proper obedience to all their good

teaching and discipline[1]; and also that I be patient with their failings[2] for through them God chooses to rule us:[3]

1. Exodus 21:17; Proverbs 1:8, 4:1; Romans 13:1–2; Ephesians 5:21–22, 6:1–9; Colossians 3:18–4:1.
2. Proverbs 20:20, 23:22; 1 Peter 2:18.
3. Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1–8; Ephesians 6:1–9; Colossians 3:18–21.

Of special relevance is the reference to scripture in Romans 13, which reads:

> Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (vv. 1, 2)

Authority as a gift from God has two important implications. Firstly, leaders must be respected if they do not interfere with the biblical instruction that people should be more obedient to God than to people (Ac 5:29). Obedience to God precedes obedience to authorities, but when authorities rule within the framework of the ethic of the kingdom of God, subjects must be obedient to the authorities. They should always respect and honour leadership because the leaders act on their behalf to maintain peace, order and stability. In many countries, leaders take an oath before God to fulfil their task with dignity, fairness and moral trustworthiness.

Disrespect for authority and leadership has become an alarming phenomenon in South African social life. This phenomenon comes to the fore in the way critics speak with and about leaders. They use disrespectful and cynical language that does not respect the title of authority. Very often in the media, journalists will refer to the current president as simply 'Cyril' or 'Ramaphosa' instead of President Ramaphosa. The disrespect is even worse when they report on the former president, Jacob Zuma. Even though citizens may and should raise concern about the policies and actions of leadership, leaders must still be respected because of their office and God's gift of authority. Leadership can be replaced by the means offered by the Constitution, but it must be done with dignity and respect for the office. Politicians themselves can take the lead in repairing the dignity of the office of the president and other leaders by debating issues in a decent, dignified and honourable way. What we often see on television when parliamentary actions are televised is conduct that not only shows total disrespect for the higher offices but also total disrespect for Parliament itself. Parliamentarians are elected to execute the mandate of their supporters in a democratic way and not to disturb or handicap the democratic process and bring Parliament into disrepute. Conduct in Parliament is televised, and people see and hear their chosen leaders in action. The conduct in Parliament spills over to the streets. Disrespectful language that belittles leaders, especially the office

of the president, then proliferates on the streets and becomes the weeds of disrespect for leadership in general. Hate speech in Parliament, derogatory and denigrating language and inciting rhetoric become hate speech, derogatory and denigrating language and inciting rhetoric on the street among citizens, and in such a way, disrespect for leadership takes root in the community.

It must be mentioned that the leadership of the EFF bares a considerable responsibility to re-address their denigrating conduct in Parliament and at their open rallies because they bring national leadership in disrepute. Their conduct of calling for violence, using hate speech and racist terminology and incitement does not belong in a country striving for nation-building, good leadership and a decent constitutional democracy. Their conduct overwhelms and disturbs their noble cause to prioritise the poor, and this behaviour is not fair to their supporters.

Furthermore, what is alarming is the growing culture of disrespect for leadership at state schools. More and more teachers and concerned parents lament the increasing lack of learner discipline in the school environment, as proven by many recent empirical studies. With reference to other recent research and their own research, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 2) report that the lack of discipline is growing, and it is inhibiting the education of learners more and more. The lack of discipline manifests as acts of violence, bullying, racial conflicts, cheating, stealing, absence and abuse of teachers in various ways. The research calls on parents as the first line of education to take the prime responsibility for raising their children to honour disciplinary measures at schools. We have discussed the responsibility of parents as the primary educators of their children in Chapter 6 (see section titled 'Steering towards healthy family life in South Africa'), and I agree with this appeal wholeheartedly. Disrespect for the authority of teachers impedes good education. In this way, the right of a child to receive good education is violated by those who have no respect for the authority of educators. Many educators leave the system or overreact with abusive disciplinary measures because of personal stress related to disrespect and abuse from undisciplined learners. Moreover, the constant stress of working with ill-disciplined and abusive learners who lack respect for the authority of teachers leads to an alarming rate of teacher burnout.[7] Stress accounts for one out five teachers leaving the profession. Disrespect for leadership in the school environment does not only hamper quality education but also spills over to other social spaces and breeds disrespect for leadership in other social institutions. If learners do not respect their teacher's authority, how will they learn to respect leadership in general? If we want to build a

7. To grasp the negative implications of this trend, see the study of Rabie-Steinberg (2021).

nation as a community of character, we will have to nurture respect for leadership, especially among the youth.

The second implication of God's gift of authority and leadership is that leaders must be worthy of respect. They must earn respect from their subjects by being an example of honesty, dedication and moral conduct. Corrupt leadership creates not only corrupt citizens but also disrespectful followers. Some citizens will follow the corrupt leaders into the swamp of self-enrichment and a laissez-faire life with no concern for the way they betray the country and make the lives of others miserable. On the contrary, disgruntled citizens lose confidence in leadership in general. They do not trust leaders because of the immoral conduct of some in their capacity as leaders. This distrust soon affects their perception of leadership in general. While many politicians in South Africa are dedicated and honest, many people will label all politicians as corrupt and untrustworthy. Such generalised stereotyping results from the actions of a few corrupt leaders, and the higher the level of corrupt leadership, the more this kind of stereotyping progresses. This tendency is growing in all institutions where leadership is concerned – politics, SOEs, the corporate sector, civil societies and faith-based communities. The only way to restore trust in leadership is leadership training in the various spheres where authority and leadership are important.

Usually, leaders are trained in management skills, problem-solving and managing their subjects. This kind of training is, of course, of the utmost importance, but the training of all leaders must also include leadership ethics because every leader is an agent of a value system containing either good or bad values. No one prefers bad values like striving for the highest profits, driving the labour force irrespective of their mental and physical conditions, abusing resources to reach optimum gains and manipulating followers with big promises in exchange for their support. This kind of behaviour is driven by the ethical theory of consequentialism, which means that the end justifies the means. If the goal of my leadership style is the highest profit, the way in which I reach this goal does not really matter. The value lies in the good end of high profits. Leadership training must translate the values of the Great Commandment and Golden Rule into moral values that serve leadership conduct in the specific area of leadership. For example, what responsibilities would I have as a leader if I wanted to adhere to the commandment of love and treat my subordinates as I want to be treated? The answer lies in serving leadership. The golden thread of moral leadership is serving leadership. Behind this statement lies an important moral paradigm that is highly regarded in Christian and global ethics; that is, that leadership is essentially stewardship. This statement needs further reflection.

Servanthood and stewardship are very powerful biblical moral concepts. Reconciliation with God in Christ and the bestowment of the Spirit of God on people turns them away from themselves to the other. Self-centredness turns into altruism. No longer is the person in Christ a lonely, self-centred pilgrim seeking a fulfilling and good life in a broken world marred by evil, but part of a new humanity, duty-bound to enter his service by recreating the disrupted world and pursuing the common good. Stewardship and servanthood are the innate qualities of God's new humanity because it is rooted in the servanthood of Christ. The oldest hymn in the New Testament (Phlp 2:5–11) sets the attitude of Christ as the foundation, direction and model for his followers to imitate. This pericope reads (Phlp 2):

> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (vv. 1–11)

In an earlier publication (Vorster 2007), I discussed the meaning of the mindset (attitude) of Christ and how the imitation of the attitude of Christ underlies biblical ethics. The Christological foundation of biblical ethics is applied to contemporary South African ethical issues. The main principles derived from this are Christ's self-sacrifice [*Kenosis*], taking the nature of a servant and humility and obedience to God. Christ's act of 'taking the nature of a servant' then becomes one of the major features of life according to the attitude of Christ. Being a Christian means being a servant. The followers of Jesus were called to follow him as servants and stewards, and this following is not limited to spiritual rites and observation of faith and testimony; it includes being servants to the meek, the poor, the lonely and the oppressed. Serving Christ is to serve people in their need (Mt 25:31–46, 7; Jn 13:12–17). Bonhoeffer (1995, p. 61) noted that true servants of God are those willing to always struggle for a good cause. A true servant of God is also a true servant of people and a steward for people – like the self-sacrificing Christ.

According to these theological principles, any form of leadership should be servant-leadership. Leaders are stewards of their followers. In leadership training, this foundational principle of leadership should be high on the agenda and should be included in codes of conduct pertaining to leadership in all domains of authority. Servant-leaders will not be involved in corruption, lawlessness or any form of power abuse but will put the people first [*batho pele!*].

■ Leadership accountability

In the liberal democratic discourse, the topic of leadership accountability is one of the famous topics on the agenda because of the many failures in the South African leadership environment. When dealing with the moral compass, this topic should also be discussed. According to the code of conduct of the Parliament of South Africa (2022, p. 1), 'MPs are elected representatives, they must be accountable to the people of South Africa, and they must act in the public interest'. Furthermore, the document maintains that: 'Parties are elected on the strength of what they stand for, and party MPs should be able to explain what they have been doing to carry out their duties' (Parliament of South Africa 2022, p. 1). Accountability functions within the contexts of the mandates of the parties they represent (Parliament of South Africa 2022):

> Because party mandates are temporary (elections are held every five years), MPs are accountable in the sense that they may not be re-elected if they are not good public representatives or if they do not deliver on party promises. (p. 1)

Parliamentarians must sign a code of conduct (Parliament of South Africa 2022, p. 1): 'The code outlines the minimum ethical standards of behaviour that South Africans expect of public representatives, including upholding propriety, integrity and ethical values in their conduct'. Furthermore, 'the purpose of the code is to create public trust and confidence in public representatives and to protect the integrity of Parliament' (Parliament of South Africa 2022, p. 1). Several issues are addressed, and for the purposes of this argument and leadership morality, the following statements are important regarding the adherence of a member of Parliament (Parliament of South Africa 2022):

> Selflessness: take decisions solely in terms of public interest and without regard to personal financial or other material benefits for themselves, their immediate family, their business partners, or their friends; Integrity: steadfastly avoid placing themselves under any financial or other obligation to any outside individual or organization where this creates a conflict or potential conflict of interest with his or her role as a member; Objectivity: in carrying out public business, including making public appointments, do so only on the basis of merit and in accordance with constitutional imperatives; Openness: Members should be as open as possible about all decisions and actions, bearing in mind the constitutional obligation for openness and transparency; Honesty: Members must declare private interests relating to public duties and resolve any conflict arising in a way that protects public interest; and Leadership: promote and support ethical conduct by leadership and example. (p. 1)

It is expected from all members to abide by the principles, rules and obligations of this code (Parliament of South Africa 2022):

> [*T*]o uphold the law by virtue of their oath of affirmation and act on all occasions to in accordance with the public trust placed in them. To discharge their

obligations in terms of the Constitution, to Parliament and the public at large, by placing the public interest above their own interests. (p. 1)

They must always maintain public confidence and trust in the integrity of Parliament and thereby engender the respect and confidence that society needs to have in Parliament as a representative institution. Added to these expectations in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, they must commit to the eradication of all forms of discrimination. The Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament is an important and good document, but the morality of leadership accountability is not suitably developed. Accountability should, in the first place, be accountability to God and the values of his rule contained in global ethics as a contextualisation of the human person' innate sense of morality. When leadership is defined within the context of stewardship to God, breaches of the oath of office will be taken more seriously.

Do political leaders in Parliament comply with these moral codes? I believe many of them do so, but the conduct of some makes a mockery of the code of conduct and disturbs the integrity of Parliament. The institutions that must implement and protect these values are also not well developed. We seldom see the applications of remedial actions when the oath of office is continuously broken. We do not hear apologies to the nation or see resignations by parliamentarians when they abuse the oath. Parliamentarians promise to put the public interest above their own and to engender the respect and confidence society needs in political authority. But how can these obligations be fulfilled if people, especially the poor, are left for weeks without water and proper service delivery? When leaders do not care for the citizens, they are not only denigrating their oath but also violating the constitutional rights of the people.

A good Constitution and a good code of conduct are useless if they do not live as guiding and protected principles in society. They are more than symbols of a respected society. They are there to drive the nation to develop as a community of character. In this process, the accountability of leadership and the remedial instruments when deviations are noted must be a priority. Abusive and self-centred leaders who pursue their own interests to the detriment of the people and who constantly get away with this immoral conduct can hardly be agents of moral formation.

■ Meritorious leadership

In the modern world, leadership must be trained to execute duties related to decisions requiring knowledge and expertise. Just as any business cannot function without well-trained officials and a labour force that understands the art of business and the modern means to be successful, political leadership should be elected on merit. Unfortunately, this is not

the case in South Africa. To rectify this limitation, firstly, it is the responsibility of the electorate, and secondly, it is the task of the political parties who propose candidates for leadership positions. It is a tendency in South Africa that personal popularity, oratorial skills and manipulation of people by gifts and other benefits determine the election of a leader, rather than merit and education and training. The *Mail & Guardian* investigative weekly newspaper ran an article on 18 November 2018 about the tertiary education of parliamentarians.

In the article, *Mail & Guardian*[8] 'tracked down the educational qualifications of more than half of South Africa's public representatives and, overall, they are a […] well-educated group', but not necessarily in the areas required for governance such as law, economics and education. They reported that, 'many MPs insisted that educational qualifications are not the key to a seat in Parliament – being a good politician is what counts'. A member without any tertiary education opined that (*Mail & Guardian* 2018):

> The Constitution of the Republic is very clear on who qualifies to be a member of this house […] [*The*] Constitution made it this way so that it did not matter whether you are a mine worker or a brain surgeon, you could still participate in our democracy. (p. 2)

Another politician refused to provide his qualifications and maintained that 'his qualification was that he has been elected by his constituency'. Another replied (*Mail & Guardian* 2018):

> To me you don't need qualifications to be a politician. You need to be able to think on your feet and know what is happening in life. I know a lot of people from all parties who are good at being politicians and they don't need qualifications. (p. 2)

The article refers to the political analyst Mcebisi Ndletyana, who agreed that politicians are not elected on qualifications, but on the popularity of their party. He commented that in politics, 'technical know-how is not a prerequisite' (*Mail & Guardian* 2018):

> What you need to have is experience and knowledge and sympathise with people you are meant to represent. If they have technical expertise, it is a bonus, but it is not a prerequisite of a popular democracy. You can have that in an aristocratic democracy where only the rich and the educated qualify for office. (p. 3)

It seems that education and training are not high on the agenda to establish meritorious leadership, and cadre deployment is still highly regarded in the establishment of leadership. This is a huge problem that needs to be addressed if we want to restore good leadership that is worthy of respect and suitable to follow.

8. Please see the *Mail & Guardian* (2018).

■ Exemplary leadership

Leading by example is one of the oldest moral principles underlying leadership and is engraved in global ethics. The Christian tradition founds the concept of exemplary leadership on the exemplary leadership of Christ. His leadership was decisive, as indicated by his reprimanding of people acting against the rule of God and the morality of the kingdom. He drives the money changers out of the temple (Mt 21:12–13; Mk 11:15–19; Lk 19:45–48; Jn 2:13–22) and denounces the unrepentant ancient cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (Mt 11:20–24). At the same time, he comforted the needy and acted as the voice of the disadvantaged. He healed the sick and set the example of compassion. Furthermore, he was the custodian of truth and righteousness among his people. He was truthful, decisive and trustworthy, with great compassion and kindness, focused on expanding the rule of God. The leadership style of Jesus can be used as a design for all leadership.

Although not referring to this model of exemplary leadership, the Corporate Finance Institute (CFI) (2022) proposes six ways of leading by example in practical terms. I discuss them briefly and then consider whether political leadership in South Africa fits the design. The institution's first proposition is that exemplary leadership commences with listening to followers to grasp their needs and expectations. A good leader should know that they lead people with many competencies and that leaders are not experts in all these fields and do not know everything. Leaders must interact with followers and be willing to accept advice.

How does political leadership in South Africa perform in this regard? It seems that actions such as cadre deployment, racial prejudice and ideological preferences still impede the important principle of listening. The lack of consulting experts, irrespective of race, in SOEs is a huge problem and contributes to the demise of these macro corporations. Are they listening to the people protesting in the streets over poor service delivery and degrading living conditions? Are they listening to the well-founded criticism of investigative journalists and civil societies? Listening must be followed by decisive actions. In South Africa, the present political leaders rather opt for eloquent promises, and that is where it stops. When followers get the impression that they are not really being listened to, the temperature of protests rises and spills over to violence.

The second way to lead by example is respect for the chain of command (CFI109 2022). A good organisation has a chain of command so that expertise can be utilised and subjects know what route to take when problems must be addressed. This aspect of exemplary leadership in South Africa does not function because of a lack of expertise and accountability in the lower ranks of the chain of command. South Africans experience

much frustration when dealing with state departments. Chains of command are badly organised, information gets lost, officials are untrained and sometimes they are just absent. How can such a non-existent or disrupted chain of command get the message to leadership when they are in such a disorganised state?

Under the heading 'Get your hands dirty', the CFI (2022) says the following with respect to exemplary leadership:

> Although leaders are meant to give directions, they should know their trades well and get involved in the actual work. For example, a leader can be leading by example by accompanying the marketing team on a field visit to popularize the company's products. The leader should pitch clients the same way the marketing staff is doing, and this will boost the overall morale of the team. Not only will the leader develop new skills and knowledge, but he will also build trust with the employees. Getting involved in the actual trade gives the leader a snapshot of the challenges that the marketing staff go through and help work out ways to make their work easier. (p. 1)

Very important is the fourth characteristic of exemplary leadership highlighted in the study by the CFI (2022), which is that leaders must deliver on their promises:

> Good leaders must deliver actual results rather than just giving promises every time. They must work toward getting tangible results and focus less on the past achievements that they have not been able to equal afterward. (p. 2)

The report proposes managerial action to fulfil promises and to create plausible results in a masterful way to build the trust of the subject. Promises to make important changes and deal with corruption and poor service delivery are an easy way for South African politicians to evade responsibilities. The promises become hollow because of very few solutions to huge and damaging problems. Some people must wait for years for promised housing and school infrastructure is not improved despite repeated, futile promises. The prosecution of dishonest and corrupt leaders is delayed despite the many promises in this regard from the top leadership. People are cynical about the proven revelation of the issue of state capture and the promises to deal with what has been done. They feel that these promises will never lead to decisive action. We are left with many eloquently phrased promises, just to see no movement to act decisively. No community of character can grow on promises.

Fifthly, the CFI (2022) mentions that another prerequisite for exemplary leadership is to resolve conflicts quickly. Every organisation has conflicts in the leadership echelons, between leaders and subjects and between subjects themselves from time to time. Continuous conflict erodes an organisation. The same is true of a political party and the political corpus. Conflicts and frictions must be addressed immediately through decisive action by leadership. Where there is no immediate action, group formation

takes place, factions develop and governance becomes paralysed. Paralysed governance is pretty much an outstanding characteristic of leadership in South Africa today. The different factions in the ruling ANC party, with their ideological confusion that I addressed in Chapter 3 (see 'Ideological confusion, loss of direction and impoverishment'), constitute conflicts and frictions that virtually paralyse the execution of policies, sense of direction and decisive leadership. The ANC is at war with itself, and the war manifests in the choices of leadership in all the departments in the areas of local, provincial and national governance. They do not govern the country to develop as a community of character but fight with each other to claim small, worthless victories that are of no use for the building of a nation and to inspire the people to work together. The current government is impotent and the community is in disarray. Mentioning other recent flaws in the ANC rulership, Merten (2022, p. 1) remarks that 'against this backdrop, public trust has dipped in politicians, governance and public institutions, according to just about any polling service'.

The sixth principle for exemplary leadership proposed by the study of the CFI is that people should be valued. This is perhaps the most important principle, and it resonates well with the South African dictum '*batho pele*' [the people first]. Considering the Great Commandment of the love of God and the neighbour, putting people first describes the core element of the moral compass we should find and use. Again, we must ask: How do we put people first when we are involved in corruption and self-enrichment at the expense of other people? How can we claim exemplary leadership when many of our children do not have access to schools or are educated at dilapidated facilities? What example is set by 'exemplary leaders' when they stir up violence and disruption by inflammable orations with the ring of racism? A leader could be competent in every field mentioned, but if they do not put the people first, their leadership is futile. Leadership in South Africa has much to learn from this study by the CFI. They should do so because, without exemplary leadership, the moral compass will bring us nowhere.

■ Citizens participating in moral intervention

No moral compass can function properly in an immoral community. Moral people must design a moral compass fitting their own circumstances. In this study, we endeavour to establish our present position after the harsh years of colonialism. We investigate the need to progress to economic justice, the state and future of family life, reconciliation, forgiveness, national unity and diversity, dealing with the culture of violence, leadership and many more related issues. The purpose is to design a moral compass fitting our progress to a society of peace and hope, order and justice, human dignity, and flourishing personhood. We exploit God's gift of the moral

sense to all people, and because of this gift, we can design our moral compass on the foundation of global ethics. Failure will be no excuse.

All moral agency begins with the individual. We must love our God, our neighbour and our environment, which is our neighbourhood. Love is the fountain of all morality. Love is the launching pad of our moral agency in our country. From this starting point, South Africans must become involved in moral intervention in the domains of society where they interact with moral agencies. The participating intervention is focused and to the point. Firstly, live a truly moral life. Pursue honesty, justice, fairness, truth and peace. Be responsible and accountable. Respect the human dignity of others and honour authority. Prioritise the plight of the poor and nourish family life. In short, love your neighbour and your neighbourhood.

Secondly, be a voice against the plagues of immoral social conduct by the people running the system. Denounce all forms of violence and corruption. Blow the whistle where selfish exploitation raises its head. Use the instruments of the Constitution to replace incompetent leadership. Sow the seeds of morality and defend our institutions against moral decay.

◼ Résumé

In our search for a moral compass, the question of moral leadership must be investigated. The investigation reported in this chapter points to the following important factors that should be addressed to enhance moral and trustworthy leadership – a leadership that could lead us to newness:

• Leadership in South Africa is currently in a crisis. Years of corruption at all levels of governance in South Africa created a deep and wide-ranging distrust in political leadership. Furthermore, the distrust is enhanced by indecisive conduct by the head of state; unfulfilled promises by government officials regarding improved service delivery; infighting in political parties, especially the ANC; immoral conduct by leaders who should be examples of honesty and decency to the public; power abuse for personal political gain; and irresponsible racial blame-shifting and incitement that flare up from time to time. Cases of violent conduct in Parliament, televised to the whole nation, aggravate the dismay in political leadership and the distrust. But it is not only political leadership that fails to inspire confidence and inspiration in contemporary South Africa. The prophetic voices of religious leaders are quiet amid our moral crisis, and it seems that academic leaders have little interest in speaking out against moral decay other than just researching the state of events. Leaders in civil society are active in the causes they pursue but cannot claim to promote visionary leadership across the board. Corporate

leadership has pockets of leaders aiding the political leaders to plan and execute moral leadership but infighting between political factions within the ideologically divided ANC regularly smothers their suggestions.

• A nation without moral and inspiring leadership cannot reach greatness. The golden thread of moral leadership is servant-leadership. Behind this statement lies an important moral paradigm that is highly regarded in Christian and global ethics, that is, that leadership is essentially stewardship. Building moral leadership in South Africa requires answers to two fundamental questions: Where does authority come from and what is the essence of leadership? The foundational teaching in Christianity is that all human authority comes from God. Leadership is a gift from God. Authority as a gift of God has two important implications. Firstly, leaders must be respected if they do not impede the biblical instruction to people to be more obedient to God than to people. Obedience to God precedes obedience to authorities, but when authorities rule within the framework of the ethic of the kingdom of God, subjects must be obedient to the authorities. They should always respect and honour leadership because the leaders act on their behalf to maintain peace, order and stability. In many countries, leaders take an oath before God to fulfil their task with dignity, fairness and moral trustworthiness. But disrespect for authority and leadership has become an alarming phenomenon in South African social life. This phenomenon comes to the fore in the way critics speak to and about leaders using disrespectful and cynical language that does not respect the title of authority. The second implication of God's gift of authority and leadership is that leaders must be worthy of respect. They must earn respect from their subjects by being an example of honesty, dedication and moral conduct. Corrupt leadership creates not only corrupt citizens but also disrespectful followers. Some citizens will follow the corrupt leaders into the swamp of self-enrichment and *laissez-faire* life with no concern for the way they betray the country and make the lives of others miserable. Disgruntled citizens lose confidence in leadership in general and distrust leaders because of the immoral conduct of some in their capacity of leadership.

• The parliamentary 'code of conduct' expects all members to abide by the principles, rules and obligations of this code: 'to uphold the law by virtue of their oath of affirmation and act on all occasions in accordance with the public trust placed in them. To discharge their obligations in terms of the Constitution, to Parliament and the public at large, by placing the public interest above their own interests'. They must always maintain public confidence and trust in the integrity of Parliament, thereby engendering the respect and confidence that society needs to have in Parliament as a representative institution. Added to these expectations in the performance of their duties and responsibilities,

they must commit to the eradication of all forms of discrimination. The Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament is an important and good document, but the morality of leadership accountability is not suitably developed. Accountability should, in the first place, be accountability to God and the values of his rule contained in global ethics as a contextualisation of the human person's innate sense of morality. When leadership is defined within the context of stewardship to God, breaches of the oath of office will be taken more seriously.

• To lead by example is one of the oldest moral principles underlying leadership and is engraved in global ethics. The Christian tradition founds the concept of exemplary leadership on the exemplary leadership of Christ. His leadership was decisive, as indicated by his reprimanding of people acting against the rule of God and the morality of the kingdom. At the same time, he comforted the needy and acted as the voice of the disadvantaged. He healed the sick and set the example of compassion. Furthermore, he was the custodian of truth and righteousness. He was truthful, decisive and trustworthy, with great compassion and kindness, focused on expanding the rule of God. The leadership style of Jesus can be used as a design for all leadership. It entails listening to followers to grasp their needs and expectations. Listening must be followed by decisive actions. In South Africa, present political leaders rather opt for eloquent promises, and that is where it stops. When followers get the impression that they are not really being listened to, the temperature of protests rises and spills over into violence.

• The second way of leading by example is respect for the chain of command and becoming involved in mutual actions to solve problems. Furthermore, leaders must deliver on their promises rather than just giving quick promises every time difficulties appear. They should resolve problems quickly. Furthermore, exemplary leadership means that people should be valued. This is perhaps the most important principle of leadership, and it resonates well with the South African dictum '*batho pele*' [the people first]. Considering the Great Commandment of the love of God and the neighbour, putting people first describes the core element of the moral compass we should find and use. Leaders could be competent in every field mentioned above, but if they do not put the people first, their leadership is futile. Leadership in South Africa has much to learn from this important leadership principle. They should do so because, without exemplary leadership, the moral compass will bring us nowhere.

• No moral compass can function properly in an immoral community. Moral people must design a moral compass fitting their own circumstances. In this study, we endeavoured to establish our present position after the harsh years of colonialism. We investigated the need for progress to economic justice, the state and future of family life,

reconciliation, forgiveness, national unity and diversity, dealing with the culture of violence, leadership and many more related issues. The purpose is to design a moral compass fitting our path towards a society of peace and hope, of order and justice, and of human dignity and flourishing personhood. God gives the gift of moral sense to all people, and because of this gift, we can design our moral compass on the foundation of a global ethics. Failure will be no excuse. All moral agency begins with the individual. We must love our God, our neighbour and our environment, which is our neighbourhood. Love is the fountain of all morality. Love is the launching pad of our moral agency in our country. South Africans must become involved in moral intervention in the domains of society where they interact with moral agencies. The intervention is multifaceted. Firstly, live a truly moral life. Pursue honesty, justice, fairness, truth and peace. Be responsible and accountable. Respect the human dignity of others and honour authority. Prioritise the plight of the poor and nourish family life. In short, love your neighbour and your neighbourhood.

- Secondly, be a voice against the plagues of immoral social conduct by the people running the system. Denounce all forms of violence and corruption. Blow the whistle where selfish exploitation raises its head. Use the instruments of the Constitution to replace incompetent leadership. Sow the seeds of morality and defend our institutions against moral decay.

We have now designed a moral compass that can lead us to newness where we could find solace, happiness and peace. A newness where we can enjoy a flourishing life with economic justice, free from abuse, racism, dehumanisation and violence. We can look back to where we came from and move forward to become a community of character. It will take time, but let us get on track. The sooner, the better. In the concluding chapter, I present a brief overview of our journey up to this point in time and how we can proceed with the moral compass in our hands.

The moral compass to a future of decent nationhood and a community of character

■ Mapping our present predicament

The brief survey of the colonial history of South Africa, including the history of apartheid as a branch of colonialism, highlighted some burning moral problems. These problems caused a long process of moral decay, to such an extent that the country is in urgent need of a moral compass that can invigorate our nation to search for a future healthy society built on moral excellence and spaces of human development and growth. I regard the following problems as the main sources and carriers of moral decay.

The dispossession of the land of indigenous peoples in South Africa is a core ingredient of the persistent moral decay in the country. Loss of land resulted in the uprooting of long-established, stabilised and peaceful societies. For the original inhabitants of South Africa, land undergirded their human personhood and sustained their sense of human dignity, of being somebody and their enjoyment, peace and hope. Losing land fuelled a destructive process of dehumanisation. Furthermore, colonial history left South Africa with a tremendous burden of racism. Racism in South Africa

had to do with power and racially delineated spaces for superior and privileged white people and inferior and underprivileged black people. Because of systemic exclusion from birth to death, black people had no effective political means to improve their circumstances and living conditions. The colonial history and everything accompanying this process, such as deprivation, social stratification and exploitation of indigenous Africans, as described above, gave birth to and sustained a deeply divided and unequal country – a division running between black people and white people. The division also coincided with privilege and poverty. The inequality between black and white South Africans also played out in other areas of human life. Because of a long history of inequality, deprivation and exploitation, a culture of perennial violence developed: the violence of the colonial system and the violence of resistance.

Let us revisit our colonial heritage and our post-1994 experiences with the aim of mapping our current position. Where one wants to go depends on where one stands. A moral compass cannot be effective when it is not fixed to a certain location as the point of departure. In evaluating the post-1994 undertakings, accomplishments and failures in the quest to address the heritage of colonialism, very impressive achievements can be observed with gratitude and a sense inspiration and hope. These include the end of the long process of social stratification in the laws and the statutes of the country. The new Constitution is built on the foundation of the values of human dignity, equality and freedom and lays the foundation for a united, non-racial and non-sexist society. An independent judiciary, the rule of law, freedom of the press and, especially, the control of political power by a constitutional court ensure the rights and liberties of all citizens. The Constitution recognised the values of the traditional Western individual rights, the socio-economic rights proposed by socialism and communal rights, and *ubuntu* of African traditions. Also, the Constitution of 1996 and the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of 1996) abolished institutionalised violence and made systemic violence illegal. Restoration programmes intending to redress the injustices of the past were introduced. Racial relations have improved, and despite some isolated pockets of racially motivated strife occurring from time to time, all indicators show that social relations are healthier than in the colonial era.

Unfortunately, the new dispensation also has a negative countenance, and failures in leadership cast a shadow over the ideal of hope and peace. Mandela's reconciliation project came to a standstill fifteen years into the new democratic South Africa. The model of his visionary and inspiring leadership was replaced by incompetent and corrupt political management over the past twelve years. Corrupt leaders used the restitution agenda to enrich themselves and their cohorts at the expense of the poor. Incompetence in leadership, nepotism, bad management and theft of

public funds plunged the nation into the swamp of poor service delivery, corruption and criminality. We are faced with a huge challenge of all-encompassing immorality trickling down from wicked political leadership.

Contemporary South Africa still has some way to go to rehumanise people and give them a sense of dignity. Despite the positive trend in racial relations in the public sphere, we must keep in mind that the racism of the colonial era and apartheid was much more than mere relationships and social contact. Notwithstanding cordial relationships, the self-definition and identification of the dehumanised groups are driven by the values of 'Westernism'. Decolonisation has limitations when applied to rehumanise and change the psychopathology of racism and the resulting 'inferiority complex'. Furthermore, although the new dispensation has eradicated all forms of structural and systemic violence by implementing a sound Bill of Rights and avoiding the formation of new forms of institutionalised violence, the culture of violence reminiscent of colonial history continues. Violent crime, violent xenophobic attacks on foreigners and high levels of femicide and domestic violence prove that violence is still acutely implanted in the South African ethos and is destroying social cohesion. The violence spreads fear and suspicion and inhibits people's willingness to foster togetherness.

Irrespective of the heinous heritage of colonisation and the perpetual moral decay and atrocious predicament of contemporary South Africa, we are still left with some positives that can be useful in the search for a moral compass. This is where we are now. With a positive attitude and resolve to find the right way forward, we can use the tools to design a new moral compass to direct us to a morally sound country with nationhood where a happy citizenry can enjoy a flourishing life. Seeing that we have mapped our present location, let us design the moral compass we need and begin with our search for direction. Where could we go?

■ The first step to newness

We must achieve a newness that could come to fruition in a community of character – a South African nation with moral sensitivity and overarching moral agency. Before we take the first step on our journey with the moral compass in hand, we must come to an honest and unselfish awareness of the pain of dehumanisation that still lies deep in our community. Before moving forward, listen to others with empathy and grasp the feelings of pain caused by deprivation, rejection and alienation that we all inherited from colonialism. Acknowledge the wrongdoings of the past and confess before God and the injured people the collective guilt of using colonialism as a means to self-enrichment at the cost of indigenous peoples. However difficult it may be, perpetrators must ask for forgiveness from their victims, and victims must forgive them. This is the difficult part of reconciliation but

the most essential part on the road to newness. Reconciliation stands or falls with forgiveness or an unforgiving attitude.

In this spirit, we could take the first step with our new moral compass by redressing and repairing the wrongs of the past and the damages caused by all structures that caused harm. Redress policies must be supported by all but managed by the political leadership in a sound and responsible way. The first step should be taken in the spirit of reconciliation, which signals a loving community characterised by innate togetherness that transcends the divisions and classifications of the past. Reconciliation is not cheap. We must move from 'blackness' and 'whiteness' to 'South Africanness'. It is imperative that all forms of racial classification must be abandoned because they remain stumbling blocks in the establishment of a community with a common ethos of human dignity, respect and moral agency. Separation in the eyes of the law leads unavoidably to separation in all spheres of life and feeds the old patterns of discrimination and enmity. Secondly, the outcome of reconciliation is a community of character, which entails the development of a virtuous and rule-based moral sensitivity. Leadership must guide this process with moral education and moral example. Reconciliation enables us to use our new moral compass to address the other injurious effects of colonialism. The first step is selfless reconciliation with all its aforementioned ingredients.

■ Crossing the bridge to the poor and bringing economic justice

Democratic South Africa has inherited gross poverty among a large portion of the population because of the social stratification and economic injustices of colonialism. The intentions of the new democratic government to address poverty and inequality through redress policies can be commended. But many of these policies have failed because of a lack of planning, training and skills development, as well as the incompetence of officials and the venom of eventual corruption and state capture. It contaminated the political corpus from top to bottom and left the poor in a toxic mess of hopelessness and despair. No country can claim decency when the poor are left behind, and no community can have any kind of moral fibre when corruption destroys programmes meant to alleviate poverty. Our moral compass directs us to eagerly build a bridge to the poor. All moral agency in South Africa must prioritise the plight of the poor and make every effort to advance economic justice.

Pure pragmatism driven by the economic realities of South Africa indicates that neoliberalism with the social arm of the state to alleviate the plight of the poor and unemployed seems to be the best way to deal with poverty in future South Africa. While the markets create wealth and

jobs, the state could take care of the poor. Redress policies as unique solutions are commendable in the unique South African context with its history of inequality and exploitation. The commendable redress policies over the past 22 years have brought progress in some areas but have also exposed many serious deficiencies because of bad management, corruption, carelessness and irresponsible planning. These failures should be addressed with a new vision. Because of its inherent inadequacies, BEE could be replaced by a programme of entrepreneurial training and skills development accessible to all South Africans. Empowerment without skills is of no use and eventually does more damage than good because it benefits a small elite of prosperous individuals and leaves the rest behind in the cycle of low income and unemployment. It has become clear that cadre deployment failed miserably, and this policy could be replaced by a programme to develop a new transformational group of professionals who are characterised by moral, ethical behaviour, altruism and the ability to comprehend and deal with the complexities of leading the public sector in the 21st century.

The state can do nothing but continue with the policy of social grants until unemployment falls to a level manageable by normal market processes. Free tertiary education would be an innate part of the long-term quest for economic justice. However, AA, as the policy featured in the past, could be reconsidered and replaced by an employment policy based on merit. The education and training of children and students in decent and respectable circumstances must be enhanced, and this process must be driven and managed by highly qualified professionals in the science and art of education and training. Obstacles ought to be managed in such a way that all learners can have access to institutions and could be tutored in the language of their choice.

South Africa urgently needs clean and morally sound governance because the perennial corruption in recent and contemporary governance is a huge distraction from the pursuit of economic justice and the attempts to address the plight of the poor. We must find a sustainable symbiosis between the state, the markets and civil society. Such a symbiosis could enable these sectors to act in unison in addressing corruption and immorality and to nurture an ethic of stewardship, honesty, respect and other moral codes conducive to the alleviation of poverty and the upliftment of the marginalised. Suppose we ignore poverty and economic justice in South Africa with our neglect, useless or outdated economic ideologies, superficial solutions, or a perfunctory attitude. In that case, we will remain a nation without basic morality, an insult to civilisation, and a nation that flaunts indecency. Let us follow our moral compass and cross the bridge to the poor and sustainable economic justice.

■ Nurturing the seedbed of our nation with passion and a fixed sense of purpose

South Africa today has a legacy of severe family disruption. It has had an enormous influence on human development, stability and the recurrent dehumanisation of people. The most potent force of this disruption was the migrant labour system, which drew fathers from the stability of their rural families to the mining industries. Still today, many families in modern South Africa experience the detrimental effects of the migrant labour system. Among the detrimental effects was the creation of new families in mining areas and the resultant negligence of the rural families. This led to the impoverishment of rural families under single-mother care. The hostel life caused many social problems, such as alcoholism, prostitution and criminality and deformed the social and moral fibre of families in both the rural and industrial areas. Western secularism also contributed to the demise of traditional family life. We still reap the fruits of these inhumane and destructive policies and movements of the past, and the process of reconstruction will be difficult. But, if our moral compass fails us in this regard, we will fail as a nation. Keep in mind that the family is the seedbed of society. When family life in a society becomes disturbed, it affects the whole society because the fixed family relationships brought about by a stable family in each community are disturbed, and the basic social morals of the society are disrupted. Broken families cause broken morals in any society.

The African dictum 'It takes a village to raise a child' must be part of our moral compass as we address the revival of good family values in future South Africa. Modern research uses the concept to refer to the village as any grouping of people who influences the children in the group through the group's overall conduct, values and customs. The group is the 'village' that serves as a good (or bad) formative agent to the children within the group. The group can be a church, a kindergarten, a class at school, a sports club, a neighbourhood, peers, marital family, extended family or any group of people where children are an in-group with a we-feeling.

Healing family life entails revisiting firstly the moral responsibilities of marital partners. Marriage is, in essence, a heterogenous, monogamous equal relationship between a husband and a wife and is founded in mutual love, compassion, help, and the promise of permanence, fidelity, trust and commitment. The family flows from this relationship and is a sphere of love and security where parents can bring up their children in a safe environment conducive to character-building, moral formation and flourishing life.

A responsible marriage and fatherhood require a husband to view his wife as an equal partner with mutual responsibilities in all aspects of their marital life. Their roles can be negotiated according to space, circumstances

and time. He must refrain from unnecessary absenteeism, dominance, violence and corporal punishment and be an example of a decent life. Through servanthood he could fulfil his obligation regarding the character-building and moral formation of his family.

A responsible marriage and motherhood require a wife to accept that most elements present in the role of the husband and the father pertain also to the role of the wife and the mother. This includes the equality of husband and wife in all aspects of marital and social life, the fact that in the modern environment, the roles of mother and father could be adapted according to the changing societal structures and the professionalising of the education, gifts and talents of females. Still, it is important for mothers to be deeply involved during certain stages of the life of a child, irrespective of the changing roles. The gift of motherhood cannot be replaced by the father or other substitutes, especially during the first three years of the life of the child and during the puberty of the female child and the later stages of development. The 'natural' must not be destroyed for the sake of ideological preferences. Firstly, the father and mother must plan for this essential mother presence in the first three years of the life of their child. Secondly, the mother should prioritise quality presence. Thirdly, employers are duty-bound to arrange space and time for the mother to fulfil her responsibility, and fourthly, moral agents could raise much more awareness about the decrepit state of motherhood in various spheres of South African life.

Throughout the different stages of childhood, children are members of various 'villages' of childhood experiences that influence their character-building and moral formation. These are the nuclear family, their circle of friends and their other peers with whom they socialise. They must be introduced and accommodated in the in-group sphere of family life as the village with a we-feeling. However, many children do not have a nuclear family context that offers an in-group. In this respect, the other in-group village(s) could fulfil the obligations of parents and take over the important role of character-building and moral formation. The child must relate to the nearest group – either the family or the village as the substitute, ideally both – so that the child can experience a we-feeling and a sense of belonging and safety. And as children grow up, they can learn and experience the value of close relationships. The group can give the child a hint of where to go when disappointed, stressed, lonely or afraid and can serve as the accommodating haven for the child in despair. Their 'villages' are also capable of empowering them with moral sensitivity to enable them to distinguish between right and wrong, to avoid the wrongs of popular culture and to employ the good in their pursuit of flourishing life.

Healing our families does not require a major investment in professional, educational and social services but the will to compassionately reach out

by way of forming and being villages for broken families and lonely children. Villages could adopt lonely street children and lead them into a future of meaning and hope. Loving people is natural, and where people are, love can be unleashed on the vulnerable. We can all be involved in the healing of our families. If families in our country can develop into seedbeds of the nation, so many other moral challenges can be addressed in our search for a moral compass. We will be better aware and equipped to deal with poverty, search for social justice, progress in nation-building, forgiveness, restoration and rehumanisation. We will be more vigorous in our struggle against the damaging and socially destructive forces of power abuse and corruption. All we need to come to this point is to focus our national mind on the upbuilding of our battered and decrepit family life. Our moral compass will be of no use if it does not lead us to the healing of family life in our country.

◼ Farewell to our culture of violence

South Africa is a modern democracy and a constitutional state in the full sense of the word. Our recent history boasts six free and fair elections and limitations on the abuse of power. Still, violence often flares up during protest marches. People still seem to think that violence is the best way to solve a social problem. Ongoing protest marches often turn into violence because the fuel for violence in the hearts and minds of many citizens is easy to ignite. Added to this is the extreme violence accompanying criminal activity, the high rate of murders, assaults, rape and the wide presence of domestic violence, especially violence against women and children. Children who are exposed to constant violence are prone to developing serious psychological problems, can become desensitised to violence and may themselves resort to violence when confronted with a problem. Dealing with the perennial culture of violence is a long-term endeavour that will rely heavily on scholarly research in many fields in the humanities and health sciences. Such studies have been done, and the increasing interest of South African scientists is a very good sign and bodes well for the future. It is essential that we address the culture of violence if we want to progress as a nation. The moral compass we are looking for should guide us out of the perennial bursts of violence in so many areas of social life.

South Africa has a long history of spiralling violence between the apartheid regime and the struggle. This spiral ended with the new democracy. However, a spiral of violence does not stay within the boundaries of politics and governance. All domains of authority can reignite the spiral and the violence. It can take many forms, from physical violence, emotional violence, verbal violence, bullying, unfair treatment and power abuse to humiliation. It can erupt in big corporations and small businesses, in big

institutions and small interest groups, in big schools and in one class, in a church community or in a single congregation, in a labour union or in a small interest group within the labour corps. It can erupt in an extended family and in a household.

Democracy is not always immune to systemic violence, especially subtle forms of systemic violence. Such violence is not obvious but just as dangerous in the long run. In some cases, liberating violence removes the rulers but not the rules and the system remains prone to ongoing injustice. Let us call it disguised systemic violence. This refers to the unnoticed violence that can penetrate systems in many obscured and masquerading forms, and it is not always discernible and easy to detect. Disguised systemic violence attacks patterns of authority, contaminates relationships between leaders and subjects and is not always unambiguously violent. Preventing the development of a spiral of violence should start at the beginning, to root out subtle and unambiguous forms of systemic violence in the macro, meso and micro domains of the administration of authority. It is usually the misuse of authority that embeds systemic violence in the form of unfair rules and regulations, treatment, expectations, remunerations, benefits and other obnoxious conduct by the commanding person(s).

It is important that people in authority nurture a culture of listening and listening to the right people at the right time. Besides listening with real intent and listening to the right people, a constant reassessment of the structure of authority is crucial. Mutual involvement and decision-making can also serve the cause of defusing systemic violence and creating healthy spaces in relationships to manage responsible authority and satisfactory and peaceful submission. Just as the persons in authority must listen honestly to the complaints and proposals of the subjects, the subjects could start by speaking honestly about what they perceive to be latent systemic violence. They, too, must speak with the right people at the right time. Subjects tend to invite outside forces to help them. Dialogue at an early stage by complaining to the right people at the right time and authentic listening and rectification could break the tension of spiralling violence and the different forms of violence it enhances. The aim of speaking and listening should be peaceful resolutions and not victories. Peacemakers are much more useful when it comes to the construction of a useful moral compass than victors.

The struggle has caused many South Africans to romanticise liberating violence. Unfortunately, it has become a culture of acting violently against anything that can be perceived as systemic violence. Mainly because of the moral justification of liberating violence and its successful use to bring changes in South Africa, the use of violence to force change is still perceived as a just means of protest and opposition, especially among the members

of labour unions. The notion of liberating violence is often the reason why so many protest marches end in violence and anarchy. The justification of liberating violence in South Africa today should be revisited. The moral agents of the past who made a case for the legitimacy of using violence for the good cause of liberating the oppressed can help in this process. Violence for self-defence can be justified, but violence to serve peace, as Augustine argued, raises many questions. Whose peace? What are the limits and conditions of the offered peace? The winner usually decides when the peace has been reached, what the conditions are and who should pay the cost. The peace of the winner is not the peace of the victim. The same arguments can be raised regarding liberating violence in a liberal democratic setting. All forms of systemic violence, disputes, political ideals and cultural concerns can be addressed by using the system and the legal avenues to protect rights. Violence can no longer be justified in South Africa for liberation, to state a case, prove a point or as a show of force. All these causes can be served through peaceful means in our new democracy. If we want to find a higher level of morality, we must see violence for what it is, which is pure evil. The concept of liberating violence in South Africa today does not fit into our liberal democracy. Let us leave it behind in our journey to become a decent community.

Violence is something people learn and can 'unlearn'. People can be educated to be non-violent. Research indicates that people can learn skills to introduce them to consequential thinking and 'alternative solution thinking'. Consequential thinking leads them to think about the consequences of the violence so that they start to consider this before they proceed with the act of violence. 'Alternative solution thinking' equips them to consider solutions other than using violence. This skills development can be internalised by a person so that it becomes their first response to a challenging situation. Research also suggests that family communication is another important ingredient in the development of problem-solving skills. When considering the reality of street violence during protests, domestic violence and mere criminal violence in South Africa, the exposure of children to violence is alarmingly high, and they learn from experience that violence can be a solution. In this respect, the family communication model proposed by researchers is a valuable and potent tool to unlearn violence as a problem-solving behaviour. The positive role of the village in character-building and moral formation adds an additional value to family communication as a skill to prevent children from resorting to problem-solving violence. The village idea expands the communication to all the groups to which people prone to violence belong. 'Village communication', which includes the development of 'alternative solution thinking' and 'consequential thinking', offers a mighty alternative to the myth that violence solves problems.

Language can incite violence, and the history of the world is full of examples of fiery orators who incited angry groups to act violently against a common enemy. Today, this kind of violent talk can be polished and subtle. South Africans are still victims of violent language, as many reports indicate. We cannot continue with liberation thinking about the use of violence and must move the argument forward to democratic thinking about change. The continuation of liberation thinking and violent language has resulted in a strange resistance and voting pattern in those parts of the country where people suffer because of poor service delivery by elected leaders. In the free society in which we live with all the means necessary for criticism, opposition, academic freedom, press freedom and freedom of speech, there can be no nuanced argument to justify some forms of violent language, such as liberation thinking. The laws against incitement to violence must be applied with no excuses, justification or mitigating circumstances. Instigators of violence must be brought to book. South Africans should display their utter disgust with these irresponsible instigators of violence under the holy guises of noble causes. To get a firm grip on the moral compass that could lead us out of the culture of violence, we must unite to protect and defend our Constitution, which provides ample non-violent means to replace bad and incompetent leadership. The young democracy must develop an ethos of true democratic thinking and acting. Such an ethos should become a core component of our moral compass.

There is a very high incidence of shootings in the course of committing virtually any type of crime in South Africa, mostly with firearms that are not legally owned and appropriately registered. In a country prone to violence with latent remnants of a long history of structural violence and liberating violence, easy access to illegal firearms is a matter of concern. A vigorous debate about gun control is overdue in this country. Crimes with the use of firearms are rising. We have a 'weak' criminal justice system, and despite proposed amendments to tighten gun control, the firearms industry is aggressively marketing guns as effective for self-defence. Given these factors, gun sales are increasing, meaning that the culture of violence will also continue. South Africans could consider the option of phasing out concealable firearms, except in the case of the police. It is of little use for self-defence, seldom used for hunting or sport, and very potent and easy to use during the committing of a crime. Rifles used for hunting, protection on farms against dangerous animals and sport cannot be concealed easily. A person with the aim to commit a violent crime with a gun cannot conceal a rifle easily, can be spotted by people around and cannot fire numerous rounds in succession. Furthermore, if limitations can be put on the magazine of a rifle for a maximum of two bullets, the quick use of the rifle for violent crime will become more difficult. A hunter, a farmer or a person using a rifle for sport has enough time to reload, but the violent criminal does not.

Ownership of any form of military weapons by the public is illegal and should remain so, and civil society must support the government in its struggle to rid our streets of illegal firearms and black market military arms. They should motivate the population to adhere to the efforts for adequate gun control according to the example of GFSA.

It is unfortunately commonplace in South Africa that some political leaders stir racial tension with a blame game. The only effect of this childish behaviour is to fuel suspicion between black and white citizens and to slow the drive to cure the culture of violence. Children, especially, are affected by racist speech by their leaders and grow up with suspicion and anger, which could spill over into racially motivated violence at schools. Furthermore, for a leader to tell needy or marginalised people that people of another race are responsible for their predicament is extremely irresponsible in view of a society inclined to violence. Fuelling violence in such a tacit way is beyond the most basic norms of responsible and edifying leadership. The development of the current vocal civil society is very positive. Not only do civil societies limit possible power abuses by the state, but they also serve as a voice for people neglected by the state. Leaders of many of these civil societies are respected opinion-makers and have an ardent following. Among these are leaders of labour unions and interest groups relating to culture and language. They have the same responsibility as political leadership when it comes to language and conduct that may fuel violence. It is of the utmost importance that leadership in South Africa comes to an agreement to abstain from fuelling violence by using aggressive language.

Lastly, efforts to discourage violence should be accompanied by the promotion of dialogue. Leadership must take the lead in promoting and facilitating dialogue where tension arises. Of special importance in this regard is the role of Christian congregations. They are involved at schools, hospitals and other civil societies, and they reach all people irrespective of race, gender, age or social stance. They have a voice and the ears of the listeners, and unlike the political leaders, spiritual leaders, to a large extent, have the trust of people. The essence of the message of congregations is reconciliation in all the domains of human relationships. The message of reconciliation underlies the promotion of dialogue when relational problems arise. Pastors are in an excellent position not only to preach about reconciliation but also to sensitise society about the value of dialogue to solve interpersonal or inter-group conflict and to teach people to steer away from all forms of violent language.

I hope that these proposals can be useful in the national debate about leaving behind the culture of violence with the use of the moral compass we are searching for. A culture of violence slows all movement and obstructs the search for a moral compass. If we do not make a concerted effort to bid

the culture of violence farewell, decency and a hopeful future will evade us as they did during the cruel colonial past.

■ Building one nation

The argument in favour of our moral compass leading us to one nation enriched by diversity starts with an assessment of the character of the nation-states of the past. The nation-state had four characteristics, namely, a sovereign state with a government, a nation of people with the same origin, a national culture and a land with firm borders. These characteristics defined nation-states in the past, but this is no longer the case. The current migration of people from poor to rich countries with better career propositions, efforts to leave countries because of poverty and to flee war and persecution, the worldwide brain drains and the poaching of people with high-level training and scarce skills have all weakened the concept of nation-states. All counties are steadily becoming plural, with minorities claiming the space to observe the traits of their own ethnicity, like religion, culture and language. Nowadays, the nation-state is no more than a state with fixed borders and diverse citizens seeking open spaces for the observance of ethnic differentiation. Diversity can create friction between the nation and emerging minorities, and in many countries, such frictions are so rife that those nations are designing many new immigration policies on the foundation of identity politics. But South Africa could set the example of moral and sustaining nation-building by striving for unity enriched by diversity.

The Freedom Charter (FC) of the COPE of South Africa at Kliptown in 1955 proposed the formation of a South African nation, equal in all respects and sharing in the wealth of the country in a fair and non-discriminatory way. The point of departure was that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. This step was a bold step towards South African nationhood and should serve as our common ideal. The old-fashioned characteristics of the nation-state cannot be accommodated in our moral compass towards a community of character. However, nation-building in South Africa is not easy. Generations of people, especially in the white community, grew up with the idea of a national identity that should be defended at all costs. During their education and in the public domain, they were constantly reminded of their 'otherness'. Tribalism among indigenous African people is also an inhibiting power when it comes to nation-building and reconciliation. But for the first time in the history of South Africa, signs of nationhood are discernible, and this movement must be stimulated by every South African. The love for the country and the emerging we-feeling must be stimulated by the core codes of national unity. In my opinion, these codes are patriotism, respect for the law, respect for the human rights of others and respect for our environment.

The patriotism we need to establish in South Africa is 'constitutional patriotism'. Embracing the Constitution starts with reflecting together on what we have in common. So, what do we have in common? Over the past decades, our histories were exposed as one history with many instances of inter-group maltreatment. Out of this exposition, we are developing a common memory and a common intention of 'never again'. Add to this emerging common memory is the reality of our common country and our common destiny, and we may accept the urgency of common responsibilities. In this way, we can nurture the much-needed 'constitutional patriotism' that will not revert to something negative and destructive. We have one fatherland, one Constitution and one future, and we must manage politics, economics and social development. Patriotic actions will then prioritise the building, enrichment and defending of national interests. The nation comes first, and the integrity of the country is the priority. Any endeavour, investment or political policy should be driven by the question: What is in the interest of the nation? To what extent will certain actions be beneficial for the whole nation?

Unity also necessitates a collective respect for the law. To build this respect, a nation must not be over-legislated. Laws must serve the purpose of creating and maintaining an orderly space for people to flourish. Laws must not limit human achievements and joy but must open the road for growth and peace. The move to constitutionalism with a Bill of Rights is safeguarding South Africa from over-legislation. Despite the many other problems we have experienced and are facing now, we did not fall into the trap of post-colonial despotic rule. But, laws are of no use when they are not executed and policed properly and when jurisprudence is ill-managed.

The law is the law for everyone but is of no use if it is not meticulously applied in all the phases of the judicial processes. In this respect, we face tremendous shortcomings in inadequate policing and jurisprudence, and as a result, lawlessness is thriving. Lawlessness is primarily a moral problem. But everyone must comprehend that the law is the law, and this dictum surely adds value to our moral compass. It is of the utmost importance that authorities must pay attention to the many well-researched recommendations of legal theorists and apply them because the law can be the law only when its execution earns the respect of the community as they reap the fruits of security, order and justice. Such respect feeds patriotism because subjects are proud and protective when they live in a safe and orderly society. Morals work when they are constructive. It is the same with laws.

Unity without a common respect for the human dignity and human rights of others is hollow. As in the case of good laws, these human rights have no value if they are not internalised by the community. Human rights must live in the heart before they can live in the law. Respect for the rights of others is not only a legal issue but also a moral issue with deep religious roots. As image-bearers of God and as equals in the eyes of God, respect for others

cannot be limited by forms of prejudice, which are usually rooted in ideologies and abuses of religions. The Great Commandment and the Golden Rule demand respect for the human dignity and human rights of others. The love God expects from us is to have no boundaries, and 'doing unto others' does not qualify the others. It refers to all 'others'. The Bill of Rights is there to provide protection against abuses of power but will be useless if it is not embedded in the love of the neighbour. A nation can thrive in unity and togetherness when neighbourly love overarches all social differences. When we restrict the love only to the in-group, all kinds of divisive and even destructive self-idolisation could disrupt the growing unity.

The unity of a nation also resides in mutual respect for the environment. Ecocide can rightly be termed the biggest crisis humankind is facing, and we are all victims. The 'green debate' in South Africa is far from satisfactory when compared with other industrial nations. We are lagging because of petty debates about the necessity to continue the use of fossil fuels mostly to serve old socialist ideas about job security in the coal mining sector. Other countries have already proven that eco-friendly and far-reaching measures can be taken without job losses because the development of clean energy can create new jobs, and workers in mining industries can be retrained to fill new occupations. South Africa ranks in the top five countries in the world for negative emissions. Of special concern is the littering of plastic material that eventually ends up in the sea and adds to an increasing worldwide ecological problem. Only 16 % of all plastic is recycled. The rest is wasted, and because of wind, rain and rivers, it eventually ends up in the sea, where it remains for centuries and serves as a direct threat to marine life. To be one nation with a good future for the next generations, the government must call on scientists to design a thorough feasible, effective and sustainable policy to address pollution and to follow the examples of the countries that have made major strides in this direction. It will be of no use to build the nation and neglect its environment. If we want to continue the road to unifying nationhood, our moral compass must include our united push for eco-sensitivity because a decent nation cannot thrive in a dying environment.

The South African nation has a history of mobility and movement. Indigenous groups, foreign slaves, immigrants and settlers left footprints that we cannot write out of our history, cannot deny and cannot destroy. History is history and what has happened has happened. The ongoing debate about dealing with the past and the place of memories is very important because a shared perspective on South African history will help us to use our diversity to enrich the nation. As such, there can be no better future (Vorster 2009):

> […] without remembrance. The road to a better future is [*indeed*] along memory lane. [*However*], forgiveness [*and growing nationhood*] does not render memories invalid or unfair. No, memories give substance to forgiveness and

[*brings*] a willingness to become involved in healing the present and planning a better future. As such, remembrance is a powerful, life-giving ingredient in a process of healing [*a community that wishes to become a humane and peaceful community*]. (p. 6)

To proceed to this point, we should be willing to walk down memory lane among the symbols of the past. Tearing down a symbol may bring healing and hope for a better future for one person, but such an action could create rage and feelings of alienation for others. Two other approaches are possible. Firstly, a symbol can be a symbol of historical events that reminds us of evil done. In my opinion, these kinds of symbols reflecting the atrocities of the past should be viewed as 'never again' symbols. These symbols must bring our nation to a firm conviction that atrocities should never happen to anyone in South Africa again. We must develop a national agreement that could become a sacred national ethos and a code of conduct that directs us away from repeating the evils of the past. Secondly, commemorating past events is every person's democratic right. Remembrance and commemoration should happen within the framework of reconciliation as the goal. Remembering within the code of 'never again' and commemorating in a way that past atrocities are not idolised or romanticised could lead us to a position where past evils are not denied or erased from the national memory. Remembrance must be holistic, and commemoration must reflect on the good and the bad. In this way, our history can be an asset in the process of understanding each other and not repeating mistakes of the past while finding comfort and inspiration in the positive reconciliatory memories of the recent past that feed our growing 'we-feeling'.

The application of the active plural option of religious freedom enshrined in the South African Constitution and the way this right has been applied up to now are excellent examples of how all other forms of diversity could be managed. South Africans can observe religious practices and rites in public institutions if it is not exclusive or discriminatory against others and does not force others to take part in these actions against their will. The same model is useful in dealing with multilingualism and multiculturalism. Differences in language and culture also have the potential to tear a nation apart, just like religious persecution. The recognition of twelve official languages means that people have the right to use any one of these languages as a means of communication in the official social domains. The new democratic Constitution presented a reconciliatory language system that offered primary and secondary schools the freedom to choose their own language of tuition on the condition that no person should be excluded but be accommodated so that they are not discriminated against.

The policy of multilingualism at educational institutions is not without problems. In 2018, the South African Minister of Basic Education, Angie

Motshekga, announced that a rollout of a decolonised education system would begin in the year 2019. Experts indicate that certain factors affect multilingual teaching, such as the preparedness of teachers, their language proficiency, the resources used and the socio-economic status of the learners. Research shows that teaching practice and learning can be transformed for the better when learners can use their indigenous language as their first language. These researchers propose that teachers and subject advisors should continuously empower teachers in translation and the use of novel strategies such as bilingual and multilingual classrooms. South African official indigenous languages can play an effective role if teachers and their learners know exactly how to use these effectively in classrooms. Multilingualism at schools should not be perceived as a liability. Single-language schools promoted by parents and activists for reasons ranging from practicality to conserving certain traditions, cultures and ethnicities do not consider all the positive contributions of multilingualism. Not only does the policy adhere to the rights of minorities, but it also enhances better intercultural understanding and reconciliation.

All rivers are fed by springs, fountains, streams and tributaries along the way. Every smaller tributary brings water to the larger river. In the same way, cultural diversities in South Africa all feed the national culture. The history of South African art is a good example of how diversity could enrich the higher ideal of nationhood and how we all can become Africans with a common loyalty and still direct our diversities as tributaries to the big river. If we block the tributaries, the river will become a narrow and unimpressive stream. Pursuing forms of cultural domination such as Anglicisation, globalisation, Africanism or Americanism or any other neo-colonial holistic model will rob our nation of our unique, enriching national formation. We witness the growth of a new nation. Let us invest the good of our own histories to enrich the enterprise of building this nation into a community of character that can serve as the pride of future generations.

■ The moral agency of leadership and subordinates

Leadership in South Africa is currently in a crisis. Years of corruption at all levels of governance in South Africa have created a deep and wide-ranging distrust in political leadership. Furthermore, the distrust is enhanced by indecisive conduct by the head of state, unfulfilled promises by government officials regarding improved service delivery, infighting in political parties (especially the ANC), immoral conduct by leaders who should be examples of honesty and decency to the public, power abuse for personal political gain and irresponsible racial blame-shifting and incitement that flare up from time to time.

Cases of violent conduct in Parliament, televised to the whole nation, aggravate the dismay with and distrust in political leadership. But it is not only political leadership that fails to inspire confidence in contemporary South Africa. The prophetic voices of religious leaders are quiet amid our moral crisis, and it seems that academic leaders have little interest in speaking out against moral decay other than just researching the state of events. Leaders in civil society are active in the causes they pursue but cannot claim to promote visionary leadership across the board. Corporate leadership has pockets of leaders aiding political leaders in planning and executing moral leadership, but infighting between political factions within the ideologically divided ANC regularly smothers their suggestions.

A nation without moral and inspiring leadership cannot reach greatness. The golden thread of moral leadership is serving leadership. Behind this statement lies an important moral paradigm that is highly regarded in Christian and global ethics, that is, that leadership is essentially stewardship. Building moral leadership in South Africa requires answers to two fundamental questions: Where does authority come from and what is the essence of leadership? The foundational teaching in Christianity is that all human authority comes from God. Leadership is a gift from God. Authority as a gift from God has two important implications. Firstly, leaders must be respected if they do not transgress the biblical instruction to be more obedient to God than to people. Obedience to God precedes obedience to authorities, but when authorities rule within the framework of the ethic of the kingdom of God, subjects must be obedient to the authorities. They should always respect and honour leadership because the leaders act on their behalf to maintain peace, order and stability. In many countries, leaders take an oath before God to fulfil their task with dignity, fairness and moral trustworthiness. But disrespect for authority and leadership has become an alarming phenomenon in South African social life. This phenomenon comes to the fore in the way critics speak with and about leaders using disrespectful and cynical language.

The second implication of God's gift of authority and leadership is that leaders must be worthy of respect. They must earn respect from their subjects by being an example of honesty, dedication and moral conduct. Corrupt leadership creates not only corrupt citizens but also disrespectful followers. Some citizens will follow the corrupt leaders into the swamp of self-enrichment and a laissez-faire life, with no concern for the way they betray the country and make the lives of others miserable. Disgruntled citizens lose confidence in leadership in general and distrust leaders because of the immoral conduct of some in their capacity of leadership.

Moreover, leading by example is one of the oldest moral principles underlying leadership and is engraved in global ethics. The Christian

tradition founds the concept of exemplary leadership on the exemplary leadership of Christ. His leadership was decisive, as evident from his reprimanding of people acting against the rule of God and the morality of the kingdom. At the same time, he comforted the needy and acted as the voice of the disadvantaged. He healed the sick and set the example of compassion. Furthermore, he was the custodian of truth and righteousness. He was truthful, decisive and trustworthy, with great compassion and kindness, focused on expanding the rule of God. The leadership style of Jesus can be used as a design for all leadership by listening to the followers to grasp their needs and expectations. Listening must be followed by decisive action.

The second way to lead by example is respect for the chain of command but also becoming involved in mutual actions to solve problems. Leaders must deliver on their promises rather than just make empty promises every time difficulties appear. Furthermore, exemplary leadership means that people should be valued. This is perhaps the most important principle of leadership, and it resonates well with the South African dictum '*batho pele*' [the people first]. Considering the Great Commandment of the love of God and the neighbour, putting people first describes the core element of the moral compass we should find and use. Leaders could be competent in every field mentioned above, but if they do not put the people first, their leadership is futile. Leadership in South Africa has much to learn from this important leadership principle. They should do so, because without exemplary leadership, the moral compass will bring us nowhere. This is the model of leadership that South Africa needs.

No moral compass can function properly in an immoral society. Moral people must design a moral compass that fits their own circumstances. In this study, we endeavoured to establish our present position after the harsh years of colonialism. We investigated the need for progress to economic justice, the state and future of family life, reconciliation, forgiveness, national unity and diversity, dealing with the culture of violence, leadership and many more related issues. The goal was to design a moral compass fitting our course to a society of peace and hope, order and justice, and human dignity and flourishing personhood. We explored God's gift of a moral sense to all people. Because of this gift, we can design our moral compass on the foundation of global ethics. Failure will be no excuse. All moral agency begins with the individual. We must love our God, our neighbour and our environment, which is our living space. Love is the fountain of all morality. Love is the launching pad of our moral agency in our country.

Using this as the starting point, South Africans must become involved in moral intervention in the domains of society where they interact with moral agencies. Firstly, we should live a truly moral life. We should pursue honesty,

justice, fairness, truth and peace. We should be responsible and accountable. We should respect the human dignity of others and honour authority. We should prioritise the plight of the poor and nourish family life. In short, love your neighbour and your environment.

Secondly, we should be a voice against the plagues of immoral social conduct by the people running the system. We should denounce all forms of violence and corruption. We should blow the whistle when selfish exploitation raises its head. We should use the instruments of the Constitution to replace incompetent leadership. We should sow the seeds of morality and defend our institutions against moral decay.

■ Becoming a community of character

At the end of Chapter 1, we asked these questions:

- Our colonial heritage. What have people done to each other?
- Our post-1994 heritage. Is the rainbow gone?
- Reconciliation and transformation. What do they mean?
- Poverty and economic justice. A pipedream?
- Family. Where are the fathers?
- Violence, extremism, distrust and hostility. Our daily bread?
- Relating unity and diversities. A bridge too far?
- Moral leadership. Where are the leaders?
- Involvement. Where are the people?
- A future of moral revival and hope? Another pipedream?

We can now answer them:

- Our colonial heritage? Colonialism was the darkest part of our history and robbed generations of South Africans of a dignified life.
- Our post-1994 heritage? We face numerous problems, but we can find a moral compass to direct our journey towards a community of character.
- Reconciliation and transformation, what do they mean? They mean newness, healing and togetherness on the way without racial classification and social engineering.
- Poverty and economic justice. A pipedream? A dream that will become true if we prioritise the poor in every aspect of future planning.
- Family life. Spaces of all the sorrows humans could bear? Turn the swords into ploughs and nurture the seedbed of the nation.
- Violence, extremism, distrust and hostility. Our daily bread? Be smart and distinguish the fires by disabling their roots.
- Relating unity and diversities. A bridge too far? Cross the bridges of otherness and follow the compass to enriched nationhood.
- Moral leadership. Where are the leaders? They will appear when they clothe themselves with servanthood and moral exemplariness.

- Involvement. Where are the people? They will surface when they take ownership of their moral compass and start the journey out of the swamp of moral decay.
- A future of moral revival and hope? Another pipedream? No! We established a moral compass that we can follow.

We can go forward and become a community of character – a decent nation with happiness.

It is up to us South Africans to use the compass correctly and to find our destination. We know what is right and what is wrong – everyone must play their part.

With serving leadership and decent citizenship, we can use our homemade moral compass to become the nation we all long for.

We will encounter difficulties, but in these cases, the compass will guide us by reminding us to DO THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME!

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This book is timely and penetrating. Vorster ploughs new ground in researching a moral compass for contemporary South Africa, from colonialism and apartheid to the current democratic dispensation. He writes clearly, carefully and helpfully about the timely topic of how theology can become a public voice, engaging structural issues where human dignity is downtrodden by those in positions of influence. Constitutionalism and populism are at war, disregarding liberation struggles principles and the desired goals of the fighters. Vorster investigates current moral flaws in politics, economics and broader societal culture from the colonial and apartheid eras. The escalating moral decay exhibited by corruption in higher echelons of society, breakdown of family values, deviation from humanness and visionless leadership continues to cripple society's moral fibre. Racism embedded in colonial and apartheid ideologies can be combatted through reconciliation, education and patriotism as per the dictates of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Diversity should be used for unity rather than division. Religious freedom and multilingualism should be the seedbed in which moral ethics can be planted and flourish. Moral intervention should be based on leadership as stewardship and accountability, as well as being meritorious and exemplary for nation-building.

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This remarkable book helps us understand our historical and contemporary context in South Africa in light of our painful past and hopeful future. The book provides a well-researched, superbly written and nuanced engagement with responsibility ethics and moral formation that can help South Africans forge a pathway to a more just, peaceful and transformative future. Scholars who long to contribute to a better future for all should read this book.

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