

THE CROSS IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUE HUMANITY: theological challenges facing South Africa. by Dr. Takatso Mofokeng

1. Historical Tour

Every serious study of the history of theology in South Africa will undoubtedly show very vividly that the various and different theological trends that have emerged in this country are preceeded and periodically punctuated by interventions of social forces and events. These social forces and events have evidently succeeded to redirect theological thinking or even radically alter theological agendas and priorities and introduce new ones which occupy positions of priority until the next forceful intervention by other social forces and processes. In systematic theological circles this would be called a series of epistemological ruptures in the hermeneutic circle.

A penetrating view of South African theology as it developed and evolved since the introduction of christianity and the birth of the christian church in this subcontinent will manifest or reveal many successive trends. Of these I will deal with only a few.

When the forefathers of the present Afrikaner population (whites of European descent who speak Afrikaans) started to colonize South Africa in the 17th century, they introduced a theology which could underpin and foster colonialism, namely a version of the theology of election and the covenant as propounded by theologians in Holland at that historical period. In this theology, according to its adherents and propagators who were Afrikaners themselves, the Afrikaners identified themselves very closely with Israel as a people that had been elected, called and led by God of the covenant into the unknown and with a promise and a mission. God had elected the Afrikaners, it was believed and taught by these theologians, made a covenant with them (the day of the covenant - a national holiday in South Africa - is a clear symbol of this trend), and promised them that their children would inherit a land (South Africa). For their part, they would be under an obligation to kindle the light of christianity and establish a church among the conquered and colonized African population whose land they had violently taken away.

This theology which continued to be modified and sharpened according to the needs of the particular geographical area and historical period, was propagated until the wars of colonization had been won and the African population had been vanquished and

subdued. Since that process of their subjugation coincided with that of their conversion, it will, therefore, be correct to say that that theology continued until Africans were completely subdued and were converted to enter the christian family as conquered, chained and silenced christians. Whenever they spoke, and some did do so, they spoke the theological language of their conqueror or at best they spoke within the framework of the theology that supported their conquer.

The conquer and christianization of black people opened an era of relative calm and stability during which the white population could face new socio-economic challenges that resulted from the industrial revolution in Britain, a revolution that had an impact in South Africa due to the colonial links between the two countries. In circles of the church of the Afrikaners which had succeeded to convert large segments of especially the slave population and their descendents in the Cape of Good Hope, racism intervened and split the church into a white church of the white master and a black church of the slaves. (De Gruchy J and Villa-Vicencio C 1983, 10ff) Inevitably, a theology that justified racist division and separation of christians in church and society had to be developed to strengthen the foundations laid in the above action. It continued to be the dominant trend in the churches of the Afrikaners up until the present.

When colonial power changed hands in 1802 and the British violently annexed the Cape of Good Hope to the British Empire the Afrikaners were subdued politically and economically. It did not take very long for poverty to start severely crippling the Afrikaners. When this happened, a new dimension of empowerment and resistance was added to the local blend of reformed theology. It emphasized God's preferential option for the Afrikaners, who were the underdogs in the contest for lordship over black people in their land. The Exodus was made into the reference pole of this theology which contested the right of the English to hold power over the Afrikaner "chosen people of God." It also aimed at restoring Afrikaners to the helm of political power as well as setting them on the path to economic recovery and power over black people. No consideration was given to the human rights of black people at that stage. As a matter of fact, the missionaries who tried to champion their cause were opposed and hated. (Enklaar I 1988) The God of the Exodus and the Sinai covenant, who descends to liberate the victims of human neglect, greed and hatred identified, according to those theologians, with these Afrikaner "victims" and empowered them to assert their humanity and claim dignity as beloved creatures of God. This is briefly what its contents were. It should, however, be clear to all that this theology which worked very effectively, was

nothing but a more modern variant of the former one. It was in that sharing of a common origin, foundation and goal that its glaring weakness lay (see H. L. Pretorius N.G.T.T. 18.4.1977, 343ff). It still evolved on a firm foundation of racism which infested white theology at that time and continues to plague it up to the present day. The conquering and dispossession of black people were not a concern to Afrikaner Reformed Theology. While it contributed effectively as a powerful resource to the upliftment of the Afrikaners as a white group, it continued to foster and promote their denial of the humanity of black people and their deprivation. Instead of humanizing the Afrikaners, it dehumanised them by promoting their inhumanity to their black fellow human beings. S. Maimela, in his book ***Proclaim Freedom To My People***, portrays a very enlightening picture of social currents and theological developments in the English speaking community and churches in South Africa around that period. These churches were established with a theological paralysis which, according to him, was a legacy of the traditional close link between the church and the monarchy in Britain. It was not surprising therefore that colonisation of an already colonized people could be undertaken with the blessing of the churches of England. Empirical interests coincided with divine interests. Things worsened with the emergence of the spirit of liberalism in the 18th and 19th centuries which swept Europe and Britain and subsequently led to the privatisation of religion and its removal from public sphere. God was banned from public life and its challenges. Deism and pietism which gained influence around the same period, only worsened this theological paralysis of the English speaking churches. As S. Maimela puts it:... We find a God so staunchly British and so domesticated that he approved everything British colonialism did without raising any finger or murmur of protest; this God was so inactive in human lives that he could neither give them guidance nor rebuke wrong political actions that dehumanize fellow humans “(Maimela, 1987, 11). The challenge facing these churches today, Maimela continues, is...” to produce a theologian who would tell what difference it makes to talk about God who is the creator and continues to meet and work among humans in order to establish God’s kingdom.” (Maimela, 1987, 12)

It might be surprising to some of you that I have so far omitted social and theological developments among the oppressed and disinherited Christians and churches. This is done deliberately for the following reason. In this entire historical period which spanned about a hundred years, black Christians were dominated not only socially, politically and economically but also religiously and theologically. It was not until the beginning of the urban migration and industrialization of the country that black Christians emerged as a religious force which would later claim the right to engage in

a theological contest against all the variants of the theology and ecclesiologies of racial separation and oppression. The formation of African Independent Churches as early as the 18th century was one such announcement of black christians' courage to read the bible with their own eyes and interpret it as they felt guided by the spirit of wisdom. It was only then, one could argue, that the basis was laid even though feebly for the development of modern Black Theology which started seriously during the second half of the 20th century. During the period that preceded the emergence of that new theology, a form of theology of hope in God's eschatological future, which included a restoration of human dignity to the dispossessed African people formed the core of the theology of the African Independent Churches at the time of their formation in the early 18th and 19th century.

2. A Moment of break and new beginning

These examples in the history of theology in South Africa form a clear and firm basis for my argument that the only way of a reasonably correct identification and discussion of theological challenges which will face South African churches and christians in the immediate and long term future depends, to a very large degree, on an understanding of historical events as well as a reasonably correct projection of socio-political developments in this country. It also depends on how the church will be led by God's Spirit to intervene as it so often had to do. It is these socio-political and cultural forces and developments as they are already doing presently which will continue to contextualize theology and shape the politics of the church in this country.

Admittedly, it is hazardous to attempt such a projection of developments at both the socio-political as well as theological dimensions of South African society. I shall, however, attempt to take the risk of being wrong.

My starting point in this matter, is the present epistemological rupture which has been articulated on different occasions in the last eight years by different churches, theologians, theological documents and confessions of faith. All these church conferences and individual christians and documents, some of which you may have heard of or seen, not only announced the final limit to the life of all theological support and justification of apartheid and its state. They also laid the basis for a new theological beginning as well as indicating possible viable theological issues for the church in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We are here referring to the following.

2.1. Events within the church-historical Context.

In 1981 the Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in South Africa (ABRECSA) took a bold and historic step by declaring apartheid a heresy, a theological declaration that had eluded the South African white churches which are opposed to apartheid for the four decades of apartheid theology and social practice. What made it possible for this movement to do so was a new definition of heresy that was adopted by it. That definition was articulated by Allan Boesak who defined heresy, not only in the limited classical sense as an expression of false theological ideas, but also in a broad ethical sense that includes christian practice as the only reliable verification of the correctness or falsity of such theological ideas. As he aptly puts it: Heresy is....“the use of the Word of God in such a way that it becomes divisive and separates human beings from God and each other. Heresy is an expression of the Word in service of some other interest than the love of and communion with Jesus Christ. It is a proclamation that creates distrust rather than trust, confusion rather than understanding, isolation rather than community” (De Gruchy, J & Villa-Vicencio, C, 1983, xii). According to this definition, apartheid is a theological heresy and an ethical heresy because it violates, at a theological level, the basic teaching of God’s Word and, at a concrete ethical level, God’s purpose with humanity. During this entire period of four decades, prior to the ABRECSA declaration, the white reformed churches of South Africa were able to practice, support and justify the social sin of apartheid and still occupy seats of honour in world ecumenical fora. They could get away with it because of their skillful use of the orthodox “escape hatch” of a definition of heresy that restricted scrutiny to theological teaching, and left social practice out. They accept all the confessions of faith which distinguish them as truly reformed and still practice apartheid internally and support its social, economic and political manifestations in society. Confessing the equality of all human beings to them means confessing the equality of white people, loving the neighbour means loving another white person and being charitable and paternalistic to black people, reconciling with black people means stopping black people from using force to claim justice and freedom. At this moment, even after calling apartheid a sin, they still won’t participate in unity discussions with black reformed churches. Is this not a continuation of a heretical ecclesial practice by these churches?

The historic declaration we referred to above ushered in an unparalleled theological onslaught on apartheid teaching and practice by many church synods and conferences, here and abroad, and led to the suspension of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1982 for this church’s theological support and practice of racism (apartheid). In the same

year, the South African Council of Churches adopted that declaration at its national conference thereby uniting all its member churches against apartheid as white South Africa's institutionalized racism. This step was followed by the birth of the **Belhar Confession of Faith** in the N G Sendingkerk which committed this church to the struggle against racism in all its forms and manifestations. Before very long the Kairos Document appeared, throwing one of the major popular theological bricks shattering the already fragile windows of the theology of apartheid. Several churches, and religious associations and individual theologians both locally and internationally responded to this document, some favourably and others very critically. Among churches which launched a scathing attack on the Kairos Document is the white N. G. Church. Its attack was embodied in its own official document called **Church and Society** which goes no further than calling apartheid a mistake, thereby relativizing the immeasurable misery, violence and loss of life that resulted from its teaching. It is only as recently as 1988 that, after years of ecumenical isolation and pressure, the N. G. Church was forced to admit that apartheid is, not a mistake but a sin. As we stated above, it is these theological, confessional and church-political developments that mark the historical moment of the epistemological explosion and rupture in the South African theological universe.

2.2. Events in the socio-political Context

On the socio-political front, the above mentioned period follows on the 1976 Soweto uprising which formed a watershed in the modern history of the black struggle for liberation in South Africa. Never before had so many young black boys and girls resolved to take so much suffering and death upon themselves as an act of self-sacrifice against racism in all its forms and manifestations. Never before had the violent nature of the apartheid state and society been more exposed than during that uprising. The entire church-internationally and locally — could not but respond politically as well as theologically, ushering in a clash between Church and State which is unparalleled in the modern history of South Africa. Even the government confirmed the existence of this clash paradoxically by denying and relativizing it, calling it a conflict between the State and a few misguided church leaders.

Since our interest at this moment is theological and not church-political, we shall not dwell on the political responses of the South African churches. But before we enter the area of theological challenges of the present and the near future, allow me to add another very significant development on the social front that has had a direct impact on the theological agenda. I'm referring here to the emergence and rapid growth of the trade union movement

among black workers. Its numerous industrial actions which periodically paralyzed various selected segments of the South African economy, including state run and controlled industries, won total victories and concessions from industry and from the government. The church could not but notice its power and impact and proceed to ask theological questions about the growing awareness and display of revolutionary power by black workers, most of whom are devout christians. The astounding courage displayed by these already impoverished workers in opting to suffer hunger for a noble goal of attaining economic and political justice could not but be understood as the voice of God in and to South Africa today.

3. Theological challenges facing the Church today.

It is not possible within the scope of this paper to deal with all major theological challenges facing the Church in South Africa today. We shall, however, select a few and deal with them as incisively as possible.

3.1 Theological anthropology: insurrection of the crossbearers.

Since the development of a more positive anthropology by many black theologians in the 1970's and early 1980's in which the image of God in the human being was interpreted positively, many more black theologians have further deepened and broadened it in different directions. In the 1970's Manas Buthelezi argued that being created in the image of God implied that black people whose humanity was denied and who were treated like dirt by whites were under an obligation to affirm their humanity. (Motlhabi M, 1968) Self-love and self-respect had to issue out in attitude, behaviour and actions that showed unambiguously that they were acting subjects who were prepared to transform their socio-political and economic circumstances. Self-love and human dignity of blacks had to be objectified in concrete projects wherein blacks transformed their environment and that of other fellow blacks into a life affirming environment. Allan Boesak took this theme a step further and argued that being human means "... having dominion over the earth" and that since people are social beings, to say that one is made in the image of God meant that... "there is an interdependence between human beings and between human beings and creation." (De Gruchy J. and Villa-Vicencio C. 1983,3f). This political, cultural and economic dominion have to be shared, he said. Boesak continued to condemn racism- an ideology of racial domination that entrenches racism in socio-economic and political processes and structures of the South African society. In his argument he asserted that to be made in God's image means "...to be able to realize this essential humanity in the social-historical world in which we all have responsibility." (De Gruchy J. and Villa-Vicencio C. 1983,4). To be able to do that, and this the next logical point that had to be

developed, people have to possess power which is a prerequisite for assumption of responsibility on the part of those who are created in God's image. Defending this positive anthropology Maimela argued that it could be upheld because of God's gracious presence among those who respond to God's call and obligation. God, he said "...stays with them, surrounding them with love and reproving them as a Father would his son in whom he delights (Prov 3:12)." (Maimela S. 1987,101ff)

Before any critique is levelled against this positive, some would even say optimistic anthropology, it should be borne in mind that the concrete conditions in which South African black children are born and in which they and their parents have to live their entire life are themselves very negative. They tell black babies already at birth that they are a negative people. That they are made by the left hand of God and in His/Her negative image. In other words, their life is a negative anthropology itself. Their political domination, social discrimination, denial of educational, cultural facilities as well as exclusion from white churches confirm that they and they alone are indeed born in sin and are not worthy of the love and grace of God. Such a negative anthropology can by no stretch of imagination, empower people who have been beaten to the ground by everything they see and hear. It cannot inspire them to stand up and assert their humanity, especially where the christian gospel is used against them. In recent years the positive theological anthropology we referred to, has been deepened quite significantly through the timely contributions of Dr I J Mosala and Fr B Tlhagale and most recently the Kairos theologians. I deliberately called these contributions timely because they were made exactly when the labour union movement was gaining ground and becoming a very formidable force on the factory floor as well as in the street. In terms of these contributions the factory floor has become a new locus theologicus and the worker our new interlocutor. The place where workers are engaged in a process of carrying out their cultural mandate of transforming nature into life supporting cultural goods, should not be turned into a place where they are dehumanized and alienated from nature and nature from them. When this place is turned into a place of exploitation and dehumanization and work into a curse it is the workers' religious duty to turn it into an arena of struggle for true humanity. It is for this reason that the Kairos theologians are persuaded that "campaigns of the people, from consumer boycotts to stay aways need to be supported and encouraged by the Church." (Kairos Document, 1985,22)

What has to be borne in mind is how much courage it takes for already underpaid workers to decide to sacrifice the small starvation wage they earn. In addition to this, it has become common prac-

tice for the state to use its coercive units to break up these workers' strikes at any cost including beatings and killings. As a result of this violent repression by the state, the workers' efforts to seek redress, which in Western countries would be legitimate, are acts of crossbearing in view of the suffering they choose to bear in a struggle for full humanity. Workers are carrying a similar cross as the one which in Roman times was a punishment for the crime of trying to escape from slavery and political rebellion. When they do carry it, this cross is transformed into "a sacred symbol of hope for liberation." Albert Nolan in his new book ***God in South Africa*** concludes a chapter on "A crucified people" in which he describes the suffering of black people in South Africa, by saying: "the point, however, is that unless we, both white and black, face the monstrous reality of evil and suffering in South Africa we shall not find God and we shall not hear his good news of salvation from sin." (Nolan 1988:57). What Nolan is in fact saying is that the crucifixion of the black people of South Africa is a window through which we can see what is happening to God and to Jesus in South Africa today.

This sacramental function of suffering workers introduces us inevitably into the areas of Christology and the concept of God. But before we get into this area let us remark that European theology as far as we know, does not deepen anthropology to the level to which black theologians are doing in South Africa. As a result it does not descent to the area where it deals with the material basis of theological concepts like sin, repentance and salvation. If the theologians would take the experience of workers seriously as of theological importance, I cannot see how theology would not be critical of the basic element of capital accumulation which is surplus extraction at the expense of workers here and abroad.

3.2. What God is doing in South Africa today?

As a christian community, we find it difficult to discuss the above issues to our satisfaction without posing the question on God's presence and what God is doing. In our attempt to grapple with this impenetrable and inexhaustible question we have to find a point of entry that will enable us to deal with this question as intensively and meaningfully as possible. Our preference is for a concrete point of entry that is very close to us. We consider the suffering and crucifixion of black people of South Africa as a window through which we are enabled to see the transcendent reality in terms of Mt. 25;40 ff. The crosses of oppressed people cannot but remind us of the cross of Jesus at Calvary. Thinking and speaking about Jesus of Nazareth is also and primarily thinking and speaking about God who emptied Him/Herself of all glory became the lowest of human beings, the Oppressed. We are also reminded of the intolerable suffering of God. In addition to reminding us of the cross

of Jesus they also enable us to understand even though inadequately, the historical dimension of the crucifixion and the pain suffered by the innocent son of Joseph and Mary, who was sacrificed in an act of political assassination which was aimed at driving fear into the hearts of the colonized people of Palestine. Conversely, the suffering of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God enables us to critically understand the suffering of the innocent in human history, evoke indignation in us as well as call us to an act of commitment to combat against root causes of human suffering. This connection and reciprocal affectivity of the two realities of suffering and dying is affirmed very strongly especially in Black Theological circles. The reason is not far to find. It derives from the intensity of Good Friday celebrations in Black churches. On this occasion black Christians who pack churches give witness to their understanding of the events around the capture, torture, humiliation and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth and how these events relate to them. They experience a transposition to the time of Jesus and consequently suffer with him in Jerusalem. That is the one side of their experience. There is another side to their experience. Jesus is being abused, tortured, humiliated and crucified in them in their country and in their time. They suffer a long Good Friday throughout their lives, a long Good Friday that relates very closely to Jesus' Good Friday. Jesus' cry of abandonment is their own daily cry. As bishop Tutu says, they experience abandonment by their God who they believe is righteous and good. (K. Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres, 1981, 163) I have argued elsewhere that this concentration on the events of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion is not just a psychological aberration nor a purposeless exercise. These Christians reflect on the suffering of Jesus in the light of their own in order to draw consequences which will orientate their own personal lives and communal action towards resurrection in their lifetime. None other than Karl Barth articulates this presence of the suffering Jesus in our own time when he says: "But the fact that he is risen to die no more, to be taken from the dominion of death (Rom6, 9), carries with it the fact that his then living and speaking and acting, his being on the way from Jordan to Golgotha, his being as the one who suffered and died, became and is as such his eternal being and therefore his present-day being every day of our time." (K. Barth, C. D. 1V. 1., 313).

The question of the presence of God and what God is doing in South Africa is a pertinent one to Christian and non-Christian. It decides whether one remains a Christian or not. As a matter of fact many young Christians abandoned the Christian faith because of this question. Ironically, others' faith was strengthened at this point. We have to understand that this question becomes pertinent because everything around black South Africa loudly denies the presence of God. Everything witnesses to the absence of God at a time and

to people who need God's presence desperately. What makes this question a torment is because everything in that country is done in the name of Christ and for him. Worse still, it is done by people who confess his name, and are members of the christian church. They perpetrate the sin of apartheid to fellow christians. This triple contradiction is at the heart of South African life, faith and theology every day of our life as a deeply divided nation. It is also at this point that theology divides into two ie. Black Theology on the one hand and white theology on the other or even into three according to other theologians i. e. state theology, church theology and prophetic theology. (In this regard we cannot but note with amazement how white theologians have generally been quick to acknowledge the existence of the three theologies after having refused on the whole to acknowledge the existence of white theology and deal with it!)

3.3. What God is doing in South Africa today? Our starting point on this matter is a confessional one, which we make with our eyes on those who were "dead" as subjects of their history of liberation but are now alive. When we witness their insurrection, when we witness their emergence from the dark tomb of Crossroads, Soweto, Winterveld and other ghetto's of our country alive, we cannot but confess the presence of God among the oppressed. When we see the great sacrifices they make, we cannot but confess that God is among His/Her people. When we see them daring to die for their life and that of their fellow men and women, we cannot but confess that God is indeed among his suffering people. The confessional statement which we made above finds biblical support according to the Kairos document. God ". . . is always on the side of the oppressed. " (Kairos Document, 22) God is by virtue of the incarnation- unto- death with the oppressed. It is from this perspective that God sees the world, all creation, all creatures including people. It is by being with those who have no one on their side, who have no one to champion their cause, no one to stand for them before the mighty of this country, that God is on the side of all people. It is by saving those who are entirely dependent on God's mercy that God is merciful to all people. It is by saving these victims of human brutality that God saves humanity from self destruction and self annihilation. God has made this choice graciously and not because the oppressed deserve God on their side. The oppressed are chosen by God unconditionally. They are chosen solely because they suffer. The God of the christian faith is not a sadist who delights in the suffering of creation. Instead God suffers its suffering. As K. Barth aptly puts it: He ignored all those who are high and mighty and wealthy in the world in favour of the weak and the meek and lowly..." (Barth T. Vol. IV, 2 p.168f). Many white theologians who consciously or unconsciously represent the ideological interests of the oppressors and the privileged in our society disagree with this position, asserting that all people are poor and oppressed in one way

or another before God and that God loves all people equally and is therefore on the side of all of them. Some would even argue that all people, including the poor, are sinners who have to repent before they can be forgiven, before they can have God's mercy. Noordmans, a Dutch theologian, deals very aptly with this uneasiness of people who have never experienced exclusion in real life, who in most cases benefited socially, politically, economically and psychologically from the exclusion of their fellow human beings, who cannot tolerate a God who would dare to exclude them. He points to the sequence of the parables in Luke 16:19-31 and 18:9-14 in which the one dealing with liberation from physical hunger precedes one dealing with forgiveness of sins. Physical suffering in these parables is brought into close relationship to salvation. (See O. Noordmans, 1980, 15ff). Asserting that God is on the side of his suffering people wherever they are in the world and that God's son suffers with them and for them may not explain adequately and in depth what that means. What we can say in this regard is that in Jesus of Nazareth, God took the entire force of torture, the entire pain of crucifixion and death and exhausted it upon Him/Herself. God solidarizes with suffering humanity to that depth and to that extent and thereby breaks the power of death as the ultimate weapon in the arsenal of all oppressors. They will and can still kill the weak but death can no longer be the limit to a life that is committed to humanity and justice. It is in this regard that A. Nolan, reflecting on the suffering and death of committed black people in South Africa, says but the great new insight is that these people will be a prophetic witness to the world through their suffering.' (Nolan, 1988, 65) We can immediately think of Steve Biko, whose death convicted the South African government of the collective guilt of all white people who are members of the South African racist state, more forcefully than his words ever could. The power of this committed life comes from the resurrection of Jesus. I have argued elsewhere that: "The Son lives never to die again and raises a community that loves and suffers with him, a community that struggles against the powers which are opposed to the liberation of humanity and fraternity among people." (Mofokeng, 1983, 263). I have also argued elsewhere that observation has shown that especially black christians have a difficulty knowing what to do with the event of the resurrection. The reason for this inability is not hard to find. I have argued that "...the fact that Jesus of Nazareth's resurrection which is an important datum of the christian faith falls outside the scope of such intensive celebration because it falls outside the purview of the life experience of an average black christian who takes concrete life seriously and would not want to escape out of it into pietism, which is an internalization of life... No one really knows what to do due to this lack of a relevant experience and related categories for perception." (Mofokeng, 1983, 29)

Maimela has found a way of dealing with this problem which might be useful to many black christians. He insists that Jesus' resurrection is proof that God has acted to defeat sin and procure liberation salvation which has to be actualized by the oppressed. In other words his starting point is an objective reality of God's finished work which needs to be accepted and actualized in the life and praxis of the contemporary black christians. He continues in this regard and says: "Fortunately for humankind, this failure and darkness of Good Friday was not permanent, for God demonstrated the divine power over sin... by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, thereby revealing by way of anticipation the outstanding human future..." He continues elsewhere and says: "And by raising Jesus Christ from the dead as a first sign that sin can be conquered, it means that God has succeeded in procuring a real cure for human sinful conditions..." (Maimela, 1987, 115). As far as the human responsibility is concerned, he says: This commitment to the liberation of African humanity will be born out of the realization that God's victorious power is freely available to those who remain faithful to the struggle against sin, the struggle which was set in motion by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." (Maimela, 1987, 119) This construct does not, however, appear very satisfactory to me. My question is, how does Maimela know that after saying this, the oppressed will stand up, take what God has procured for them and actualize it? What is the meaning of God's achievements, to oppressed people if they do not respond to God's call? Obviously denial of justice and dignity will continue unabated. But as we all know, black people are already making huge sacrifices for justice and humanity. They are taking up the cross as a means of affirming their humanity and their right to power at all dimensions of organized society, i.e. social, political economic, cultural and religious. This movement of crossbearing, of insurrection, serves as more fertile reality to which theology should connect talk about Jesus Christ's objective procurements. In other words theology should find connections in the foot prints of the "Spirit" of Jesus among those who are bearing the cross. Those who have resigned themselves to injustice and inhumanity, as well as those who are paralyzed by fear have to hear Maimela and be invited to join the existing community of crossbearers among whom Jesus continues to traverse his journey from Jordan to Golgotha, from Crossroads to Cape Town, and from Soweto to Pretoria, again and again. To this entire movement, resurrection stands ahead of us as a coming and beckoning object of hope that encourages and empowers the crossbearers of our day.

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