Ubuntu Justice and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: An African missiological response

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Abstract

This article examines some of the missiological problems of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), taking into consideration the theological and missiological concepts of forgiveness, reconciliation, and justice. The article proposes the *Ubuntu* Justice concept's viability as a missiological framework with which to respond to the activities of the TRC. The article further explores the methodology and the goal of public hearings and uses the "Gugulethu Seven" and the "PEBCO Three" cases to highlight the sacrosanctity of truth, remorse, and forgiveness in the process of reconciliation. This inquiry considers that as an African understanding and a strategy of upholding justice and maintaining peaceful relations, *Ubuntu* recognises the importance of the process of rehabilitating both the victim and the perpetrator. For the process of reconciliation to be genuine, the perpetrator must genuinely commit to treating the victim as an equal, affirming both the humanity and the dignity of the victim.

Keywords

Ubuntu Justice; the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Gugulethu Seven; PEBCO Three; reconciliation

Introduction

Following the fall of apartheid rule, the post-apartheid South African government sought the "collapse of legislated identities … [d]ivisive race or ethnicity" and other such characteristics in the national discourse, and to construct a sense of shared identity through equal rights and citizenship (Adam et al. 2000:51). It embarked on a journey of constructing a new nation embedded in the values of democracy, fairness, and human rights. Fredrickson (2007:4) argues that Apartheid South Africa was a type of (white) racism which discriminated "based squarely on skin colour or other physical characteristics". It is within this vantage point that one would submit that in contexts where racial oppression and discrimination continue unabated, people are consequently deprived of their identity and social interconnection is negatively impacted. Chapman and Van der Merwe (2008:5) argue that apartheid, as an era of the perpetuation of Gross Human Rights Violations (GHRV) of gargantuan proportions, managed to consolidate a legacy of social, racial, and political estrangement in South Africa. As such, the establishment of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a mechanism of Transitional Justice (TJ), became a necessity in order to mitigate a history of racial conflict, violence, and human rights abuses.

Introducing its significance to the envisaged just, peaceful and healing nation after a conflict-ridden era, Mbaya (2016:288) likens the TRC to "a midwife trying to help the mother (South Africa) deliver a baby, a new nation". As per its mandating legislation, the Promotion National Unity and Reconciliation Act (PNURA) (1995:4), the TRC was tasked with "establishing as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature, and extent of the gross violations of human rights" which were inflicted during the apartheid rule. It should investigate among other things the "circumstances, factors, and context of such violations" (PNURA 1995:4). It was tasked to hold hearings, collect information from victims, and investigate the motives behind GHRV as avowed by the culprits (PNURA 1995:4). TRC's objective to give ear to the victims' testimonies was an attempt at "restoring the human and civil dignity" of GHRV victims, and possible compensation (PNURA 1995:4).

Gobodo-Madikizela (2004:128) co-testifies that when a culprit admits his evil doings, the victim's pain is corroborated. Once this is done, the victim can confer forgiveness, a core value of the TRC, as part of the victims' "process of becoming rehumanized … claiming self-efficacy" (Gobodo-Madikizela 2004:128). A sentiment further emphasised by the TRC itself is that through these hearings, human rights violators are called to account, acknowledge, and take full responsibility for the crimes they had committed (TRC 1998). Forgiveness, the Commission further observes, is not equivalent to forgetting. Rather, when one forgives, one seeks "to forego bitterness, renouncing resentment, moving past old hurt and becoming a survivor rather than a passive victim" (TRC 1998: 116). Be that as it may, the TRC was not spared from challenges that threatened its very objective.

Maluleke (2008:686) contends that the TRC's ultimate objectives of restitution and restoration are about justice; they should therefore be incorporated, perceived rather as a "God sponsored objective". He further charges that restitution in its fullest sense has everything to do with the "restoration of just relations between and among humanity, creation and God" (2008:686). The African concept of *Ubuntu* in post-apartheid South Africa is, according to Matolino et al. (2013:199), employed as a principle of the reconstruction of the societal moral character and dislodging of social fragments. *Ubuntu*, which was introduced to the TRC, albeit not being policy, is ripe for analysing how the TRC itself responded to the issue of reparation and overall justice for the victims as well as forgiveness for those who perpetrated human rights abuses. In a divided and unequal society like South Africa, the concept of *Ubuntu* is expedient in assisting the nation to overcome its social challenges and amend broken human relationships, and this would subsequently ensure peace and stability.

Considering the problem raised above, this article will seek to address the following research question: To what extent can *Ubuntu* Justice be used as a missional framework to better engage some of the shortcomings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa?

In the light of the above research question, this article investigates the notion of *Ubuntu* in the context of Justice and how can it be a framework with which to engage and respond to some of the TRC's shortcomings. The article further explores the TRC's missional consequences in its

activities and their contemporary missional inferences. The missiological perspective of the article is embedded in Bosch's (2011:442–453) concepts of mission as a quest for justice and mission as liberation. Although the article is approached from a theological and missiological perspective, it also employed sources from social sciences, especially in discussing the concept of *Ubuntu* Justice and reconciliation in the context of African cultural worldview and praxis. The difference between this article and available literature on the activities of the TRC is the missiological and theological approach employed by the authors. The authors employed archival and literature study as the methodology for data gathering and the issues were analysed thematically.

In the light of the above background on the objectives and activities of the TRC, this article discusses the cases of the "Gugulethu Seven" and the "PEBCO Three", the missing gap in the Gugulethu Seven and the PEBCO Three cases, *Ubuntu* Justice as a cultural response, and Ubuntu Justice as an African theological and missiological response.

The contextual analysis of the selected cases: "Gugulethu Seven" and the "PEBCO Three"

In this subheading, we would discuss the two cases by starting with "Gugulethu Seven" and then "PEBCO Three". The article uses the selected cases to highlight the sacrosanctity of truth, remorse, and forgiveness in the process of reconciliation. The objective of our analysis of the two cases is to unearth some of the cultural and missiological gaps in TRC's handling of the cases. Although the mission of the TRC is not to handle the cases from cultural, and theological perspectives, our purpose for the article is an attempt to provide religio-cultural and missiological responses to the cases.

The "Gugulethu Seven"

On 3 March 1986, the 23-year-old Mandla Mxinwa, Jabulani Miya (23), Zanisile Mjobo (21), Zola Swelani (22), Themba Mlifi (30), Christopher Piet (23), and Zabonke Konile were gunned down in an open field in Gugulethu (TRC 1998). Besides other gunshot wounds, all seven youths were shot in the head (TRC 1998). Members of the police force who were

at the scene were, Thapelo Mbelo, Warrant Officer Barnard and McMaster, Charles Brazzelle, John Sterrenberg, Johan Kleyn, Andre Grobbellar, Dolf Odendal, Stephanus Brits, and Riaan Bellingan (TRC 1998). In justifying this mass murder, the police contended that the young combatants were "known terrorists who had been killed during a legitimate anti-terrorist operation" (TRC 1998:451). The security police further allege that the murder was a pre-emptive measure "to prevent these terrorists from attacking a police bus ferrying senior policeman to the nearby Gugulethu Police Station" (TRC 1998:451). This is while the families are convinced that these combatants were counter ambushed and executed (SABC 1997).

According to Mbelo (1997), in the early morning of the 3 March 1986, they were called into a meeting in which his commander Bellingan, Kleyn, and other members of the security police and Vlakplaas askaris were present. It is in this meeting that, he claims, they were given a picture of an extremely dangerous and armed kind and told that they needed to be very careful (Mbelo 1997). In that briefing (in fact, throughout the Gugulethu mission), Mbelo (1997) further claims that there was no instruction of apprehension. The language used was that these young men had to be eliminated and that they had to be taken out, that they had to be 'swept'; words that imply killing. This illustrates that the plan was not to arrest the Gugulethu combatants. They were made to believe that these combatants were going to attack a police bus, that they were armed, and as a result, each of the security policemen was prepared to shoot before being killed (Mbelo 1997). To illustrate this point further, Mbelo (1997) gives evidence that when one of the Gugulethu Seven cadres approached them raising both his arms as a sign of surrendering, he was nonetheless ordered to kill him.

About the killing he committed, like most of the askaris, he believed that he was merely following instructions from those in command. According to Mbelo (1997), what made a good cop in the apartheid regime was taking orders and executing them without asking questions. I nevertheless believed that:

> "What I have done has hurt a lot of people and I request the parents and the family members who lost all their beloved ones to please pardon me and the country at large" (Mbelo 1997)

In concluding his testimony, Mbelo (1997) had this to say to the families of the "Gugulethu Seven": "I would plead for forgiveness from the parents and the families, and I am prepared to meet them one by one to ask for forgiveness if they allow me, thank you".

Meanwhile, Bellingan one of the accomplices of this gruesome act denies most of Mbelo's testimony and submits that the shooting only took place when one, the attempt to arrest fell flat, and two, that the police felt threatened (SABC 1997). He further denies the version of the families (and Mbelo) that he and his colleagues counter-ambushed the combatants. He admits nonetheless that he could have given the order to shoot to kill (SABC 1997). It is only when the legal representative of the families Brent William evoked the TRC's question of responsibility that Bellingan took responsibility for the orders he gave. This is whilst the nature of those orders remains unknown (SABC 1998). He is captured claiming that: "I, Rian Bellingan, take full responsibility for everybody who cooperated with me, the askaris, Mbelo. Also, responsibility for those seniors, who today are 42 saying there was nothing wrong, they did not know me. Today, I accept full responsibility for this whole operation" (Bellingan 1997).

The abduction (PEBCO Three)

Sipho Hashe, Champion Galela, and Qaqawuli Godolozi were abducted at the Port Elizabeth airport by the security police of that area through false pretence. Accordingly, on 8 May 1985, the trio took to the airport to meet a Khazimile Botha, whom they were persuaded was with the British consulate, a fellow who was supposedly "sympathetic" to their liberation protest (Mamasela 1998; Kelly 2012:6). This telephonic persuasion was nonetheless staged and turned out to be a pretext to get them out of their houses and into abduction (Kelly 2012:6). Upon abduction, they were taken to an abandoned Post Chalmers police station near Cradock, where they were torture-executed, and their fate remains unknown (TRC 1998).

The Amnesty Hearing

It is of benefit to point out that Elizabeth Hashe, Rita Galela, and Mrs. Godolozi, the widows of the "PEBCO Three", had previously shared their apartheid experiences with the Human Rights Violations (HRV)

Committee of the TRC. About her husband's apparent demise, Rita Galela is quoted to have said the following:

> "I would like them to confess and state why they killed my husband and would like to know who the perpetrators and murders of my husband so that we can be able to reconcile. If we have washed our hands, we will be glad, we'll reconcile … We don't want their disappearance to remain indefinitely. At least the truth must come" (cited in Kelly 2012:8).

Meanwhile, Mandisa Dukumbana, Hashe's daughter, was captured on the side-lines of Roelf Venter's amnesty hearing, claiming the following:

> "We need to know what happened to him [Hashe], who is responsible, where did they bury him. So that we can pick up the pieces and give him a decent burial. That is all we need from him [Venter]" (SABC 1998).

It is observed that during his testimony, while not being specific on how he was going to assist them and how much he was willing to offer the families, Mamasela "offered to share some of the little money he had made with them" (SAPA 1998). In response, the mother of Qaqawuli Godolozi, Mrs. Benedicta Godolozi, nonetheless extolled that "I came here to find the truth, not to look for money" (SAPA 1998).

The missing gap in the Gugulethu Seven and the PEBCO Three cases: Full disclosure and reconciliation

Kelly (2012:8) asseverates that the concerns raised by the victims of the above-named cases in their statements "cuts to the heart" of the Commission and its objective or perhaps the link between full disclosure and reconciliation. Moreover, these appeals are a further demonstration of a collective consciousness that only the truth would bring some form of closure and healing. Further to the above, in 1996 the TRC received amnesty petitions from the members of the Port Elizabeth security police apparatus, namely Gideon Nieuwoudt, Hermanus Du Plessis, Harold Snyman, Johannes van Zyl, Gerardus Lotz, Johannes Koole, Gerhardus Beeslaar, and lastly the askari Peter Mogoai (TRC 1998; SAPA 1998). They sought amnesty for their participation in the events that led to the

demise of the trio (TRC 1998). In his own words, Van Zyl significantly points out that the purpose of the PEBCO operation "was to remove the three activists from society" (SABC 1998). The former security policeman Gideon Nieuwoudt testified that van Zyl shot Hashe, that Lotz shot Galela and he, Niewoudt shot Godolozi (SABC 1998). Nieuwoudt's testimony seeks to drive an understanding that the death of the "PEBCO Three" was a "clean killing", denying that they were assaulted before that (SAPA 1998).

He nevertheless admits that he placed the deceased on top of a pile of wood, poured diesel over them, and then lit the fire, burning the bodies to ashes (SABC 1998). The next morning, they collected the ashes and deposited them into a black bag (SABC 1998). Following an order from Van Zyl to destroy evidence of what he had done, Nieuwoudt emptied the bags into the Fish River (SABC 1998). According to some of the security policemen, the PEBCO activists "had to be killed because they posed a danger to the state through their involvement in the underground operation of the African National Congress" (IOL 2007). Nevertheless, in what would be viewed as an attempt to discredit the askaris' testimonies, the security policemen testified that the Vlakplaas askaris took part only in the abductions, not the questioning and subsequent murder (Bubenzer 2009:65).

On the other hand, former Vlaakplaas operatives Joe Mamasela, Johannes Koole, and Peter Mogoai's accounts are in sharp contradiction. For instance, the former Vlakplaas askari Mamasela confirms that they were wholly involved in this operation. He acknowledges that the PEBCO trio was assaulted and tortured as they were being questioned by Lotz, Nieuwoudt, and van Zyl (Mamasela 1998). Mamasela, who had now turned state-witness, describes the assault which led to the subsequent death of the trio as "the most brutal … It was a dehumanising experience" (Mamasela 1998 & SAPA 1998). He further testifies that "in all my experience in this hell hole (referring to Vlakplaas) I have never heard of a clean killing" (Mamasela 1998 & SAPA 1998). This logic suggests that the narrative of "clean killing" is driven by the white security policemen "to appear honest and decent gentlemen" (Mamasela 1998 & SAPA 1998). Thus, the Amnesty Committee of the TRC refused amnesty for the security policemen citing "lack of full disclosure" as the core reason for such a verdict with the exception of Snyman (Bubenzer 2009:66).

One seeks to suggest that the obvious missiological implications of both the cases would be the relationship between full disclosure and reconciliation. This, however, should not be misunderstood as suggesting that full disclosure translates to reconciliation. It is rather suggested that full disclosure is a progressive driving force in the process of reconciliation in post-conflict situations. This approach is, according to Solomons (2013:99), preferred because it "seeks freedom for the oppressed and the oppressor". According to Volf (1996:266), trials, amnesty hearings, in this case, presuppose "finding out what happened and meeting out justice". Volf (1996:267) further reports that Jesus rejected the power of violence and endorsed "the power of truth". Volf (1996:267) adds that the truth is otherworldly, that the truth is the "power from a different world", and the tool of this power is "witness". Therefore, those who witness to the truth have an "obligation to tell it the way it was, to point to the truth, not to produce the truth" (Volf 1996:267). Those who witness to the truth are, in accordance with Volf's (1996) dialectic, unseduced by persuasive external forces; they battle to win the war against tendencies of manufacturing the truth. Indeed, to be a witness translates to strife, to be engaged rather in the "self-effacing and non-creative work of telling the truth" (Volf 1996:268).

Confession in the process of reconciliation is, according to Stott (2017:19), "a rare Christian grace". Examining what he terms "the dynamics of reconciliation", Conradie (2013:36) argues that by "a confession of guilt", the perpetrator accepts responsibility for the atrocities committed and admits to "moral indebtedness to the victim". Daye discovers that in the process of truth-telling, "the party in the wrong stands 'naked' before the narrative of its unjust action and asks for forgiveness" (cited in Conradie 2013:36). For instance, as Mogoai was giving evidence on how Godolozi was helplessly screaming when he was being violently bulldozed by the white security policemen, the widow of Godolozi could be seen leaving the gallery sobbing and attended to by the TRC's psychological personnel (SABC 1998). The expression of emotions demonstrates that Mogoai's manner of telling the truth managed to touch and change Mrs. Godolozi. If it were to be persuaded, the transformative effect of truth-telling has the potential of closing an extensive grieving period and opening a door of imminent closure.

It is against this background that the widows of the "PEBCO Three" were sympathetic to his amnesty application for "he told the truth that they needed" (Kobe 2014:64). In the case of the white security policemen, the widows were vehemently against them being granted amnesty.

During Mbelo's encounter with the parents of the "Gugulethu Seven", it is evident that his truth acknowledged and corroborated the families' previously denied truth, that the young men were ambushed in the line of duty, in their words, "working for freedom" (SABC 1998). During the encounter, Mbelo was to, according to Mrs. Ngewu (1998), accept the stones thrown at him even though some are not meant for him, and like Jesus, he should accept those on behalf of his colleagues. Likening him to Jesus might be an indication that Mbelo's truth had a liberating effect on these families which would later liberate Mbelo himself. It can be said that Mrs. Ngewu was pointing to her transformation and the promise of internal healing from the consequential effects of colonialist apartheid (DeYoung 2012:17).

Conceptualising *Ubuntu* Justice: A cultural response

Ubuntu is defined in various forms by various scholars, but they nonetheless generally hold that *Ubuntu* is an African ethical concept which underscores an African way of life. According to Gumbo (2014:67), for some, *Ubuntu* encapsulates the quality of being human, which means acting with maximum respect, compassion, kindness, and care towards fellow human beings (Murove 2014:45). For Mucina (2020:6), *Ubuntu* is a "philosophical and ethical system of thought, from which definitions of humanness, togetherness, and social politics of difference arise".

A scholarly definition of *Ubuntu* is, for instance, well encapsulated by the sub-Saharan indigenous languages' proverb "motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe" (Tswana), "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (Zulu)" (Gumbo 2014:67). An English direct translation would be "a person can only be a person through others" (Gumbo 2014:67) or "I am because we are" (Vellem 2010:316). Masango (2006) registers that African spirituality shapes *Ubuntu* because of its esteemed belief that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

The role of the *Ubuntu* discourse in the TRC can be traced back to what came to be known as the "post amble" of the South African interim constitution of 1993 (TRC 2003:3). This African traditional value, according to the TRC, is a vital source of restoration and healing (Doxtader et al. 2007). Valuing its "conciliatory undertones", Sigenu et al. (2017) argue that *Ubuntu* was rallied to effectively succour the TRC and South Africa in its quest of consolidating harmonious and cooperative relations among peoples of various races and ethnic backgrounds. However, Gade (2017:30) is of the view that the Commission fails to define *Ubuntu* and the worth of its employment. To illustrate this, Gade (2017:30) critiques the TRC's amnesty committee for parading the *Ubuntu* discourse without arguing its significance, thus becoming its adoptive and unarticulated concept of persuasion. Furthermore, some might argue that the TRC exploited the concept because it is a source of "inspiration" to the majority of South Africans (Doxtader et al. 2007:91). *Ubuntu* nevertheless became a critical expression in the proceedings of the TRC.

Letseka (2015:545) observes that a large proportion of South Africa remains "rural, communal and very traditional". It is against this background that *Ubuntu* as a notion of justice would be better understood. The African traditional justice system would be demonstrated through an assembly such as Imbizo or Pitso, or Lekgotla which was epitomised by the utmost fairness. According to Mazrui, *Ubuntu* Justice has three duties. The first duty is to protect the innocent, the second duty is the compensation of the offended and the third is the "sense of shame the community instils in offenders" (cited in Keevy 2009:29).

According to Letseka (2015:549) "justice is perceived as *Ubuntu* fairness; doing what is right and moral in indigenous African society". Keevy (2009:26) contends that *Ubuntu* is the basis of the African traditional justice system, which "ensured social control, unity, and cosmic harmony in African societies". Furthermore, *Ubuntu* as an African epistemological understanding of justice is demonstrated through the Africanist sense of broad-based, public consultation and discourse, interdependence, and the consciousness of the need for accord on matters of moral dispute (Letseka 2015:549). Within such a "group solidarity" context as epitomised by African traditional societies, consensus, restorative justice, and reconciliation are of paramount importance (Keevy 2009:39). According to

this argument, it is here that the African emphasis on unit or community becomes crucial because "there is no *Ubuntu* without community" (Letseka 2015:549).

Koopman (2018) argues that the proportion of communality as found in the philosophy of *Ubuntu* involves avoiding stumbling blocks that seek to deform unity, peace, and tranquillity. Koenane et al. (2017:271) observe that *Ubuntu* Justice is "more a corrective" than it would be a punitive measure. Centred around restorative justice, *Ubuntu* Justice is preoccupied with bringing the perpetrator and the wronged together as means of reconciling them (Koenane et al. 2017:271). Consistent with this view, Koopman (2018) would then contend that *Ubuntu* as a restorative form of justice is preoccupied with "the redress and restoration of a balanced knocked askew".

It is important to emphasise that punishment is foreign to the indigenous justice system, as it seeks no custodial prisoner but a prisoner of shame (Keevy 2009:29). As such, a guilty verdict translates to ostracization and ridiculing of the guilty party to the extent that the offender is "regarded as a non-person" or "outcast" (Keevy 2009:29). Until such an offence is pardoned and one's status restored, the offender shall remain an outcast who is prohibited from participating in the community and its activities (Keevy 2009:29). Furthermore, the *Ubuntu* maintained African indigenous justice system presupposes some form of collective responsibility and shame, which is argued to be "an effective deterrent for potential offenders" (Keevy 2009:30). Nevertheless, it is argued that since the African traditional form of justice is concerned with communal survival, this form of justice does not assure important human rights for individual persons and outsiders (Keevy 2009:30).

Ubuntu Justice as an African theological and missiological response

Boesak (2013) correctly observes that *ubuntu* is not a biblical [idea] but an ancient one. He (2013) nonetheless argues that *Ubuntu* boils down to the logic that humans have been created for togetherness. It is within this context that the theological conceptualisation of *Ubuntu*, according to

Mashau and Kgatle (2019:5), presupposes interhuman accountability and the upholding of the scriptural instruction "to love one's neighbour as oneself". It is against this vantage point that this crop of scholars suggests that "God expect[s] humanity to advance community well-being whilst protecting the rights of the socially marginalised and the powerless" (Mashau et al. 2019:5). One's relationship with God, as per this logic, is conditioned by one's communal relations (Mashau et al. 2019:5).

A developing theology of *Ubuntu* is embedded or is defined by scripture, for instance, Acts 4:32–35, which is, according to Membe-Matale (2015:274), a diversion from the practical elements of greed and selfishness. Greed drives the culminative system of inequality, where the destitute are thought to be the property or object to be utilised to the advantage of the well-off. So, a system that perpetuates inequality would be a total negation of God's plan for humans. *Ubuntu* would therefore serve as an affirmation of security without the fear of imminent insecurity because in the *Ubuntu* environment no one is left behind (Membe-Matale 2015:275).

A responsible theology of *Ubuntu* would, firstly, be preoccupied with the question of "memory, shame, and guilt of the past, enabling liberation for all God's people and creation" (Mashau et al. 2019:5). Second, such a theology should tackle the "denial of the dignity and sanctity of people which leads to issues of identity and belonging" (Mashau et al. 2019:5). It should further address the commercialisation and privatisation of supposed essentials such as land, water, and knowledge (Mashau et al. 2019:5). In conclusion, Mashau et al. (2019:5) propose that such a theology of Ubuntu would speak to the "affirmation of the lived experiences and cultures".

Bosch (2011:413) observes that to resolve the mystery between evangelism and social duty, one is to differentiate between two separate "mandates". These injunctions are the "commission to announce the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ" and the call for Christians to a "responsible participation in human society, including working for human well-being and justice" (Bosch 2011:413). He further proposes that where evangelism has been a success, it then bears "fruits" in the form of social justice" (Bosch 2011:416).

In line with Bosch's (2011:442–453) thought of mission as the quest for justice and liberation, one would propose a theology that is in constant dialogue

with the situation of the poor and the marginalized. Such a theological or missiological intervention should be designed to liberate the poor rather than maintain or propagate their lived *status quo*. A missiological interaction with the poor should be transformative as it seeks to divorce them from the shackles of displacement and poverty. It follows that in the post-TRC South Africa, our theology should also focus on Zacchaeus and that our gospel should provoke a repentant Zacchaeus. Our manner of doing missiology and theology should incite a compensative Zacchaeusan character, willing to compensate those he had previously defrauded. While stating the case of the oppressed, our theology should equally embrace the oppressor. This injunction propels a missional theology that accepts and extends "care" to individuals by virtue of being created in the image of God (Soares et al. 2017:2).

The importance of reparation is to uphold "a sense of justice among victims", undergirded by a normative conviction that victims ought to be compensated for the harm inflicted on them (van der Merwe et al. 2018: 303). The undertaking of reparation, as a peace-building mechanism, stands as insurance of "reduction in the likelihood of conflict recurrence, thus contributing to the development of sustainable peace" (van der Merwe et al. 2018: 303).

The TRC responded to the issue of reparation in two ways namely, monetary reparation to the benefit of the individual victims and non-monetary reparation to the effect of the entire society. As such, non-monetary reparations are easily available to all i.e., visual redress (Daly 2003:373).

Conclusion

The objective of the article is an attempt to provide an African missiological response to selected cases of the TRC. The article started with background information for the establishment of the TRC and then zoom into the contextual analysis of the handling of cases of the "Gugulethu Seven", as well as the "PEBCO Three". The cases were examined to identify the cultural and missiological problems that emerge in these two cases. Of interest to this study in the Gugulethu narrative is Thapelo Mbelo's and Rian Bellingan's testimonies before the TRC amnesty committee and

Mbelo's encounter with the parents and families of the Gugulethu activists. In the PEBCO narrative, our interest was the plea of Galela's wife and Hashe's daughter, which summarise the families' plea for full disclosure of what had really happened to the three PEBCO activists. When combined, both cases raise or lead us to an enquiry about the relationship between full disclosure and reconciliation.

We introduced the concept of *Ubuntu* Justice by defining *Ubuntu* in the context of African communitarian society. we attempted to explain the changing framework of *Ubuntu* as a theological and missiological concept. We first observe that as a theological concept, *Ubuntu* presupposes inter-human accountability and closeness for God-created human beings to live together interdependently. Thus, the theology of *Ubuntu* is a theology that affirms and embraces the other. It follows that we expand on the relationship between *Ubuntu* jurisprudence from an African missiological perspective, as well as the theological concept of reparation to deal with the issue of victimhood, among other things.

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