Sankofa—the Need to Turn Back to Move Forward: Addressing Reconstruction Challenges that Face Africa and South Africa Today

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Abstract

The Sankofa, a mythical African bird that moves forward while its head is turned backward toward a golden egg on its back, inspires the considerations of this article. The egg here represents a treasure in the form of historical wisdom. This article suggests that Africans have to rediscover and reclaim historical wisdom to address contemporary problems and challenges. It addresses the tension between universalism and particularism that continues to move Africanism to Westernism: a process that is regarded as undermining the soul of the continent. Knowledge of the past provides the potential to repossess what it means to be human in Africa. Since re-memory captures the emotional memory, it serves as a dynamic source for spiritual recovery, healing and reconciliation. To build a collective historical memory of historical wisdom; therein lies the necessary illumination. This article realises that the wisdom of history and tradition possesses the ability to redefine and reconstruct social and religious problems from within the frame of memory. It endeavours to show that a Sankofa connection with the African past provides sustenance for understanding and embodying the present and the future.

Keywords: Sankofa; reconstruction; African wisdom; leadership; xenophobia

Introduction

The word "Sankofa" is an African word that originates from the Adinkra tribe of the Akan people in Ghana, who speak the Twi language. According to the Carter G. Woodson Centre, *san* means to return; *ko* means to go; and *fa* means to fetch or to seek. When the entire word is translated it reads as "Go back and get it"; or "Go back and take it." The symbolic version of the word "Sankofa" is a mythical bird (see Figure 1

below). This bird has its feet planted firmly on the ground, and the head is turned backwards. The symbol and the word, when translated together, literally mean "it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind."[1] This symbol has been interpreted and re-interpreted in several different ways, but what it really symbolises is that the Akan people's search for knowledge is based on critical reasoning, as well as intelligent and patient investigation of the past. The Akan people are of the opinion that the past serves as a guide when planning for the future and obtaining the wisdom of the past enables planning for a strong future. Visually and symbolically, Sankofa is expressed as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking back with an egg (symbolising the future) in its mouth, or sometimes portrayed as a stylised heart.

Figure 1: Sankofa, mystic bird and stylised heart

Source: Sankofa – Expressive Art Culture exaculturaljourneys.com

The symbol sometimes refers to the chief of the tribe (those in leadership) who ought to see all things, even things behind them. The Sankofa has also been used as a symbol whereby knowledge of the past can be utilised to map out the future; or where a mistake has been made, the wrong can be rectified and lessons can be learnt from the experience. In this sense the Sankofa symbol alludes to a historic past that is uniquely African and it is remembered when building a better future. The idea is of looking to the past with the understanding that both the good and the bad have formed the present situation. Hence, the Ghanaian proverb advises that it is useful to go back for that which has been forgotten.[2]

This article utilises the Sankofa teaching in ascertaining the benefits of going back to our roots in order to move forward. That is, to reach back and touch base with the past and assemble the best of what our past has to offer us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, sacrificed or been deprived of, can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated. The Sankofa wisdom is not selective as it encourages all to understand that both the good and the bad have

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1   "The Power of Sankofa: Know History" (https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the power-of-sankofa).
2   W. Bruce Willis, The Adinkra Dictionary: A Visual Primer on the Language of Adinkra (Washington, DC: Pyramid Complex, 1998).

formed us to become what we are today. It encourages us to embrace all that we have been through and to respect the generations that have gone before us.

The egg off the bird's back indicates that we extract what is valuable from the past, and export it into the present in order to make positive and benevolent use of historical knowledge. It is precisely this wisdom of learning from the past, which ensures a strong future. The Akans believe that there is movement and new learning; as time passes the knowledge of the past provides us with eternal wisdom.

Sankofa Wisdom: Unearthing the Religious Wisdom of Africa

According to Confucius, there are three methods whereby we can learn wisdom. The first method is by reflection, which is the noblest way; the second is by imitation, which is the easiest; and the third by experience, which is the bitterest. The philosopher, George Santayana, says: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."[3] Either we pay mere lip service to history as a teacher or we can draw wisdom from it. Sankofa represents the importance to learn lessons from the past. This article endeavours to use the Sankofa method to unearth wisdom that derives from the African religious belief systems, creeds, codes of behaviour, rituals, spirituality and tradition that speak to the challenging circumstances today.

"Purification of Memory": Remembering the Past to Heal the Present and Change the Future

In the preparatory discussions for the Synod of African Catholic Bishops, an event that took place in Rome in 1994 (in the shadow of the Rwandan genocide, which claimed the lives of 800 000, inflicted by mostly Christian Hutu neighbours), the church looked back to see what lessons and wisdom can be drawn from the event so as to avoid such a tragedy among Christians and people in general from happening again.

Leaders of missionary groups in the Catholic Church, such as Francis Libermann, the Holy Ghost Fathers and Daniel Comboni of the Verona Fathers, who worked in Africa for many years, always advised their members to learn from the culture and habits of the African people. The Reverend Father Daniel Comboni said: "The regeneration of Africa by means of Africa, seems to me the only possible way to Christianise the continent." Libermann cautioned not to impose European ways of doing things in Africa: "Become African with Africans," he insisted, "Adapt yourselves to them as servants have to adapt themselves to their masters, their customs, taste and manners."

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3   George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Reason in Common Sense* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1905), 284.

These sentiments of the evangelisation process, according to Magesa,[4] served as a forerunner to the African Synod, which encouraged a dialogue of life between Christianity and African religion. The openness to dialogue with indigenous African religions and belief systems was a means to discover the spiritual treasures of the local people and it spelled a revolutionary way forward for Roman Catholics since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Making African religion a dialogue partner was indeed revolutionary, in fact interreligious dialogue was elevated to a mandate in the document *Nostra Aetate*.[5] The document recognises that African traditional religions as well as non-Christian religions contain important dimensions of divine revelation and truth to which the church must be receptive. The church calls people to appreciate the values found in other religions because they are evidence of the inherent and the common desire of all human beings' search for the divine. In the document, the church in her wisdom calls for dialogue, collaboration and to preserve and promote the spiritual and moral values in non-Christian religions. The document, *Nostra Aetate,* urges all Roman Catholics to respect people of different religions, and describes discrimination as foreign to the mind of Christ, stating that we must be at peace with all people— irrespective of religious differences. From these insights emerged a Sankofa form of wisdom in the sense that the wealth of African indigenous religious truths is discovered, brought forward and inserted into the present situation. This move brought a rich African expression to Christianity, wherein the people feel at home and at ease with their faith.

The same holds for biblical interpretations. By going back and reflecting on certain missionary practices based on the literal interpretation of biblical readings, African biblical scholars can attest to the untold damages that were caused in the process of evangelisation. By applying the Sankofa method, it is never too late to draw on the truth so as to rectify past mistakes. Magesa[6] points out that a fundamentalist reading of the biblical tradition that dominated European missionary evangelisation practices, entirely dismissed African religion, its customs and manners. In fact, he says they wanted it to become extinct. To this end, the fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible communicated a message of prejudice and exclusion. The Shema (Deuteronomy 7) forbade social contact with people of other cultures and religions, including intermarriage and all forms of political affiliations. "Make no covenant with them … there must be absolutely no communication with them" (Deut 7:5, 16ff). The theology driven by this perception of religious purity and fear of contamination, spurred people on to eradicate religious differences. Religious violence, not necessarily physical, but in the form of exclusion, advocated no dialogue in the evangelisation

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4   Laurenti Magesa, "On Speaking Terms: African Religion and Christianity in Dialogue," in
     Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace: The Second African Synod, edited by A. E. Orobator (Maryknoll,
     New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 26.

5   Pope Paul VI, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*,
     proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on 28 October 1965.

6   Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 26.

process, despite the fact that the New Testament was against all forms of Christian chauvinism. The psychological violence done by biblical fundamentalist missionaries in the show of superiority did unspeakable harm. This form of missionary activities were domineering, dictatorial and alienating. The language that was used, according to F. Eboussi Boulaga,[7] was a missionary "language of refutation" of African religion, a "language of demonstration" to prove superiority of Christian beliefs, a "language of orthodoxy" demanding conformity and thus a "language of conformity."

Theologically and morally, this kind of evangelisation is obviously wrong and in 1990, Pope John Paul II openly lamented this on behalf of the Catholic Church; he characterised it as faulty, erroneous, unjust and even sinful.[8] In his Apostolic Letter in 1994, *Tertio Milennio Adveniente* (On the Threshold of the Third Millennium), Pope John Paul II proposed that the church should examine her conscience for such historical wrongs, repent and seek forgiveness. This gesture of asking forgiveness, (in the words of Magesa),[9] formed one of the most striking features of John Paul II's pontificate. Since this was amazingly unexpected, Magesa says that "for us in Africa, the pope's recognition of moral failure for attitudes of acquiescence … given … to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth was most significant."[10] Although, according to Pope John Paul II, this should be judged in the proper historical and cultural contexts of the time, and even though the historical circumstances may have encouraged an overriding sense that the "authentic witness to the truth could include suppressing the opinions of others or at least paying no attention to them," he claims that the failure remains. This insight is, no doubt, the direct result of some deep reflection on the past in search of the truth. In this sense the Pope speaks the same language as G. W. F. Hegel, who says that: "Each period is involved in such peculiar circumstances, exhibits a condition of things so strictly idiosyncratic, that its conduct must be regulated by considerations connected with itself, and itself alone."[11] However, despite some mitigating factors the Pope said it does not exonerate the church from expressing profound regret for these attitudes. He says that the gospel can only be proclaimed when the principle is respected, i.e. "the truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it wins over the mind with both gentleness and power"[12].

Hence, there is a need for repentance and to ask forgiveness and to be reconciled with other religions. Pope John Paul II rejected any form of violence as a tool of

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7   F. Eboussi Boulaga, Christianity without Fetishes: An African Critique and Recapture of Christianity (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 43–44.
8   Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 30.
9   Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 31.
10   Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 35.
11   Hegel, G. W. F., *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* translated by J. Sibree (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902).
12   Pope John Paul II. Apostolic Letter in 1994, *Tertio Milennio Adveniente* (On the Threshold of the Third Millennium), No 35.

evangelisation. In 1994, the Pope asked that the church should look at the darker aspects of its own history, and judge it in light of the principles of the gospel. He referred to the review as a process of "purification of memory"; of remembering the past so as to heal the present and amend the future.[13] This reflection on the past brings with it the wisdom that commands rightful practices based on informed thinking for the future. It brings along Sankofa wisdom into the present and so directs the future into new horizons.

Magesa, however, claims that the apology of Pope John Paul II to Africa, concerning the slave trade, racial discrimination and cultural alienation, did not go far enough since it lacked in areas concerning the missionary violence that included damaging spiritual marginalisation by missionaries of African values and African identity. Nevertheless, the very fact that an apology was expressed, opened the way for reconciliation and recognition of the value of African spirituality. Magesa[14] is, however, of opinion that this realisation must result in the positive consideration of African religious values as the governing factor for evangelisation in Africa. This links into the Sankofa practice of revisiting the past to unearth African values and transport them to the present and in this way learn from past failures to bring about healing and transformation.

Sankofa Wisdom: The Need to Deconstruct Africa's Corrupt Governance and Despotic Leadership

It has become imperative to conduct a moral interrogation of the relevant knowledge of history so as to address the democratic reconstruction challenges that face Africa today. Africa, says Masango, has produced a reputation or a perception of "corruption; dictatorship; military coups; rebellious leaders; greediness; misuse of power; and incompetent, politically unstable leaders; suspicious leaders who undermine their own democracies"[15]— thus politically and economically ineffective; a plague of the continent. Masango maintains that their inability to cope with the vestiges of colonialism resulted in African leaders to cover up their leadership styles and inabilities by reacting and blaming the Western world and previous colonial powers.[16] Leadership in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan, and Burundi among others, are prime examples of this practice. Corrupt governance and despotic leadership give credence to people to make condescending statements about the general situation in Africa. Peter Kanyandago writes in 2007 in *Universality: From Theory to Practice,* on this very issue whereby Western universality has posited itself as the exemplary model, which Africa must

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13   Luigi, Accattoli. When a Pope Asks Forgiveness: The Mea Culpas of Pope John Paul II (New York: Alba House, 1998), 174.
14   Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 36.
15   Maake, J. S. Masango, "Leadership in the African Context: Words on Leadership," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 23 (3) (Jan 2002): 707–718.
16   Masango, "Leadership in the African Context," 707.

follow if she wants to solve her current problems. He points out that this negative universality towards Africa has had severe adverse ethical and anthropological effects on Africa and the manner in which the West relates to Africa. This negative perception has denied African cultural identity and African humanity. He refers to a speech that was delivered by President Nicolas Sarkozy on 26 July 2007, when he attended a symposium on "Solutions to the Continent's Problems." Instead of apologising for the suffering caused by the exploitation of colonisation, he proposed as a solution that Africa should imitate the West in reason and universal consciousness since Africa has no reason.[17] He also refers, among others, to John O'Donohue's[18] article "Be Modern" (1989, 136), wherein he reiterates the ethico-anthropological assumption that the major cause of Africa's current (melancholy) situation, is her people's failure to adapt to the modern situation, as well as the intellectual and moral categories inherited from the traditional Western situation. O'Donohue in his article equates the modern situation with the Western situation, as if the Western situation possesses universal value to which all people must adapt. These Western values include efficiency, creativity, patience, rational endeavour, concern for non-kin and willingness to take risks. These, he claims, do not exist in Africa, people have no confidence in themselves, are lazy, fatalistic, take the past as the model, believe in instant solutions, do not experiment, and do not use their creative faculties. He states that the only solution to Africa's problems is for Africans to cease to be African, and become "modern." This attitude, says Peter Kanyandago[19] "reinforces a belief that a negative ethico-anthropological mentality exacerbates Africa's anthropological poverty." Unfortunately, says Kanyandago, O'Donohue is not the only person with these views. Many paternalistic and condescending views of Africa are still overtly racist and indicative that some Westerners still fail to recognise non-Westerners, and in particular, Africans, as fully human beings. The inference (even from the speech of President Nicolas Sarkozy) is that as long as Africa's corrupt governance and despotic leadership exist, this negative ethico-anthropological mentality towards Africans will prevail. The perception abounds that Africa is incapable of changing itself.

From an African perspective, in the light of unearthing African Sankofa wisdom, it is well to realise that many negative Western influences exist that are not worth imitating, even though there are some positive aspects such as liberty, freedom and justice that are

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17 Peter Kanyandago, "From Negative to Positive Universality: Anthropological and Ethical Implication for Africa," in *Universality; From Theory to Practice: An Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Debate about Facts, Possibilities, Lies and Myths*, 25th Colloquium 2007 of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 316.

18 John O'Donohue, "The Problem of Africa, 1989," in *The African Mind* 1 (1): 136–149, in *"From Negative to Positive Universality: Anthropological and Ethical Implication for Africa,"* Peter Kanyandago (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 316.

19 Peter Kanyandago, "Let us First Feed the Children (Mark 7:27). The Church's Response to the Inequitable Extraction of Resources and Related Violence," in *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace; The African Synod,* edited by A. E. Orobator (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 174.

worth employing. While the old colonial era left Africa with a legacy of problems, the challenge to nurture and shape new models of leadership is indeed undermined by autocratic-personality driven leadership styles. While African heritage cannot be ignored in the creation of African leadership, at the same time, says Kanyandago[20] people in Africa cannot discount the fact that they live in the 21st century and that Africa is part of the global scene. Of the 54 countries in Africa, at least 24 countries suffer from the brutality of dictators while they claim that they abide by the rule of democracy.

Unearthing African Traditional Leadership Values that Counter Corruption and Immoral Leadership

The Catholic African Synod produced two documents, namely the *Instrumentum Laboris* and the *Final List of 57 Propositions;* and the former makes (9 times) explicit mention of the term corruption, which shows that the gravity of corruption is a source of grave destabilisation on the African continent revealed in the form of *coup d'état*, violent conflicts, internal xenophobia and wars. The document *Instrumentum Laboris* deals with it extensively, showing how corruption is the root cause of suffering in African societies as well as one of the obstacles to a just society.[21] While the document underlines various ways of curbing corruption, it also reveals that curbing corruption is a *conditio sine qua non* for a reconciled, just and peaceful church and society. The Sankofa method requires looking back at traditional African structures and extracting what is valuable to counter what had become bad and corrupt practices.

Unearthing values implies looking for morals and standards that are highly esteemed and treasured; it carries conviction for which a person is prepared to live as well as to die for. There is no society without a value system, and human beings imbibe values by means of living in certain societies and cultures.[22] As a person's perception of reality changes, so the values of a person may also differ, but a person's integrity is therefore judged by abiding and living according to those value systems such as telling the truth and respecting the property of others. All cultures and societies embody different leadership values and in Africa, the origins of leadership beliefs are based on family hierarchical structures. Each family has a head and normally a male figure, and each village has a chief, clans and paramount rulers. These political configurations were sacrosanct prior to colonisation. It was believed that disloyalty to a leader was disloyalty to God and the position of leadership was either hereditary or by conquest. It was a

20 Kanyandago, "Let us First Feed the Children," 174.
21 Gabriel Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption: The Need for Transparency and Accountability," in *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace; The African Synod*, edited by A. E. Orobator (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 227.
22 G. E. Idang, "Cultural Relativism and the Language of Morals," *International Journal of African Culture and Development* 2 (1) (Pretoria: Unisa Press 2007): 4.

political value for people to show respect for leadership as well as the political institutions and customs.

Traditional leaders in Africa, and in particular in the South African context, are individuals who occupied communal political leadership positions approved by cultural standards and values. The foundation of the validity of tribal leaders is to uphold tradition, which includes the whole range of inherited culture and a way of life. This includes the people's history, as well as moral and social values and the traditional structures which exist to serve those values.[23] The hierarchy of traditional leadership consists of the king, the chief and the headman. The king was perceived as a link between the living and the dead, and this part of his office was highly revered. The chief has charge of a specific community and exercises authority over a number of headmen in accordance with customary law. Both the king and the chief do not require training to occupy their positions, as they were hereditary according to the principle of primogeniture in the male line.[24] Traditional leaders were regarded as the fathers of the nation and their prime responsibility was to care for the people. Conflicts were handled in terms of values, which were shared by both rulers and subjects. While the system was not democratic, consultation was an important means to rule. Notably, their powers to govern were not differentiated into the three Western categories, namely judicial, executive and legislative, and the rulers were not subject to the inspection of an independent judiciary. This is a later development that came with the Black Authorities Act of 1951, which made them subordinate to colonial structures.

While time has moved on and certain practices have become archaic, some valuable norms can still be extracted from traditional leadership; some that may even offer solutions to the leadership problems that Africa encounters today. In the pre-colonial African community, leadership has been exclusively along the patrilineal lines. The person that emerged as a leader was to dispense all needed services to his subjects. When a leader's following expanded he would appoint his trustees to help him in administering the African indigenous religions of the nation. This resulted in the appointment of headmen and chiefs in various numbers, depending on the size of the nation. A nation with a centralised administration and having an observable number of chiefs, developed into a kingdom with the king at the helm. The king, together with his aides at various echelons of his administration and the councillors, would provide services to their subjects, dispense justice and uphold their welfare. Traditional African societies held human worth in very high regard, and the emphasis was not placed so much on the individual, but on the group. All activities of the kingdom, be it cultivation of crops, rainmaking, trading, performance of rituals, and so forth, had to be performed under the

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23 Dolly Bizana-Tutu, *Traditional Leaders in South Africa: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Cape Town, University of the Western Cape 2008), 6.
24 Letsealo, in *Inheemse Publiekreg in Lebowa*, by M. W. Prinsloo (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1983), 18 (referred to by Bennett 1983, 106).

auspices of the king as the provider and the soul of the nation.[25] Malfunctioning leadership is an offense against the community and society. Traditionally a person entrusted with authority looked after the political, religious or moral and economic interests since these elements were guided by the community. According to Magesa, any person in authority is invested *ipso facto* with the power and the responsibility to guard and allocate justly the community of goods. The leader is invested with immense power, and both the ability to lead and the validity of any leadership depend greatly on whether or not the leader is an African indigenous person, and is religious and just[26].

African traditional leadership came into being as people needed to be organised under an individual with outstanding qualities and abilities to organise and lead people in the quest for security, appropriation of land for residential and farming purposes, acquisition of water resources, and organising people for ceremonies (performance of rituals and other festivals) that were needed for the well-being of the nation.[27] Traditional leaders were experienced as "fathers," i.e. protectors of the nation and their prime responsibility was to care for the people. They ruled by means of consultation, not dictatorship. They took accountability for how their people lived and promoted self-sustenance. They organised themselves in social institutions such as the family, kraal/ward, tribes, nations/states. African traditional leaders had to cater or provide for the welfare of their subjects (food and security), the roles of African traditional leaders in agriculture and economic activities, judiciary (legal) systems, marriage systems and the performance of rituals and their significance in pre-colonial African societies.

Leadership in African religion refers not only to elected leaders, but also to parents/elders, but if leaders fail in their parental responsibilities they are expected to relinquish their leadership roles.[28] Leaders should see to the wise use of all resources to avoid an affront or offense against the ancestors and God[29] (Magesa 1997, 283). Failure to deliver as leaders could lead to near-catastrophic consequences that might put both the individual and the community at risk.[30] Dictatorship and corrupt governance do not match up with the hierarchical perception of reality in the African worldview. Magesa[31] writes: "… to callously disturb created order by abusing it disrespectfully means nothing else, ultimately, than to tamper dangerously with human life … if the world is disturbed, God, the spirits and the ancestors … are likewise unsettled."

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25 Phuti Solomon Matloa. The Role of African Traditional Leadership in Modern Democratic South Africa: Service Provisioning in Rural Areas (Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2008), 83.
26 Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 61.
27 Matloa, The Role of African Traditional Leadership, 78.
28 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 233.
29 Magesa Laurenti. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*.(New York Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 283.
30 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 233.
31 Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 61.

Unearthing such valuable realisations can assist in countering corrupt governance and despotic leadership so prevalent in African countries. It is a valuable insight to know that traditional leadership was there for the nation as a whole and not for the advantage of the individual. Leadership is responsible for the holistic development of the nation and not for selfish gain that ends in corrupt practices such as autocracy; greed; abuse of power; and incompetent, politically unstable and suspicious leaders causing the downfall of the people politically, economically and spiritually.

A Corrupt System is often Built on Personalities

A direct consequence of corruption is that it damages the government seriously and destabilises society. It is the lack of accountability and transparency that captures the reality of corruption.[32] A corrupt system is often built on personalities rather than institutions and this is very apparent in the African context. One way of curbing corruption is the necessity of transparency and accountability. However, in the attempt to define corruption, says Gabriel Mmassi, the following elements have to be included: "… unAfrican indigenous religions, greed, bribery, fraud, embezzlement of public funds, misuse of authority and power, rigging of elections, tax evasion, and nepotism in employment."[33] He points out that singly or collectively these terms evoke a breach of social and religious contracts and necessarily call for some form of reconciliation.[34] Mmassi[35] states that transparency and accountability are diametrically opposed to corruption and are a means to a reconciled, just and peaceful church and society. He argues that these two concepts embody a pragmatic sense and translate into a community that can render its members, as *Instrumentum Laboris* states, the "salt of the earth and light of the world" in social, cultural and religious spheres. This, however, can only happen if they are contextualised in a concrete milieu, such as the socio-religious elements of a given person or community.

Corrupt practices undermine any form of reconciliation, democratic transformation and nation-building processes in Africa. After the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa, reconciliation was regarded as the prime priority for any meaningful healing of the nation and this was based on truth telling (Pope Paul VI 1965, 78).[36] Unless there was a willingness to own up to one's role in the conflicted history of apartheid, redressing the situation would be futile. The truth cannot just be extracted, but needs to be accompanied by transparency and accountability. Racial prejudice and racial antagonism were not the only problems during the apartheid regime; it was buffered by

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32 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 228.
33 Pius, K. Kidombo, *The Faces of Corruption in Kenya. N African Indigenous Religions* (Obi, Kenya: Sino Printer and Publishers, 2004), 3.
34 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 228.
35 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 227.
36 Pope Paul VI, "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (Rome: The Vatican City, 7 December, 1965), *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 78.

systemic economic inequality and this inequality constituted the depth of the problem. The informed solution to the problem was to redress injustice and bring about social transformation, and this was the first step to reconciliation. Racial antagonism and racial policies were at the surface, but were used to entrench economic and social inequality. The truth that had to surface had to conjure from within the person.[37] Maluleke[38] explains that reconciliation means that all must be accounted for—the truth must be completely disclosed and all the pain must be vented. This, however, does not necessarily mean that everything is solved, but rather that good and bad are recognised (and taken responsibility for).

Evaluating the truth and reconciliation process, it is pointed out by Anthony Egan (2011, 98) that despite the success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), there are still many un-reconciled people. Victim reparation was poorly handled. Many resented that perpetrators were pardoned for having revealed that which they called "all" and escaped without punishment. A significant minority, mostly among the former white ruling class, regarded the TRC process as biased in favour of the ANC and thus withdrew into the privileged enclaves. The upshot of it all, says Egan,[39] was polarisation and the resurgence of identity politics—both black and white. Hence, despite reconciliation, racism still prevailed.

Looking back (Sankofa), and given the situation that traditional values and customs are being polluted by the forces of corruption, the question is: Can we take it for granted that traditional justice mechanisms may still offer a means to restore a sense of accountability and transparency, and of linking justice to democratic development? By exploring traditional systems it is clear that justice and reconciliation had elements of democratic culture, but unfortunately these were destroyed by the forces of Western colonial rule. Western colonial systems were primarily directed towards civilising what they perceived as uncivilised, and the process had to take place within the parameters of Western values. By doing this, traditional techniques had been altered in both form and substance by the power of colonisation. The primary aim of the traditional justice system in many African communities is reconciliation; to forgive and forget and to move on. To obtain reconciliation the cardinal values of accountability, truth-telling, reparation, legitimacy and the role of civil society were accentuated. This was done in a very significant manner to sustain peace, trust and reconciliation and to rebuild structures in a positive, progressive and humane manner, based on the African indigenous system of communal dialogue, consensus and understanding. It is clear that the African traditional culture and value system have much to offer to the world, even

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37 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 228.
38 Maluleke Tinyiko, "Truth, National Unity and Reconciliation in South Africa: Aspects of the Emerging Theological Agenda," *Missionalia* 25 (1) (April 1997): 59–86.
39 Anthony Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace: The Second African Synod,* edited by A. E. Orobator (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 98.

though Africa remains a region where conflicts are caused by external factors, issues over natural resources and the wrong use of power in the development process. Revisitng these dynamic processes could and should be a means to redress the detrimental consequences of the colonisation of Africa.

The New Colonisation of Africa is Religion Convoyed by Violence and the Accumulation of Wealth

A great concern in Africa is the apparent violence that is connected to religion. Religion has become politicised and a religious identity has become imperative for top political and economic positions. Pope Benedict remarked that the widespread sense of God among Africans is quickly becoming a source of pain in Africa. The Pope emeritus says that this development is an invitation to a new colonisation of Africa, this time a religious one.[40] This new scramble for Africa, though a religious one, the Pope claimed is as serious as the one foisted on Africa in 1885, and as violent. The population in Africa, that is about 900 million, of which 45 per cent (390 million) is Christian and 40 per cent Muslim, it is estimated that close to 130 million are Catholic and it is predicted that by 2015 they would have increased to more than 280 million (4% of the total growth of the Catholic world population). Other Christian communities and non-Christian communities also project very optimistic numbers and a future full of growth.[41]

The growth of African religions, Christianity and Islam in particular, brings with it many challenges in need of urgent solutions. The challenges, says Odozor, can be grouped under four categories: historical, theological, political, and social. When Pope Benedict said that the violence and intolerance in Africa are revisited "in God's name," he was stating an obvious fact. Historically, all religions harbour memories of having done harm to others in the name of religion. Theologically the search for new converts causes religions to collide as never before. Politically, there is competition over control of the common good and from the social perspective a lack of agreement on the nature of the common good. One only has to look at how Nigeria has become a hotbed of conflict between Christians and Muslims. It was not like that before, but it is believed that the politicisation of religion is the cause of this conflict. Religious identity has become important for the suitability of public office. Religion has become a means of winning votes. Politicians suddenly side with certain religions to win votes and positions in Africa.

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40 Paulinus I. Odozor, "African and the Challenge of Foreign Religious/Ethical Ideologies, Viruses, and Pathologies," in *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace; The African Synod*, edited by A. E. Orobator (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 216.

41 Odozor, "African and the Challenge," 217.

The Drive to Impose Sharia

Sharia has become one of the most contentious issues in Africa, as well as for the coexistence of Muslims and Christians. The drive to make Sharia or the Islamic penal code the basic law for everyone has made some Muslims in some countries in Africa[42] to become very belligerent. In Nigeria, where Christianity, Islam and African religion are prominent among the population, wrangling over the imposition of Sharia has recently generated considerable violence. The protagonists are of the opinion that this expression of the Islamic way of life and the enforcement thereof are important and effective to curb social ills. First of all, this is an imposition and when Sharia becomes the law of the land, everyone has to adhere to Islamic laws and practices. The imposition of Sharia laws is blatantly unfavourable towards women, and this is evident in how it has created a so-called legal climate in which terrorist groups like Boko Haram are of the opinion that they possess the religious right to violate the freedom of young girls without being prosecuted. When Christians and Jews object to Sharia, this does not imply that they object to do God's will or to reform morals in society. Jews and Christians abide by a religious, moral code based on the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. To enforce Sharia by means of civil sanction is an imposition and a violation of freedom and religious freedom, as well as freedom of conscience. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, as is being taught in the Vatican II document, *Dignitatis Humanae,* which states that "all human beings, because they are human, they are intrinsically endowed with reason and free will, and are thus compelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek truth, especially religious truth" (No 2). As clarified by Odozor,[43] the obligation to seek the truth can be carried out only in freedom since it is a moral duty. Catholic moral theology teaches that knowledge and freedom are necessary to make a human and thus a moral act. The human person is obliged to know what he or she is doing and then to do it freely. The absence of freedom and knowledge is a serious omission to make a moral decision. The same is true for faith: to force faith on a person is not faith, since faith proceeds only from free human volition. No religion has the right to enforce their tenet of faith and moral behaviour by incurring state sanctions. The divergence of how to understand, read and interpret God's ordering is a constant source of tension between Muslims and Christians in Africa.

The Sankofa reasoning offers an exploration into the benefits of freedom of religion in the face of democratisation, neo-liberalism, media deregulation, and global religious activism—realities that make it increasingly difficult for religions to coexist. Since African traditional religions were intensely vulnerable during the early stages of Christian and Muslim missionary activity that accompanied colonisation, it is essential that the African indigenous religions are allowed their rightful place. Between 1945 and 1965, the African leaders stressed that political independence had to go hand in hand

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42 Odozor, "African and the Challenge," 219.
43 Odozor, "African and the Challenge," 219.

with religious independence and that the colonial mentality had to change regarding African indigenous religions. In 1963, the African Society of Culture was organised. In 1966, Pope Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesiae Sanctae* (Governing) of the Holy Church, which encouraged the creation of study groups to study African indigenous religions. According to David T Adamo, responses came from various parts of Africa, but the most impressive response came from Zaire in 1967. The most practical and significant response came from Vincent Mulago, who established a centre for research at the Catholic Faculty of Theology on African indigenous religions. This centre published several books and arranged many international conferences. To avoid any negative implications of the term "Non-Christian Religions," the name of the Secretariat in Rome, which encouraged interreligious dialogue, was later renamed by Pope John Paul II as the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.*[44] According to Philippe Denis, traditional religions were widely practised in South Africa during the apartheid years, albeit in secret. The reason for the clandestine practice was that the missionaries of the nineteenth century, regardless of their Christian affiliation (Congregational, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran or Catholic), were all vehemently opposed to indigenous African practices since they were judged barbaric and superstitious.[45] Despite the criticism, African indigenous religions continue to be practised until today.

The Sankofa method unearthed the understanding of traditional African religion as a "source of civilisation values." Indigenous religions were defined by many African scholars as the foundation of black culture, and they are believed to serve as the deposit of African values and identity. Nkulu-N'Sengha[46] argues that since it adheres to a spirit of tolerance and has no missionary agenda, African, indigenous religion provides a spirit of cooperation and harmonious living with people of other religions; for this reason he says it provides the foundation for interreligious dialogue in Africa.

It was an intentional effort of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II to promote interreligious dialogue. To this end, in 1986 he personally asked for forgiveness from traditional religious leaders for the past mistakes of the church.[47] In 1995 the African bishops met in Rome for the first African Synod of the Catholic Church.[48] High on the agenda was "Interreligious dialogue," which at that stage had become a top priority of

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44 David Adamo, "Christianity and the African Traditional Religion(s): The Postcolonial Round of Engagement," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32 (1), Art. #285, doi:10.4102/ ve.v32i1 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2011), 285.

45 Phillipe Denis, "The Rise of Traditional African Religion in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Missionalia* 34 (2/3) (2006): 310–323 (Pretoria: Sabinet, Unisa Press, 2006).

46 M. Nkulu-N'Sengha, "Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 33 (4) (1996): 528–556 (Gweru, Harare: Mambo Press, 1996).

47 L. N. Mercado, "The Change in Catholic Attitudes Towards Traditional Religion, Dialogue and Alliance," *Missionalia* 18 (2) (2004/2005): 102.

48 Nkulu-N'Sengha, "Christ as our Ancestor," 533.

the church in Africa. The second Vatican Council enabled this essential dialogue between African indigenous religions and Christianity, as well as between Christianity and Islam, thereby showing that there are some lights of truth from the same God to all people in all religions.

According to Laurenti Magesa,[49] religion is the source of abundant life in Africa, despite the differences as to how abundance is achieved. Religion influences Africans' attitude towards the divine and opens the door to the heart and mind of Africa. Religion unites the living with the living-dead, and it is a source of creating order among the living. Religion also provides a neatly tailored hierarchy that guides serious decision-making processes in a given African society. Rewards and punishment are viewed through the lens of such a religious understanding.[50] From these insights emerge the Sankofa wisdom to respect people's freedom to choose and practise their own religious beliefs.

The Current Enslaved Conditions of African People: Perpetrated by Africans against Africans

The enslaved conditions of African people did not end with the emancipation of slavery, it still continues today, but this time round it is perpetrated predominantly by Africans against Africans. Modern slavery is perpetuating the actuality of an African holocaust and the African holocaust represents an existential threat to the humanity and dignity of African people. Slavery of the past and slavery in the present corrupt and strip both the enslaved and the slave masters of their humanity and dignity, then and now. Western colonial countries and slave masters were not called up for crimes they had committed against humanity, and the question remains: How many of the present brutal dictators of African states will be convicted in future for their crimes against African humanity? The current slave trade that operates through Libyan markets, that targets young African men and women, has caused great consternation in both Europe and Africa. The recent kidnapping of schoolgirls by Boko Haram (who kept the girls in bondage), religious oppression and modern-day sex slaves, are occurrences that shocked the world. These forms of modern slavery are a form of genocide, examples of which are: women and child sex trafficking; forced labour; bonded labour or debt bondage; domestic servitude; forced child labour; unlawful recruitment; child conscription; dehumanised treatment; women and children sold as if property; physical and mental abuse; poverty; and corruption. All of these contribute to present day slavery perpetuating the new African holocaust. There is no doubt that modern slavery impacts on all the vital aspects of African life, which includes religion, tradition, culture, agency, self-determination, rites of passage (including marriage), identity, and ethics. Since the post-colonial African era, conditions have not changed. In fact, in many ways they have deteriorated as Africa remains the most exploited continent in the history of humanity. More human victims

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49 Magesa, "On Speaking Terms," 61.
50 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 230.

have been produced in Africa than on all the continents of the world combined. In many instances, it is not so much white on black, but more often black on black exploitation expressed in rape, poverty, gender violence and xenophobia.

Xenophobia: The New African Pathology

Since the transfer of political power in Africa, a new range of discriminatory practices have emerged together with their victims. Regardless of the transition that took place from authoritarianism to democracy, concerns such as prejudice, racism and violence continue to mark present-day Africa. The impact of the new prejudices and violence is more than often directed against foreigners and in particular black African foreigners. In South Africa, xenophobia has been dubbed by Harris as the "new pathology" of the nation as "the foreigner stands at a site where identity, racism and violent practice are reproduced."[51] Harris[52] portrays xenophobia as "negative, abnormal and the antithesis of a healthy, normally functioning individual or society." She asserts that, presently, it has become part of the inherent South African culture of violence. In addition, because xenophobia is perceived as a socially located phenomenon, it is characterised by a negative attitude or mindset towards foreigners, which is expressed in a deep dislike, a fear or even hatred towards them. Harris[53] claims that xenophobia is often connected with violence and physical abuse and for this reason argues that it is more than an attitude— it is also a harmful activity. However, what is curious about xenophobia in South Africa is that it is not uniformly applied to all foreigners, since it is largely directed towards black foreigners, particularly those from the African continent. African-hate of other Africans, black-on-black violence, or Afro-phobia is a most fitting description of xenophobia in the South African context. Why black South Africans target their own African black brothers and sisters in such a violent and negative manner remains in itself a bizarre phenomenon.

Morris[54] provides an explanation stating that, since South Africa was isolated during the apartheid years and hardly ever allowed black foreigners into the country, this ruling had limited South Africans' exposure to other African people. This attitude of insularity created a space for South Africans to develop hostility and suspicion towards African foreigners. As argued by Morris[55]: "… the brutal environment created by apartheid with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance has also impacted on people's ability to be tolerant of differences." Therefore, South Africans find differences threatening

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51 Harris, Bronwyn, "Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa," in *Psychology and Social Prejudice,* edited by D. Hook, and G. Eagle, 169-184 (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002), 169.
52 Harris, "Xenophobia," 169.
53 Harris, "Xenophobia," 170.
54 A. Morris, "'Our Fellow Africans Make our Lives Hell': The Lives of Congolese and Nigerians Living in Johannesburg," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21 (6) (1998): 1116–1136.
55 Morris, "Our Fellow Africans," 1125.

and dangerous and xenophobia exists because foreigners are different as well as unknown.

It is strange to observe that all social disorientation in South Africa seems to possess a violent and criminal component. What is curious is that this violent form of xenophobia, distinctive to South Africa, is not applied equally to all foreigners. While it is a strange phenomenon, it remains a reality that African foreigners seem to be at greater risk than others. The social disorientation, as experienced in South Africa, is also associated with criminality and illegality. Black African foreigners have been described as "illegals," "illegal aliens" or "illegal immigrants," together with other derogatory terms. These terms entail both criminality and difference. A more disturbing factor is that xenophobia is exacerbated by South Africa's existing culture of violence and in this sense, according to Harris, it has assumed the sick characteristics of a national pathological condition. African foreigners are victimised with the same violence which was used during the apartheid years as a political vehicle for liberation. The only difference now is that the violence is in fact a tool for criminality.

Appealing to Sankofa Wisdom

By unearthing African values to deal with African enslavement and xenophobia, an appeal can be made to traditional African ethics, values and morality. According to Motlhabi: "… the ultimate goal of African traditional morality, indeed of all morality, was seen as the promotion of human welfare."[56] Motlhabi explains that good moral principles, according to African traditional morality, are those which befit the welfare of the human being. Goodness in traditional terms, says Motlhabi,[57] was described in words such as kindness, faithfulness, compassion, hospitality, and peace. These qualities in turn were to bring dignity, respect, contentment, posterity and joy to all people within the community. This was all done to promote human life, and human life was the supreme good toward which morality was aimed in the traditional African context.

As explained by Motlhabi,[58] the quest for human welfare was traditionally embraced in Africa by the value of good neighbourliness and this quality in turn was instrumental in creating good interactions among people. Motlhabi[59] maintains that good neighbourliness was in effect the practical implementation of the value of *ubuntu*, which means humanness or personhood. The concept of *ubuntu* places great emphasis on the person as the highest and most intrinsic value of Africanism. Traditionally, some of the manifestations of *ubuntu* were mutual respect, harmonious social and interpersonal

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56 Motlhabi, M, African Theology/Black Theology in South Africa: Looking Back, Moving On (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008), 56.
57 Motlhabi, African Theology/Black Theology, 56.
58 Motlhabi, African Theology/Black Theology, 56.
59 Motlhabi, African Theology/Black Theology, 56.

relations, kindness, gentleness, cooperation and conformity to known communal customs. It was believed that the person who possesses all the above qualities not only embraces *ubuntu*, but *is* real *ubuntu*, that is, a person indeed.[60] On the other hand, the person who does not possess these human qualities, does not qualify as a human being, and is not a person. In addition, says Motlhabi[61]: "… good interrelationships among people following from neighbourliness implied a good standing with God." It is understood that what generally promotes human welfare and social harmony is that which is ethical and morally good and that which is detrimental to a human being's welfare is regarded as evil.[62] This relates directly to the concept and problems around the African legal system and public morality.

Tension between the African Legal System and Public Morality

Despite the fact that the African legal system and the moral system are inseparably intertwined, there is often conflict between the law and public morality in Africa. Waliggo is of the opinion that often in Africa the "law seems to be divorced from public morality."[63] He says that common law tradition seems to concentrate on dismissing the harm that an individual may cause to another person, while paying less attention to the harm done by the individual to the community and to the future of that community. In Africa, public morality is based on a strong sense of shame for the individual who acts or behaves contrary to the common good of the community and its values. This is based on the philosophical axiom: *We are, therefore I am*.

John Waliggo described public morality at the Alraesa Annual Conference, in Entebbe (2005) in the following way: "It is the total set of ethical-moral, legal-human rights values, customs or traditions, which define, describe, promote and defend a given society's or community's common good, shared values and vision, their public ethos, and the common pursuit of the good in order to achieve their full potential and civilisation."[64] He stated that: "… public morality regulates the behaviour and values of both the community and the individual who lives and achieves his or her full humanness within the community."[65]

The main objective in Africa is that when a wrong is committed, it has to be redressed and a broken relationship has to be restored between the relevant parties. Often the procedure is accompanied by intricate practices. When dealing with a breach of law in

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60 Motlhabi, African Theology/Black Theology, 56.
61 Motlhabi, African Theology/Black Theology, 56.
62 Slater, Jennifer, Christian Identity Characteristics in Paul's Letter to the Members of the Jesus Movement in Galatia: Creating Diastratic Unity in a Diastrastic Divergent South African Society (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2012), 186.
63 John Mary Waliggo, Paper discussed at the ALRAESA Annual Conference, Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, Entebbe, 4th–8th September, 2005, 1.
64 Waliggo, Paper discussed at the ALRAESA Annual Conference, 2.
65 Waliggo, Paper discussed at the ALRAESA Annual Conference, 1.

Africa, it is well to keep in mind, says Mmassi, that there is a distinction between a tort or a delict and a crime. A delict or tort refers to "wrongs against norms and customs" and "the punishment of these wrongdoers involves compensation, to be determined by those instruments in society that may be called 'courts.' A crime on the other hand is a violation of a formal legislation of the state"[66] (Mmassi 2011, 232). The main aim is that a broken relationship, between parties that have wronged each other, has to be restored.

In South Africa, for example, the apartheid system was a public morality that violated humanitarian law; therefore it corroded the moral fibre of the society. Apartheid was an authoritarian state and it was replaced by a multi-party democratic system, with the separation of powers and a constitution that contains one of the most liberal bills of human rights in the world. The Constitutional Court is accessible to all who seek final arbitration in human rights and constitutional matters. This court is most effective and well respected.[67] In reality, since 1994, South Africa has been in a one-party dominant situation; therefore what the ANC decides is what the country gets. The only significant check on the ANC is the Constitutional Court and this has been positively displayed more than once as corruption was settling in more and more, with top ANC ministers (including the president) being major culprits. Although the ANC says they are committed to good governance, there remain extraordinary high levels of corruption: bribes posing as gifts to facilitate lucrative government tenders; misappropriation of public funds; undeclared conflicts of interest of officials owning companies dealing with the state; and incompetent officials that are in public positions for monetary gains. While corruption plays out in the public domain, with ANC officials becoming richer by immoral means, they also claim that they are there for the poor.

While officially South Africa is a middle-income economy, it maintains the highest economic inequality in the world with extensive unemployment/poverty between 24–40 per cent. Black economic empowerment action has created a sizable new middle and upper class, largely among black people; the poor have grown poorer, generally among the coloured and black communities. Poor education has created a skills shortage and in many sectors a lack of skills transferability. This has led to many jobs being filled by immigrants from other parts of the continent, which in turn has increased xenophobia and violence.[68] The moral contradictions in the African (South African) society lie mostly between verbal articulations and lack of practical implementations. This is evident in the creation of a new middle and rich upper class black community, contrasted by an ever-growing poor sector of the population. The preaching of reconciliation policy prevails, but it does not counter racism on all sides, black and white. There is a liberal constitution, and yet it is opposed by social conservatism, which

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66 Mmassi, "The Scourge of Corruption," 232.
67 Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," 98.
68 Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," 98.

confuses people to do what is right. Politicians are advocating good governance, but they apply corrupt practices. They are campaigning what is universally right, yet the cultural mediation keeps people imprisoned in moral decay. According to Egan,[69] the ANC's so-called social liberalism in matters like the equality of women, abortion rights, gay rights, gay marriage, and opposition to the death penalty, flies in the face of a population that is generally deeply patriarchal, homophobic and pro-life. In response to high crime rates and poor policing, many people are broadly in favour of capital punishment. Social liberalism reflects South Africa's Constitution and the Bill of Human rights. Many have called for parts to be changed to reflect the social mores, but if it happens, a precedent may be set, democracy will be undermined, and the ANC rule will be entrenched.[70] The Western values are appealed to when it suits the self-interest of new ruling elites, but that tradition is trotted out to keep the masses under control and thus we see the widespread misuse of these rights and culture in defence of sectorial interests.[71] Rooted in a strong Western type of universal human rights culture, South Africans are faced with multiple contestations over the nature of these rights. This remains an ongoing struggle to maintain the soul of the people intact.

Conclusion

To build a collective historical memory of remembering the past—although desirable to forget, but impossible to forget—therein lies the necessary illumination. Knowledge of past experiences provides the potential to rediscover what it means to be human in Africa. The restructuring of the African experience cannot ignore the vestiges of the African world, or the cultural realities. The re-memory captures the emotional memory, which serves as a dynamic source for spiritual recovery, healing and reconciliation. A Sankofa relationship with the African past provides sustenance for understanding and embodying the present and the future. This research brings to mind that the wisdom of history has the ability to redefine and reconstruct from within the frame of memory, and capitalise on what is good and valuable. Corruption, unethical leadership, abuse, violence, poverty and greed represent an existential threat to the people-hood and agency of African people. Modern slavery is a consistent crime against the African humanity, which strips both the enslaved and the perpetrator of their humanity and dignity. It is a process, which undermines the soul of the continent as a whole. Looking back and unearthing that which is constructive, is one way of rebuilding the people and restoring their self-worth and dignity; by using what is familiar and customary.

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69 Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," 98.
70 Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," 98.
71 Egan, "Governance Beyond Rhetoric," 99.

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