

## GUILT AND CHANGE - THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

DJ Louw  
University of Stellenbosch

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### Abstract

*The basic assumption underlying the argument is that the reconstruction of our society would be hampered unless opportunities are created for dealing with the issue of guilt and the basic disposition and attitude of people in our country in a constructive manner. Inevitably, the issue of guilt puts the notion of reconciliation and forgiveness on the agenda of the church. Without the wrongdoings and injustices of the past having truly been dealt with, forgiveness cannot be expected in our country. While dealing with a Commission of Truth and Reconciliation, the task of the church is to prevent forgiveness becoming neurotic. Forgiveness becomes neurotic when it is a masochistic manoeuvre aimed at gratifying one's omnipotence and power over and against the guilty person. Not to forgive, while understanding God's unconditional love, is also neurotic. True forgiveness is a transforming and liberating act of God, exercised through the liturgical life of the church. Mastering the art of forgiveness presupposes confession and true remorse. To facilitate this an assessment chart for understanding guilt has been developed. The technique of storytelling and listening is viewed as a pastoral method to make remembrance a constructive part of the whole process of reconciliation in South Africa.*

### 1. Introduction

The prevailing euphoria surrounding the democratization of South Africa and the speeding up of structural changes in our country could be hampered by the past. Economical growth, social development and a new orientation to future plans for growth in South Africa are not the only important issues, but how we are going to deal with the wrongdoings and injustices of the past.

We are in a transition period, not only in negotiations, but between phasing out the past and creating the future. One of the most burning issues is the question how the wrongdoings of the past should be dealt with: justice versus reconciliation. Those arguing for justice will argue that, should amnesty for past deeds be granted now, the next government could do likewise after having committed similar crimes.

On the other hand there is the argument that without justice being done, the passage out of apartheid will not be complete, psychologically and politically. Accordingly, justice requires restitution and retribution. However, there is the contention that retribution will only tear the country apart, and the veiled threat that the whole transition will be derailed by those most threatened.

The situation becomes even more complicated when one bears in mind that the following could become stumbling-blocks:

Suspicion and distrust  
Negative prejudices  
Fixed ideas and stereotyping  
One-sided perceptions  
Painful memories  
Ungrounded fear  
Severe loss  
Bitterness and wrath.

During such an impasse reconciliation is an option for allowing the country to move forward instead of keeping it mired in the past. There is the real danger that issues of bitterness and apology will keep recurring during each new phase of change and possible sacrifice. In South Africa we will be confronted time and again with the issues of guilt and forgiveness, retribution and reconciliation.

The problem addressed in this paper is the following: How must we understand guilt as a theological issue and how is it possible to make a pastoral assessment of guilt while dealing with people or group conflict? When is guilt superficial and when is it real and true? Is it possible to help individuals or groups to deal with real guilt by assisting them towards a genuine confession? These questions lead us to a very important issue in pastoral care: how is confession connected with guilt feelings and is it possible to make a pastoral assessment of true remorse?

Our problem automatically links up with other theological issues such as reconciliation and forgiveness.

The hypothesis I wish to propound is that change and the reconstruction of our society must create opportunities of dealing with the past. Inevitably we must be willing to face the issue of guilt. If not, the reconstruction of our society would be hampered unless people are willing to change their attitude. The latter is possible if we not only view guilt as a sociological and psychological issue, but as a theological issue. The technique of storytelling is viewed as a vehicle to deal with the past in a constructive and therapeutic way.

The theological presupposition of this paper is that guilt as a theological issue is linked to two important concepts: forgiveness and reconciliation. Both are inherently part of God's grace and justification. Forgiveness refers to the juridical component of our salvation: we have been set free totally. Our guilt has been wiped out by the blood of Christ. Reconciliation refers to the change which has taken place between God and man. Enmity has been replaced with friendship. Between God and man there is a new relationship of peace.

Reconciliation means the restoration of a good, peaceful relationship between enemies. In order to achieve this peaceful relationship, it is necessary that the factors which produce enmity be removed (Link 1978:145). Further, if reconciliation is connected with restitution, we will have to make a clear distinction between a punitive model and a reconciliation model.

A further presupposition is that in South Africa two historic events will colour our understanding of guilt, confession, reconciliation and forgiveness. The Rustenburg declaration with its very clear confession of the sin of apartheid underlines the need for forgiveness. The latter denotes that the past has been

completely wiped out and cancelled. Otherwise remorse and confession become meaningless charades.

The Kairos document raises the question of what unconditional grace really is about. The document states very clearly: "In our situation in South Africa today it would be totally unChristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed" (1985:68). The consequences of such a statement are: "... in practice ... no reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible without repentance. The Biblical teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness makes it quite clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless he or she repents of their sins" (1985:68).

It is clear that the issues of guilt, confession, reconciliation and forgiveness cannot be separated from their function and meaning within a cultural and historical context. Guilt, as a social and political phenomenon, is continually influenced by concrete events which could affect others. In such a case confession will be characterized by the demands of others and these demands are determined by perceptions, stereotypes and emotional issues.

A pastoral approach to the issue of guilt within a polarized society will have to develop a sound theological theory about the essential characteristics of guilt and forgiveness. The intention of this paper is therefore to describe guilt as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Secondly, it is important to make a distinction between guilt and feelings of guilt in order to understand the true nature of guilt. At stake is also the question of collective guilt and the corporative dimension of our mutual and common faith. The further intention is to deal with the correlation between personal guilt and collective guilt. In the fourth place it is important to view guilt as a theological issue which is very closely connected to the issue of forgiveness. In my conclusion I shall revert to the question of a genuine confession. In this regard the following question is posed: Is it possible to develop an assessment model which can help Christians to assess the true character of people's confessions and feelings of remorse? In order to answer this question a pastoral assessment chart has been developed.

## 2. Guilt as a multi-dimensional phenomenon

In an effort to understand the phenomenon of guilt, it is important to bear in mind that it consists of the following five dimensions:

- The *relational dimension*. Guilt deals with our failure within relationships.
- The *normative dimension*. Real guilt can only be assessed in the light of those norms and values which have been transgressed.
- The *ethical dimension*. Guilt must be viewed in close relationship to ethics. It refers to behaviour in the light of the "ought." In theological anthropology we deal with the fact that our humanity is connected with the issue of moral behaviour. Humanity and our sense of morality are part of our human dignity. Therefore, the ethos of the Bible has often been described as a "character ethos" (*Gesinnungsethos*) (Gerhardson: 1981:118). This is the reason why the fundamental wrongs in people's behaviour cannot, according to the biblical view,

be cured effectively until people are "saved" by a radical inner transformation, enabling them to live as they should (Gerhardson 1981:119).

- The *anthropological dimension*. Guilt is a reaction and a conduct of human behaviour because of our responsibility and accountability. Our freedom and responsibility to make decisions imply the possibility of failure and wrong decisions.
- The *theological dimension*. In the presence of God, *coram Deo*, guilt becomes a state of being which describes our condition of alienation and estrangement. It is in this regard that the issue of sin surfaces. This is the reason why the ethos of the Bible has a religious base (Gerhardson 1981:117). Fundamental to the Bible's ethos is the conviction that a disturbance in the fellowship of men and women (as within the individual) is ultimately to be explained by a disturbance in a proper relationship with God. For human beings and for human society to function properly and adequately, a sound relationship with God must be maintained. According then to biblical faith, the right norms for human life are theonomous.

Estrangement from God and rebellion against his love and will lead to a misuse of freedom and could end up in hubris: a kind of rebellious arrogance (Hiltner 1989:27). Sin often ends up in a preoccupation with oneself and reinforces our alienating narcissism.

In the Old and New Testaments different words are used to describe the estrangement and alienation between God and man. JH Ellens (1989:60-61) gives an explanation of the following different words:

1. *hatta't*, a failure to achieve exactly what was expected - 'a missing'
2. *pesa`*, a failure to conform to the standard - 'a rebellion'
3. *pesa`*, a failure to do things just the way they were required - 'a transgression'
4. *'awon*, a distortion or corruption of that for which one was intended - 'a perversion'
5. *ra`*, a nastiness of disposition - 'evil'
6. *resa`*, an insensitivity to that which would be appropriate to a child of God living before the face of God - 'impiety.'

The New Testament words for sin have a similar character and content. They include:

1. *hamartia*, a failure to achieve exactly what was expected - 'missing the mark'
2. *parabasis*, a failure to do things just the way they were required - 'a transgression'
3. *adikia*, a failure to conform to the standard and thus a falling into behavior which is not affirmed or approved - 'unrighteousness'
4. *asebeia*, an insensitivity to that which would be appropriate to a child of God living before the face of God - 'impiety'
5. *anomia*, a failure to adhere to prescriptions - 'lawlessness'
6. *porneria*, an inability to do right and good - 'depravity'

7. *epithymia*, a longing to do differently from what is appropriate and prescribed - 'evil desire.'"

If we are willing to accept that the essence of a theological approach to ethics is righteousness, as reflected by the unconditional love of God, sin is a transgression of the imperative to love God and fellow human beings. We can conclude that we do evil when we follow our narcissistic selves and inflict injury or disadvantage upon fellow human beings or upon God's world. The evil results from bad choices that are free in the proximate sense but bound in the ultimate sense of conscious and unconscious commitment to unhealthy values. From a psychological point of view, the evil stems from ignorance, psychopathology, spiritual pathology, inadequacy and other human limitations and distortions (Ellens 1989:67).

### 3. The nature of guilt

In an article on OH Mowrer's view of guilt, JV Gilmore (1989:86) refers to Mowrer's viewpoint that for humans morality is a vital, relevant and enduring concern. The implication of this is that Mowrer understands neurosis to be caused by the repudiation and repression of one's conscience, not one's instincts. The neurotic person does not have too much guilt; rather, he has too little guilt in the sense that he does not allow his guilt feelings to influence his actions.

According to Gilmore (1989:87) Mowrer defines guilt as the fear a person feels *after* having committed an act which is disapproved of by the significant others in his life, before that act is detected or confessed. Guilt, in short, is the fear of being found out and punished.

In order to understand the phenomenon of guilt, one has to distinguish between guilt (a knowledge of transgression because of a serious misconduct in the light of objective criteria for right and wrong) and guilt feelings (a subjective reaction dealing with disappointment, shame, and failure). Actual guilt therefore is experienced as a distressing incongruity between what I ought to do and what I have done or between who I should be and who I actually am. In other words, guilt presupposes a norm or an expectation in relation to which I am found "wanting."

L Aden distinguishes between three different types of guilt: rule guilt, existential guilt and ultimate guilt (1989:101).

- *Rule guilt*: refers to tangible personal and social misdeeds, acts which violate the individual's particular social milieu. The heart of guilt, then, becomes unlawful behaviour or the tangible transgression of one's social norms and taboos.
- *Existential guilt*. Guilt is actually an attitudinal, instead of a behavioural matter, because it describes the occasion that leads to guilt as an internal, and not merely as an external, event. Guilt becomes a basic violation of one's being and the primary relationships in which a person exists. One's entire self-structure becomes distorted.
- *Ultimate guilt*. It occurs when we rule out God in our lives and without God become centered in ourselves, so that all our actions proceed from a corrupt centre and are only egoistic attempts at self-fulfilment. Seen theologically, ultimate guilt is sin because we are immersed in the guilt of unbelief, a destructive self-assertion (hubris) and a falling back in concupiscence: the unlimited desire to draw the whole of reality into ourselves.

To these three we can add a fourth type: *collective guilt*. Individual acts of sin cannot be isolated from destructive group acts. Ideologies which violate the human dignity of individuals or groups and which result in injustice, can create collective guilt. Often the complicity of the person or the group is indirect or even unknowing. The fact is, as in the case of racial prejudices, the "sin" is inculcated in a person or group by the surrounding cultural view of life. An awareness and discovery of complicity becomes an important matter. Although the question of ignorance is at stake, it does not prevent a person from developing a consciousness in the light of norms attached to the situation. It is important in the discovery of collective guilt that the issues about wilfulness versus victimization should be transcended in the light of a new understanding of our call to human rights and self-responsibility. People have to move beyond their handicaps, rather than use them as a justification.

D Augsburger, in his book *Pastoral counseling across cultures* (1986:119), points out that our Western culture is often characterized as more guilt-oriented while Eastern cultures, such as the Japanese, is characterized as more shame-oriented. However, in the process of healing, both guilt and shame could play a therapeutic role. The positive power of shame is "discretion motivating choices, energizing 'honor,' a disposition to virtue," while guilt "is direction demanding the better, pointing to values, an urge for integrity" (1986:122). In dealing with the issue of guilt within the prevailing situation in our country, we need both: a disposition to virtue as well as an urge for integrity. D Augsburger calls the undergirding factor which develops both virtue and integrity, grace. "Grace offers the support that allows trust to replace anxiety, acceptance to restore honor where we were shamed, and forgiveness to resolve guilt" (1986:139).

In conclusion we can state that guilt must be viewed as a constructive phenomenon. Although it was described in negative terms, guilt is part of our grandeur and is basically a constructive reaction. The intention of guilt and sin is not to drive in a sense of despair and insufficiency just because one enjoys seeing men writhe in agony. The motive behind creating an awareness of guilt is to help people to grow and to develop a mature faith. Guilt functions as an alarm system that tells us that something is wrong in the moral sphere of our self-responsibility. Guilt does not tell us automatically what is wrong (it is not primarily only a cognitive experience) but does make us aware of the fact that something significant is wrong. It helps us to get in touch with the essence and reality of our being. It gives some insight in our subjective and emotional make-up.

While true guilt deals with the transgression of norms, guilt feelings refer to our emotional reactions and the impact of guilt on personal identity and self-image. This insight in the realm of guilt feelings consists of several components (Aden 1989:107-115): a sense of defilement; a feeling of disloyalty and that one has been unfaithful to some significant person or principle; the pain of deception; the sting of judgement and blame, and the despair of lost destiny which can result in a severe depression. All these emotional reactions are part of the phenomenon of remorse.

It becomes clear that guilt presupposes responsibility. If guilt is incorrectly assessed, it becomes pseudoguilt and never can lead to proper responsibility and real forgiveness. Guilt feelings give one an insight into the quality and character of another person's motives and attitude.

### 3.1 Conscience and guilt

M Buber's distinction (as quoted by Pattison 1989:164) between three spheres of guilt, is very helpful: (1) the laws of society; (2) religious faith and (3) the sphere of conscience. In assessing the nature of real guilt, it is important to reckon with the role of conscience.

Being aware of the fact that the term "conscience" means different things to different people and even for the same person has varied emotional overtones when used in different contexts, G Peterson (1982:5) follows a holistic view in his understanding of the concept. A holistic view seeks to hold the major views of conscience together, for there is indeed a great deal of overlap in what is here distinguished for purely conceptual purposes (see Peterson 1982:5-10).

- a) *The judging and accusing function of conscience.* The use of the term in popular Greek thought prior to the New Testament, conveys this meaning. This view is also the dominant one in the New Testament itself. The judgements of conscience are generally experienced after an event, as when we feel guilty about something we have said or done or about something we have left undone.
- b) *The conscience as a moral guide.* The conscience functions as a guide for daily living and directs us to right moral paths and constructive decision-making.
- c) *The conscience as a form of self-awareness.* Through a person's conscience a person becomes aware of his or her unique being. Being conscious of oneself because of an alert conscience, creates a better self-understanding and an inner dialogue between the "I" and the "self."
- d) *Conscience is essentially a social phenomenon.* Through our conscience we internalize the predominant values of our society and the customs of our cultural environment.
- e) *The conscience functions as an inner call to realize our potentialities for creative living and to act in a responsible manner.* Our conscience puts our humanity and unique identity at stake.
- f) *The conscience as an instrument for wisdom and an inner knowledge through which God and his Spirit operates.* According to the New Testament the conscience can be weak (1 Cor 8:7) and evil (Heb 10:22) as well as good (1 Tim 1:19). The important point to understand is that our conscience can be cleansed and purified through the forgiveness offered in Jesus Christ (Heb 9:14, 10:22).

We can conclude that our Christian conscience can play an important role to create a sensitivity in order to help us to come in contact with the realities of our responsibility. It can function as a guide to provide a real guilt which challenges us and helps us to avoid making use of destructive defence mechanisms. The latter play an important role in neurotic guilt.

### 3.2 Neurotic guilt

Repression is an important mechanism in neurotic guilt. EM Pattison (1989:167) refers to repression as an effort to dispel the guilt rather than to obtain forgiveness. He gives a brief outline of the neurotic mechanisms fundamental to neurotic guilt.

- a) Reparation or the payment of penalties as typified in the obsessive-compulsive neurotic.

- b) Confession, or the acknowledgement of guilt as self-punishment or as a bribe to continue guilty behaviour.
- c) Repression, or the loss of guilt to consciousness which creates anxiety.
- d) Projection, or the shifting of blame to others which reaches its ultimate expression in paranoid psychosis.
- e) Rationalization, or the justification of one's guilty behaviour.

We can say that, because of the primary mechanism of denial and suppression, our guilt can become neurotic. It then hampers the processes of confession, remorse and restitution.

#### 4. Change and the healing power of forgiveness

Forgiveness is a phenomenon *sui generis*. In literature on the nature of forgiveness the impression is created that confession and remorse are prerequisites for forgiveness. Theologically speaking, this is not the case (see Runia 1992:83).

Forgiveness is connected with the new state of our corporate being with Christ. Forgiveness is a category which deals with the content of faith as related to the issue of the substitutionary atonement. Confession, remorse and restitution must therefore be a consequence of forgiveness, not a condition to earn forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the gospel of God's grace and unconditional love. One can therefore only confess one's sins and discover the reality of one's guilt when one realizes who God is. A discovery of the nature of God and a confrontation with his grace create a deep understanding of sin and transgression, not vice versa.

While forgiveness is connected with our new being in Christ (it is an ontological category) reconciliation deals with the healing power of grace which is manifested in peaceful relationships and deeds of justice. Reconciliation is an effect of God's compassion in our lives. This is the reason why David in Psalm 51:1-2 says: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." It is therefore an understanding of who God is (his unfailing love and compassion) which reveals the character of our transgression and results in guilt and constructive confession.

Our choice for a pastoral approach implies not a punitive model but a reconciliation model. In a *punitive model* reconciliation becomes a demand and a prerequisite for the restoration and renewal of impaired relationships. Restitution then functions within a give (on demand) and take (by force) model. The indemnity is then viewed as a punishment and not as a compensation in the light of ethical issues such as responsibility, righteousness and humanity. In a *reconciliation model* the renewed relationship is a consequence of forgiveness and unconditional love (grace). Indemnity and restitution are then viewed as ethical matters (the Christian ethics of love.) Giving without any preconditions replaces hostility and violent demands. It is with such a model that pastoral care can make a contribution to reconstruction programmes in South Africa.

#### *Confession*

Confession can be described as an acknowledgement of one's initiative in violating fundamental relationships and transgressing the norms of Scripture as portrayed by the will of God.

Effective confession stems from our acceptance of responsibility. In effect, confession is an exponent of our facing God. This is the reason why confession is an honest confrontation with oneself. Out of such a confrontation sorrow, remorse, or contrition for behaviour need to follow. Genuine remorse is therefore a recognition of the damage being done and a desire to be reconciled in love.

Remorse is not self-condemnation in an attempt to extract sympathy, nor is it a wallowing in self-pity. Remorse is a sincere desire to restore and to heal. In this sense it is the motivating spur to reconstitutive action rather than the occasion for punitive self-flagellation (Pattison 1989:171).

Restitution naturally emanates from confession and remorse. But then restitution must not be viewed as a bribe to avoid retaliation. Restitution is an act of justice to foster and promote reconciliation.

When transgression and injustice touch the issue of social rights and put our humanity at stake, it is important that confession be done publicly.

Mowrer (in Gilmore 1989:92) is convinced that confession must be conducted openly in order to reap its intrapsychic and psychological benefits. He maintains that healing and redemption depend much more upon what one says about oneself to significant others than upon what others, no matter how highly trained, say to one. Change in behaviour is encouraged and strengthened when our failures are acknowledged and made known by significant others. In any case, the practice of confessing sins to one another has good biblical warrant (James 5:16). It opens up avenues to face truth and reality:

"confession links our ability to tell the truth about ourselves - both as praise and in penitence - to God's forgiveness and the promise of community. We learn how to confess both our faith and our sin in the friendships and practices of a community that knows that forgiven-ness and not self-righteousness or self-punishment or penance or vengeance, is the first and defining mark of Christian life" (Jones 1993:357).

## 5. A pastoral model for remorse assessment

The practice of forgiveness does not consist of acts trying to forget, to exonerate or to liberate somebody on parole (probation). The practice of forgiveness is to accept God's unconditional grace through faith and to set the other person free. Forgiveness means to set somebody free and to hand him or her over to the grace of God.

True forgiveness is a conscious process involving both the forgiver and the forgiven (Pattison 1989:175). While confession, remorse and restitution are the responsibility of the guilty person, forgiveness creates an event of *mutual togetherness* and acceptance. Both the guilty person and the forgiver are connected to each other in the act of reconciliation. In forgiveness the guilty one accepts the implication of being delivered to and dependent on the love of the other. In forgiveness the forgiver must share the guilt, anguish and estrangement of the sinner. (Pattison 1989:173). Substitution becomes therefore a concrete act of real reconciliation. "To identify with the guilty person implies that one accepts the feeling of guilt in oneself. This may be blocked by the self-righteousness of the forgiver" (Pattison 1989:174). Refusal to forgive gives the victim justification for

retaliation and thus hampers the process of change through reconciliation. (On the issue of reconciliation and hampering issues, see IJ du Plessis 1992:37-39.)

### *Neurotic forgiveness*

Forgiveness becomes neurotic when it is a masochistic manoeuvre aimed at gratifying one's omnipotence and power over and against the guilty person. Not to forgive, while understanding God's unconditional love, is neurotic. Intolerance is a sign of pathology. It creates the illusion of perfection while denying one's own imperfection. It could happen that one may fail to forgive because of one's own guilt. The offender becomes then a convenient target for minimizing one's own guilt by making the other person appear more guilty. Projecting one's own guilt onto another person allows one to punish him/her instead of oneself. This is *scapegoating*.

Forgiveness can become pathological when one becomes too forgiving, denying the other person's guilt. To minimize or forget the guilt is not a responsible attitude. Guilt must not be minimized or forgotten, rather it must be acknowledged in order to help somebody to change.

We in South Africa must be very careful not to demote forgiveness into a political ball game. We run the risk of a "pathology of forgiveness." Such a pathology consists of the following (Pattison 1989:168-169):

- a) To misuse confession and forgiveness. Confession and forgiveness can be used to deny responsibility rather than to affirm it.
- b) Confession and forgiveness may become masochistic, a relentless exposure of one's faults to gain the attention, sympathy, and love of others.
- c) It can be used to diminish responsibility or punishment; it acts as a defence against acknowledging true guilt.

On the contrary: true forgiveness is a transforming and liberating act of God, exercised through the liturgical life of the church and its members. Forgiveness becomes a way of life rather than a simple word to assuage guilt (Jones 1993:357). Christians in our country have to start embodying the wholeness of the gospel through mastering the art of forgiveness. To do this, Christians should move away from a judgemental approach. It is the task of the church to create an environment of trust and acceptance. We must penetrate the superficial and the illusory in the quest for truthfulness. To do this we are in need of small groups where the attentiveness of true pastoral listening is expressed and the dignity and worth of the other is avowed (Jennings 1988:166).

We now come to the vital question: in a pastoral situation how do we know that people's guilt, confession and forgiveness are genuine? There is no method to prove the authenticity of guilt. The only avenue to follow in a pastoral assessment of guilt is to try to understand the sincerity of a person's remorse. In pastoral care this can help us to distinguish between true and false guilt. The following assessment chart could be used within groups while dealing with the issue of confession and the wrongdoings of the past. For example, after groups have come together and expressed their need for confession and forgiveness, each member could complete the chart and take time to reflect on each aspect in order to make an assessment of the sincerity of the person or group who confessed.

Assessment chart for understanding guilt

	True remorse	3	2	1	2	3	False remorse
1.	Accept responsibility						Refuse responsibility
2.	Aware of guilt feelings (feelings of regret and sorrow)						Absence of guilt feelings with no need for regret or sorrow
3.	A sound knowledge of the transgression. Acknowledgement: I did wrong (confession)						Efforts to escape and to evade the consequences of evil and unjust deeds
4.	Self-confrontation and consciousness						Self-justification
5.	Knowledge of the norms violated						Denial of the facts
6.	A clear understanding of God and his will						Ignorance of God and a refusal to open up before God
7.	Confession in the light of an understanding of grace						Confession as a demand, duty and formal obligation
8.	Humility. Being crushed and humbled						Narcissistic self-affirmation and self-maintenance
9.	Self-criticism and honest self-analysis						Criticize others with minimum self-insight
10.	Honest effort to restore. Restitution						Withdrawal from the

The graphic line of this assessment chart can help the pastor or a person to understand the true character of guilt better. It is this sort of insight which helps pastoral hermeneutics to facilitate genuine change. Change is a result of insight. And insight within a pastoral context is an awareness of the presence of God and how our behaviour affects the will of God for everyday living. We, as pastors, cannot demand confession, but can lead people to insight, accountability and acceptance of responsibility in the light of an ethical principle: the conduct of unconditional love as it is manifested in deeds of justice and forgiveness.

## 6. Conclusion

To forgive is not the effort of trying to forget. A vital part of forgiveness and our dealing with guilt is our *memory*. Remembrance is part of the whole process of reconciliation. The vital question is: how are we going to deal with memory concerning the past of apartheid? How are we going to deal with it as a Christian and theological issue?

We cannot remember for the sake of remembrance, which would be feeding our grudges. The purpose of remembrance is to take responsibility for the past and to identify ourselves with the issue of suffering and pain. The essential ingredient of a Christian memory is accountability. Thus one carries the past into the future with the vital hope and promise: it would and should never happen again. This is a constructive use of memory. Otherwise remembrance becomes neurotic and a stumbling block for the process of reconstruction in South Africa.

Memories are there, not to exonerate ourselves or to suppress the past. A proper way of dealing with memory is to relive the past in order to transform and change the future. We then become part of the wrongdoings of the past with the intention of creating the future on the basis of the Christian ethics of love. The only condition for doing this is that our memory should be moulded by a new conduct: humility. Then one starts to remember the past from the side of the victims, from the underside of history.

I am convinced that the only method to put a reconciliation model into practice, is to bring separated societies together into groups where an opportunity is created for telling the hurting and painful stories of the past. The practice of reconciliation is the art of listening to the stories of those who suffered under apartheid. If we really start listening in an empathetic way, it would be proof of the sincerity of our reconciliation. And this is where real change can occur. It must be a change at grass roots level.

It is the task of the Christian community to start therapeutic groups where it is possible to meet each other - not as opponents, but as brothers and sisters. For this we need the fellowship of the church: *koinonia*. Through *koinonia* the church penetrates into our society and contributes to creating a healthy environment.

Collective guilt, through the vehicle of remembrance, should be dealt with within the liturgy of the Christian community. It is through *koinonia* that we can really listen to the stories of the past. It is not the task of the church to cultivate guilt and grudges, but to transform guilt through the festive liturgy of *koinonia*, then the future is set free for the dynamics of reconstruction. Memory then becomes a redemptive event and part of the feast of the Eucharist: memory transformed into hope.

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