

THE STRUGGLE WITHIN

An investigation into the impact of racism
on the identity of White, English-speaking Christians
in South Africa in the 1990s

Ian William Henderson

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Theology
in the School of Theology,
University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

January 1995

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenge posed by racism to the identity of White, English-speaking Christians in present day South Africa. It suggests an approach to identity that is based on narrative theology's claim to the primacy of story. It argues that although racism has undermined and defiled our identity, both as a community, and as individuals, there is still hope that that identity might be renewed and transformed.

In the first chapter an attempt is made to clarify a new approach to the study of identity. It is argued that traditional theories about identity are inadequate when compared with an understanding of identity based on narrative. This approach suggests that identity is reflected in the process by which we find *meaning* in the stories which we tell about ourselves - as individuals, and as community.

The second chapter examines the story of communal White Christian identity. An overview of South African history is presented, together with the church's involvement in that history, with the aim of revealing that racism has become entrenched in the institutions of that society at every level. Faced with this reality we must admit that our story as a White Christian community is fundamentally a *racist* story.

In the final chapter personal identity is examined through the biographical accounts of four White Christians. It is argued that just as alienation and isolation are expressed as results of racism in the White community, so too these are expressed in the lives of individual Christians.

In conclusion, it is suggested that these learnings might be applied to the ongoing work of combating racism. Four possible proposals are made as to how this might be accomplished.

CONTENTS

Preface	<i>i</i>
Introduction	1
Chapter One	
<i>A new look at identity</i>	7
Chapter Two	
<i>The story of our communal White identity</i>	36
Chapter Three	
<i>Biography, identity and racism</i>	71
Conclusion	130
Appendix	137
Bibliography	182

PREFACE

This thesis represents much more than three years of academic research. It tells the story of a long and painful personal struggle to come to terms with the meaning of White identity in a country which groans under the burden of racism and oppression. Along that road many people have shared insight, compassion and understanding, which have given me strength and hope to proceed when I was tired and the way was not clear. In particular I would like to acknowledge two of them: Antoinette Zanda, from whom I have learnt so much, who has astounded me with her deep compassion and commitment; and Jeanne Smuts, whose warmth, humour and support I have been immensely grateful to share as we explored the unknown together.

There is a third person who I would like to acknowledge. She who has borne the tension and anxiety that goes along with writing a thesis admirably. To Erica: you have been an untiring encouragement and strength. Thank you.

Preface

My appreciation extends also to the Centre for Science Development who provided part of the funding that made the research possible. Of course all opinions expressed and conclusions reached are mine, and do not reflect in any way upon this body.

Finally, it is required of me to declare that this thesis contains only my own work, and has not been submitted to any other university for accreditation.

INTRODUCTION

Looking into South Africa is like looking into the mirror at midnight when one has pulled a face and a train blew its whistle and one's image stayed there, fixed for all eternity. A horrible face, but one's own.

- *Breyten Breytenbach*¹

Amidst the hope, euphoria and relief of 1994 lies the shadow of our past. I spent April this year preparing observers to audit South Africa's first democratic election. It was a strange, almost unbelievable sensation, this day for which we had waited so long. The day of liberation, of salvation, had finally dawned, the beginning of a new era. And yet, like Scrooge's ghost of Christmas past, we pray and hope that the ghost of apartheid will not return to haunt us just as we begin to enjoy the fruit of that new day.

¹Breytenbach 1972:138.

Introduction

It has been a remarkable year, and yet amidst the jubilation we are reminded of our history. This is a history of racism, of suffering, of exploitation, of sorrow. Its legacy lives on in the millions of people in our country who are homeless, jobless and hopeless. Despite the admirable aims of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, we can't be helped from thinking that if we are ever to break the ties that bind us to our past, then we are in need of divine intervention.

As a White Christian, I feel privileged to have been exposed to a little of the reality of life as it is lived by the majority of the citizens of our country². It is a privilege because it has only been a result of the undue warmth and openness of Black friends and strangers that I have gained this insight at all. Yet it has woken me to the harsh realisation of the devastation wreaked by apartheid. It has made me understand that the life I knew and had lived for two decades in White South Africa was built at the expense of Black South Africa. And most of all, it has started me on the long pilgrimage of trying to understand what it means to be White, privileged and Christian in a context of racism. This thesis is part of that pilgrimage. If anything it opens more questions than it provides conclusive answers, yet it tries to communicate what learnings I have absorbed along the way.

The title *The Struggle Within* reflects my belief that this process is a long and a hard one.

²In the first chapter I relate my own story, which tells of how I became conscientised to life outside the "white ghetto" (as Joseph Barndt (1991) calls it).

Introduction

A pilgrimage is not something easy, or something to be entered into lightly. When the Israelites wandered forty years in the desert they wore down their resources, they cursed themselves and their God, they lost hope, but they continued walking. For where can one turn back to in a desert? The pilgrimage which I am describing is similar in many ways. The directions are not clear, and we might easily lose hope along the way. But there is nowhere to return to, and the only way is forward. The word *struggle* has connotations of a battle between two forces. And indeed this is true. It is the battle between the old identity and the new. It is the battle between the gods of security, power and control and the God of faith, sacrifice and vulnerability. And this struggle has a context. That context is the White South African community, and the inner landscape of each White Christian. To win the battle over racism and injustice in society, we must first triumph over the racism and injustice that is deeply embedded in our own selves.

My basic argument in this thesis is a relatively simple one. I will try to show that as White Christians we must confront the fact that racism, like a disease, has deeply infected our faith and our identity. As White people, our reality has depended for so long on racism that we cannot tell our Christian story without telling at the same time the story of racism. Both as individual White Christians, and as a community of people, we must confront this reality and look for creative ways to weed out racism and restore the integrity of our faith.

I have divided the discussion into three sections. In the first I look at the concept of

Introduction

identity. I argue that traditional approaches to the study of identity, as found within psychology, fail to tell us the whole story. In their desperation to be objective they ignore the fact that identity is subjective - it is represented in the way I tell my story from the *inside*. In their individualistic approach they ignore the communal character of identity. I propose that we replace this method with an approach derived from narrative theology. Narrative theology teaches us that we attach meaning to our existence in the way we tell our story. We each own many versions of our story - in my case the Christian version, the White version the male version. My identity is formed in the story I promote as my normative story, and how I go about defending and developing that story.

In the second chapter I examine identity in the context of the White Christian community. Looking back at the history of South Africa, and the church's involvement in it, I argue that our society is held together at its foundations by the mortar of racism. In fact we can hardly claim to have a Christian story at all, because our White racist story so undermines it as to render it worthless.

In the final section I examine personal identity in the context of communal identity. I present the biographies of several White Christians, and discuss them in the light of our discoveries about communal identity. I make a tentative attempt to critique those personal stories in the light of our communal story.

Introduction

In conclusion I relate the findings of this investigation to the ongoing work of combatting racism. I argue that from this discussion we can extract learnings which contribute to the work of empowering and challenging White Christians to understand and respond to the crisis of faith that racism represents.

From the above it should be clear that I am intimately involved with my subject matter. This is in no way the "objective" account of an impartial observer. The story of the White, Christian community in South Africa is my story. In many ways the stories of my respondents resonate with my own. This has important implications for the study, for this is no passionless piece of objective academic writing. It is the reflection of a deeply personal pilgrimage. I believe that if we truly adopt a narrative approach, then theology is only possible from the perspective of inner³ history. Yes, we *must* hear the critique of external history, and we must listen carefully to our Christian story as it is retold by Black people. We must make these critiques events of spiritual significance, and we must allow our faith and theology to be shaken, if necessary devastated, by what they have to tell us. But the fact remains that theology can not be done on our behalf. Examining our identity as individuals and as a community of Christians is a theological necessity. When we proclaim Christ, we must know who we are in the context of our society, our history. We must know what we are saying.

³An explanation of the terms "inner" and "external" history can be found within chapter one. See also Niebuhr (1941).

Introduction

I have used the terms Black and White with a deal of caution. The sense in which they are intended here, is a political one. It indicates the division between those who are on the receiving end of racism, and those who are not. The term "Black" does not refer to the apartheid classification of African people, but includes those who have been classified Indian and Coloured, for all have been on the receiving end of racism and share a common experience of oppression. I question whether there is such a thing as "race." Is race not a social construction that allows us to divide people for the purpose of exploitation and domination? Is it not better to think of ourselves as members of the one race that exists on earth, the *human race*?

Contained within this study, and within my own heart are two intertwined threads of fear and hope. I am afraid that we will never learn, that we will continue to prostitute our faith as we sell our souls to the gods of racism, sexism and the other related illnesses of our society. Yet I am also hopeful, because the job of rescuing Christ's church is ultimately God's responsibility and not our own. God has a plan, or so I try to believe, and maybe, just maybe, we can be part of it.

Chapter One

A NEW LOOK AT IDENTITY

And a man said, "Speak to us of Self-Knowledge."

And he answered, saying:

"Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and the nights.

But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart's knowledge.

You would know in words that which you have always known in thought.

You would touch with you fingers the naked body of your dreams."

- *Kahlil Gibran*¹

This thesis puts forward the argument that identity can be understood via biography. In this section I will spell out why I think this is valid, by comparing traditional approaches to identity in psychology with a biographical approach derived from narrative theology. But a biographical approach cannot be argued in a vacuum of theory only. As I shall make clear, this approach has a story too, which is bound up in my own biography. Thus I shall begin by telling that story.

¹Gibran 1983:62.

A New Look at Identity

The story of my life

Mine is probably a story similar to one that could be told by many other South Africans, although I like to think of it as special and different. It does not yet have an ending, and hopefully there will be many sequels - for it is the story of my life.

I was born to two excited parents - my father a doctor, my mother a nurse-turned-housewife. I grew up in middle-class suburbia, my childhood little disturbed by the havoc that was turning the lives of most South Africans upside down. My father was an emotionally detached man, a professional. Although kind and committed to his family, he found it very difficult to communicate with us, a fact which I was to find harder to accept as I moved through adolescence into adulthood. My mother was more intense and involved with us emotionally, but found it difficult to overcome the tone set by my father. Unfortunately my mother never developed a career for herself, as she was absorbed in the duties of mother and housewife - something which I look back on with regret. I guess I always felt secure at home - it was a safe, if boring place to be. Generally my life progressed with relative happiness within the confines of White South Africa. Although my parents were liberals and didn't support the National Party, they were not prepared to accept an ANC government either. They felt disempowered by the intensity of the political struggle going on around them, concerned about the spiralling conflict and violence, and yet too scared or disinterested to find out anything more. By the age of sixteen I had never seen the inside of a township, and I don't believe they ever had either.

A New Look at Identity

I don't know how it happened, but in my penultimate year at high-school I had a charismatic spiritual experience and "found God," or rather, God found me. Several years earlier I had been sent off to board at one of the prestigious private schools in Natal. I have ambivalent feelings towards my time there, because while I came to despise the elitist ideology which underpinned the education, I had some significant experiences there which changed the course of my life. The spiritual encounter was an extremely significant event for me. I gained an overpowering sense of God's presence, his interest in me and his acceptance of everything I was - appealing and appalling, open and hidden. From this point on I became a dedicated Christian, a real "conversion" had taken place. Apart from cultivating an active spiritual life, my moral code became strongly developed. In many ways I was quite an insecure person, lacking in confidence, and I felt oppressed by the bruising "macho" ethos of the school. I think that this helped to sensitise me to the sufferings of others. Already cynical about the dominant values and people which ruled my world, I transferred this cynicism to the world outside of my school, family and social circle. This was expressed most strongly in my attitude towards apartheid.

I noticed that when the police or army were exposed for the injustice and violence they were perpetuating, other Whites became defensive. They attempted to explain this away by appealing to the difficult circumstances under which they had to work. I only felt a burning anger at the treatment which I knew Black people were suffering. In retrospect, I feel that the reason why my White family and acquaintances reacted so defensively, was because their very identity was tied up in the social system in which they lived out their lives.

A New Look at Identity

There is no doubt in my mind that my faith played an important role in the way my world-view was developing. I had begun to feel very strongly that all people were equal in God's sight, and should be respected for that. If I had to explain why I felt the way I did, it was because I was first a Christian, rather than a "lefty" or anything else. I believed in the doctrine of creation, rather than the doctrine of the fall. I felt that as a Christian, my calling was to live out the Kingdom of God within a fallen world. In the Kingdom of God, all people are equal in God's sight, and valued for the fact that they are human beings, created in the divine image. The colour of their skin or size of their bank account, or level of their education does not come into it, and might even detract from our ability to receive God's love. The words of Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ," were frequently in my thoughts. The congenial liberalism of my parents was swept away by a fierce new commitment to biblical unity between all people. Soon this new world-view challenged not only the way I related to and viewed Black people, but also my attitude towards the rights of women. I began to see that the need for equality between men and women fell into the same category as the need for equality between Black and White people. The one could not exclude or take preference over the other.

That said, my transformation was in no small part also due to my encounters with several key figures in my life at that time: one was a classmate, the son of a progressive and outspoken Indian doctor. With his insight into political realities in South Africa, and first-hand experience of the political activism of his parents, he devastated my limited and sheltered experience of South Africa, and provided continual intellectual challenge to my theories about apartheid. Unfortunately I only realised the extent to which he had

A New Look at Identity

influenced me much later, after I had left school. Another was a Christian pacifist doing community service for his objection to military service in the SADF². His commitment and sacrifice challenged me, and I resolved to follow his example when the time arrived.

Looking back, my conversion had not been merely a spiritual event. It had begun the slow process of changing other parts of me too. A seed had been planted, and it was slowly growing within me. I was becoming gradually conscious and aware of the political realities of life in South Africa, and its implications for both myself as a White person, and for many others as Black South Africans.

When the day which I had waited so long for finally came, I left school and entered university. School had begun to feel like a straightjacket towards the end, and on moving out I was desperate to be different and defy the social expectations for someone with my background - which would entail a career in business or an important profession. I registered for a degree in psychology and sociology, but after a year changed to theology. I had become involved in some political activities on campus, but was always more involved in religious activities, and expressed my political involvement through this. I submerged myself in student Christian activities, and as I progressed through my theological studies, my own faith became more overtly political in content.

²South African Defence Force. If conscripts were able to prove on religious grounds that they were pacifists, and could not partake in any armed force, they were given an alternative service of community work. The sentence was punitive, at one-and-a-half the length of time (this equalled six years in return for two years' army and two years' camps spread over twenty years), and the work very menial in most cases. Both aspects were meant to discourage conscripts from applying for it. If military service was objected to on political grounds, the sentence was a jail term for the same length of time as community service.

A New Look at Identity

When historic political change finally came to South Africa, I felt in a way as though I had missed the boat in terms of making an important contribution to the transformation. Although I had, as a student, taken part in demonstrations and been arrested (briefly) on one occasion, by then I felt a strong desire to become a "radical" and throw myself into the struggle against apartheid. In retrospect I think that part of this was driven by guilt at having benefitted so much from the system. I had become very aware by this stage of what was actually happening in South Africa, and it both angered me and made me feel responsible.

Upon finishing my undergraduate studies I was employed by *Koinonia Southern Africa*, a Christian organisation which worked to undermine apartheid by building bridges between Black and White communities. People were brought together over meals in each others' homes, to talk and share, laugh and cry together. Shortly after I started working with the organisation, a person by the name of Antoinette Zanda was brought in to run a workshop entitled *Challenging Racism*, as part of a programme of staff development. The programme itself aimed to empower us to understand what racism is, how it works, and what role we play as individuals and groups in the "cycle of oppression." Also, it helped us to work through our own experiences and discharge painful events in our past, in order that we could be healed from them. Out of this we could be empowered to address racism in our own context. It was a liberating weekend, both personally and for the organisation!

Antoinette subsequently became quite involved with our organisation, and in the year between her first and second visits something very significant happened within me.

A New Look at Identity

Where I had been quite deeply ashamed of my Whiteness, and burdened with feelings of responsibility for South Africa and the mess we had got ourselves into, I was now able to view my own background and the fact that I was a White South African with positive feelings - if not quite pride. Where the term "racism" had implied a confused morass of anger, bitterness and rejection, I now felt I understood why racism was having such a devastating impact on our society, and how it was doing that. By looking at how racism is internalised by both White and Black people, as dominance or inferiority, I looked with new eyes on how I, as a White person, related to Black people. In trying to put such a thing into words, I can only say that my identity as a White person has been totally transformed.

The work that Antoinette did with us was so successful that she was invited again to run a similar programme with the national executive of Koinonia. Eventually the organisation was encouraged to adopt the anti-racism programme as one of our own, as it was so much in line with the goals and aims of Koinonia. This was enthusiastically done, and it became one of the central activities of some Koinonia branches, notably our own. I became heavily involved in running anti-racism programmes for Koinonia, and spent much time with White people looking at the reality of racism and the impact it has had on their lives. My task was to present a particular model for understanding racism, and encourage them to adopt it and use it to analyse the world in which they live. But more importantly than that I was trying to persuade them to adopt a new lifestyle and world-view which abandoned racism and constructively built non-racism in our society. However, during this process, I began to realise that there was something very central to the process which we, as facilitators, did not fully understand, something called

A New Look at Identity

identity.

What is identity and why is it so important? Why do White people find it so difficult to change? Why is it so hard as a White person to acknowledge racism and admit that the system of apartheid has caused such devastation to Black people? What is guilt, and what leads White people to take responsibility for racism, or to deny that responsibility?

These were the questions which pounded ceaselessly inside my mind and which persuaded me to begin this thesis. While I believe that answers to these questions in themselves are important, the real motivation behind trying to answer them is to gain a better understanding of how to support White people through a process of change. In this sense I believe that the thesis itself cannot be seen in isolation from the experience of doing anti-racism work which spawned it. At the end of the thesis I will draw up some strategies for this work which I believe have emerged from the investigation. Hopefully in this the circle will be completed.

Faith and identity - a crucial link

The first thing that became clear to me in examining my own biography, was that there can be no separation between faith and identity. What my story told me, whether the theorists agree or not, is that my faith, my cognitive processes, my moral code, my personality, the culture that I am part of and all the other parts of what make me who I am, are bound intrinsically together in that murky pool called "my identity." This becomes clear if we examine my identity as a White person. It would be a futile exercise

A New Look at Identity

to attempt to reduce this identity to a sum of parts which could then be individually analysed. If we were to look at such factors as my self-confidence, my view of parental authority and example, the extent to which I have been exposed to different points of view, we would still know little about how I view myself as a White person. Identity in this sense is not a compilation of a group of objective realities, but an integrated whole. Likewise, one could not look at the type of faith I have and where it came from in a way that would tell us what role it plays in my life. My faith is part of who I am. It is bound up with the essence of what makes me think and feel what I do, and they are mutually influential. Again these things are not objective realities which we can get a hold of and analyse as we would some organism in biology. They can be known only through the microscope of my story as I tell it.

When inspection of my own story led me to this conclusion that identity is an indivisible whole, and that faith is not something that can be separated from identity, I realised that it would have profound implications for the thesis. The first is that faith and identity cannot be talked about independently. By implication, people who claim Christian faith could not be included in the same investigation as people who did not, under the assumption that faith is but one factor which can be accounted for in the equation. My field of expertise is within theology rather than psychology or sociology, and so I concluded that the meeting place of faith and identity might be a happier hunting ground for my investigation. Also, because *Koinonia* is a Christian organisation, most of the people who have attended our workshops are Christians. Secondly, the fact that Christian faith is central to the investigation leaves us with two possible approaches to it. The first is a phenomenological approach which views faith from a sociological reality in the lives

A New Look at Identity

of individuals and groups. This "objective" approach appeared immediately unsatisfactory to me because it implies that faith should be examined from the perspective of the observer, rather than the experiencer of that faith. The second option, and the one that I have chosen, is to "experience" the impact of the faith through the world of the person who lives it. In this approach, we might be throwing caution and "objectivity" to the wind and run the risk of collecting nothing more than a lot of personal opinion. However, that is a risk which must be taken, and hopefully by the end of this chapter it will seem more rational than it now might.

Let us now wade directly into the subject of identity. What is identity? How should we understand identity? How can we bridge traditional divisions between the study of identity and the study of Christian faith? Hopefully these and other pressing questions will be answered in the ensuing discussion.

 *Identity and story*

In the pages leading up to this important section I laid the context for this discussion in my own story. Out of this I made the claim that identity cannot be separated from Christian faith, where the latter exists. Two tasks were raised by this discussion which both require urgent attention. The first is to define what is meant by identity. The second is to present a method for investigating and understanding identity. I shall attend immediately to these demands as a major task of this thesis; in the latter half I shall test the claims which are raised here.

A New Look at Identity

Classical approaches to the study of identity: Erikson and Marcia

As I have alluded to already, the concept "identity" is a difficult one to pin down. Erikson calls it a "term for something as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive." (1968:9). It is obviously important, because such eminent theorists as Freud, Erikson and Marcia spent a lot of their time talking about it, but what is it? Let us look at historical approaches to the study of identity.

Since at least the time of Socrates (469-399 B.C.), philosophers have studied the concept of personal identity; references to concepts such as self-knowledge, self-consistency and self-development abound in the writings of numerous Western and Eastern philosophers and theologians. Fascination with this idea of identity has absorbed thinkers over the ages. However, it is modern psychology that has taken up the search to understand identity with the greatest force. We are indebted to William James for his pioneering work in the field, but it is Erik Erikson's views on ego identity, first published in his *Childhood and Society* (1968), that have inspired most contemporary research on the formation of identity. Erikson proposed that identity is one phase, albeit the pivotal one, in a life long process of personality development. He argued that the resolution of the major crises of childhood pave the way for the achievement of identity in adolescence. The extent to which identity is *successfully achieved* then determines the ability of the adult to negotiate the important crises of adulthood.

Other significant researchers, most notably James Marcia, have developed Erikson's theory of identity. The majority of recent investigations have utilised the identity-status

A New Look at Identity

paradigm worked out by Marcia, who assumed that the two dimensions of crisis and commitment were central in Erikson's theory.

In the following pages I shall present in more detail the identity theory of Erikson and Marcia. While I do not doubt the value of their findings and have none of the correct credentials to do so, I will attempt to show some of the limitations of their approach in the context of our discussion.

There is no doubt that Erik Erikson³ is the central figure in the study of identity in the twentieth century. He was a great researcher, and one cannot look seriously at any of the theorists who followed him without examining the figure on whose work they base their own.

Anyone who employs the concept of identity stands upon the shoulders of Erik Erikson, a position both privileged and presumptuous. (Curle 1972:26)

Erikson built on the work of Sigmund Freud, in formulating eight developmental stages through which the ego grows to full maturity. Whereas in the classical Freudian view development of the personality is complete by adolescence, and relatively independent of environmental influence, Erikson provides a life-span theory of psychological development and emphasizes the autonomous or conflict-free development of an adaptive ego. Each stage, from birth to old age, is marked by a normative crisis that must be

³The basis of the information on Erikson's theory comes from two sources: Erikson's *Adulthood* (1976) and Corsini's *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (1984).

A New Look at Identity

confronted and negotiated. Crisis resolutions leave their mark on the developing person, and each contributes to the totally formed personality. The stages are assumed to be interdependent and build upon one another in a cumulative manner. Importantly, the *achievement of ego identity during adolescence* is the central concept in this development scheme. Identity formation entails the synthesis and integration of prior experiences and developments and provides the foundation upon which future progress will occur.

In Erikson's theory, development continues throughout life. However, the three adult stages which we shall examine shortly, are directly affected by the identity achieved during adolescence. In the first four stages, which are completed by school age, the personality who successfully negotiates each crisis will learn in turn trust (versus mistrust), autonomy (versus doubt and shame), initiative (as opposed to guilt) and industry (rather than inferiority). The pivotal adolescent stage demands the achievement of identity. At this point, adolescents actively attempt to synthesize their experiences in order to formulate a stable sense of personal identity. This process is psychosocial: the person must learn to fit into society and solidarity with group ideals, while there is also an important role for accurate self-knowledge and reality testing. Positive resolutions of the crises which precede this one facilitate identity formation. On the other hand, previous failures may lead to identity diffusion.

Following identity achievement occur three developmental stages of adulthood in early and middle adulthood and maturity, respectively. The first of these is intimacy versus isolation - the willingness and ability to unite one's identity with that of another. A firm sense of identity is prerequisite, because authentic disclosure and mutuality leave one

A New Look at Identity

vulnerable. Love is the ascendant quality. In middle adulthood, generativity competes with stagnation, when one strives to actualise the identity formed and shared with selected others. The generation of offspring, ideas, artefacts and so forth is involved, and the virtue of care now emerges. In the final stage, integrity versus despair, the focus is on the completion or fulfilment of one's life cycle. Wisdom is the virtue which enables the person to understand the relativistic nature of knowledge and accepts that life had to be the way it was.

While the early stages of Erikson's theory impact on that decisive fifth stage of the development of identity, Erikson made it clear that the pivotal step in the whole scheme is the formation of identity. As the central stage of adolescence, and thus the bridge between childhood and adulthood, its relative success or failure impacts greatly on the ability of the individual to achieve intimacy, generativity and integrity - thereby bringing a "successful" or frustrated end to the life cycle.

While Erikson leaves us in no doubt that identity formation during adolescence is central to personality development, we are still left wondering what this identity precisely is. The word "identity," as Erikson acknowledges, has become a "term for something as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive." (1968:9). Not all adolescents are able to bring the central "Who am I?" question to an affirmative conclusion. Some choose a negative identity, a rejection of previous identification, whether race, sex-role, religion or socio-economic position. The resolution of the identity-identity diffusion dilemma, argues Erikson, requires both a crisis and a commitment. By "crisis" is meant the young person's confrontation and struggle with alternatives among potential choices.

Commitment implies attachment to a strongly held personal choice after having struggled with alternatives. A committed individual can be said to have achieved a certain level of identity.

James Marcia is another theorist who is regarded as a central figure in the study of identity, and since the early 'sixties, the empirical study of identity has been dominated by Marcia's identity status methodology (Van der Merwe 1993). Based on Erikson's writings pertaining to this stage of identity versus identity confusion, Marcia proposed that individuals could be categorised into one of four different identity statuses:

MB
Identity achievements are individuals who have experienced a decision-making period and are pursuing self-chosen occupational and ideological goals. *Foreclosures* are persons also committed to occupational and ideological positions, but these have been parentally chosen rather than self-chosen. They show little or no evidence of "crisis." *Identity diffusions* are young people who have no set of occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether or not they may have experienced a decision making period. *Moratoriums* are individuals who are currently struggling with occupational and/or ideological issues; they are *in* an identity crisis. (1980:161)

Marcia (1966) interprets Erikson as providing two criteria in assessing ego identity development. The first is the experience of a crisis and subsequent experimentation with alternative roles and ideals where fundamental values, beliefs and aspirations are questioned and examined. The second is the resultant formation of a relatively enduring set of commitments which serve to complete the individual's self-definition and provide a place for him/her in the community. In Marcia's expanded theory (Marcia and Friedman 1970), attention is given not only to crisis and commitment in terms of

A New Look at Identity

ideological and occupational choices, it also includes interpersonal relationships. The four identity statuses here identified represented, for Marcia, a continuum. They constituted four alternate modes of response of a young person to the complex psychological and social demands surrounding identity formation.

Before I go any further in discussion of Marcia and Erikson, it would be prudent of me to defend my decision to involve them at all. Both Erikson and Marcia focus on the changes within adolescence as the locus of identity formation. Their central claim is that a challenge to identity, in the form of crisis at the onset of adolescence, must be resolved in the form of new commitments that will carry the individual into adulthood. Now the focus of my study is not on adolescents, but it *is* to do with the crisis and commitments of identity. I believe that White people are faced with a crisis also. If identity is the answer to the question, "Who am I?" then White people must also answer the question, "Who am I as a White person?" We could call that crisis a *crisis of authenticity*. Viewed from the position of the Christian faith, with its dictates of justice, equality and respect for all persons, it is not Black people who must defend their right to existence, but White people. Apartheid and racism are complete anathema to the Christian faith; I don't believe I have to defend this statement. If White identity is inextricably bound up in racism, as I intimated earlier, then the challenge of faith is directed at White, and not Black people. As White people it is demanded of us that we face this crisis of our right to be, our acceptance as a whole person and our ability to see a role for ourselves in the world. I believe that this crisis and subsequent commitments underlie the identity of White Christians, and I will attempt to show this later on. While some openly acknowledge and address the crisis, others deny and attempt to avoid it, but cannot.

A New Look at Identity

Now we could apply the categories of Erikson and Marcia to understand the different ways in which we resolve this crisis, but I am not convinced that this will be ultimately useful. This is the point at which I begin to question the very foundation of the approach taken by this school of theorists. For these categories are limited in their ability to explain identity. They are vague in saying what happens in the formation of identity commitments. This vagueness, however, is implicit in the model, since the more specific the categories become, the more exclusive they are too. Furthermore, the reliance of both theorists on adolescence as the point at which crisis occurs is problematic. In my own research it became clear that it was possible for *the* major identity crisis to occur much later in life, as a result of a particularly momentous event. Such was the case with one of the people I interviewed, who had gone through a divorce which changed his entire personality and life convictions.

With these questions in mind, I would now like to put Erikson and Marcia et al to one side for a moment. We will return to them, but I would first like to introduce a different approach to the study of identity. I believe that the dialogue between this new approach and the approach of Erikson and Marcia might be very fruitful. Let me start with a brief sketch of narrative theology, since a narrative approach to the interpretation of reality is central to this new method.

Narrative and identity - turning to theology

Narrative theology has come to prominence over the last two decades or so. Far from being a "new fad," narrative theologians are arguing that narrative theology calls us back

A New Look at Identity

to the roots of our faith, and is the only way in which we can appropriately talk about the relationship between God and the community of believers. At the centre of narrative theology, as the name well suggests, is the assertion that the way human beings understand and interpret the world around them, the way we *make sense* of our lives, is through narrative or story.



Narrative theology claims that stories are very important firstly because peoples' experiences, the events of their lives, form the basis of what they believe, secondly because language is not just a means of communication but is actually a means by which human beings make sense of their lives, and thirdly because propositions cannot by themselves explain the true nature of reality and life. (Balcomb 1994:2)

Put in this way, having a story is central to the possibility of having a self - it is only the narrative account that unites events and agents together in a way that they make sense.

In other words stories do not illustrate a meaning, they do not symbolize a meaning, but rather the meaning is embodied in the form of the story itself. Put differently, *stories are indispensable if we are to know ourselves*; they are not replaceable by some other kind of account. (Hauerwas 1977:77, my emphasis)

Hauerwas goes on to argue that Christian convictions cannot be isolated from the story of life from which they came... "those facts are part of a story that helps locate what kind of "fact" you have at all." (1977:73). We might relate this to the task of determining what type of identity a person has achieved - what his/her ideology is, what commitments have been made - and argue convincingly that these things cannot have meaning when separated from the story in which they exist.

A New Look at Identity

A man's [sic] sense of his own identity seems largely determined by the kind of story which he understands himself to have been enacting through the events of his career, the story of his life. (Crites 1968:68)

But what is a story? Again I turn here to Hauerwas. Perhaps, like identity, the category of story becomes remarkably elusive the moment we try to qualify it. We all know what a story is, and can even distinguish between a good or bad one, but find it hard to say exactly what it is. Certainly there are different types of stories, and they can be both realistic and mythic at the same time.

The features which enable a story to flow and us to follow, then, are the clues to the nature of historical understanding. An historical narrative does not demonstrate the necessity of events but makes them intelligible by unfolding the story which connects their significance. (Mink in Hauerwas 1977:75)

Hauerwas continues with:

Stories are thus a necessary form of our knowledge inasmuch as it is only through narrative that we can catch the connections between actions and responses of men [sic] that are inherently particular and contingent. The intentional nature of human action is exactly that which creates the space demanding narrative as the necessary form to account for the connection and intelligibility of our action. (1977:75)

The structure of any particular narrative is thus not in any way the exact structure of reality, but the narrative form is an obligatory way of viewing, changing and to some extent re-expressing reality true to the form of human action.

A New Look at Identity

A story, thus, is a *narrative account that binds events and agents together in an intelligible pattern*. We do not tell stories simply because they provide us a more colourful way to say what can be said in a different way, but because there is no other way we can articulate the richness of intentional activity - that is, behaviour that is purposeful but not necessary. For as any good novelist knows there is always more involved in any human action than can be said. To tell a story often involves our attempt to make intelligible the muddle of things we have done in order to have a self. (Hauerwas 1977:76)

A story-centred understanding of the world is thus the starting point of narrative theology. This has implications for theology, since theology is then usually autobiographical - people do it out of the experience of their lives. We cannot talk about the theological ideas or doctrines of Jesus, Paul, Anselm, Luther, Schleiermacher, Barth or anyone else without placing those ideas within the context of the life that gave them meaning.

The autobiographical nature of theology means that the best way to understand the events that undergird theology is from the "inside," that is from the point of view of the person who experiences those events, not from the outside, that is from the point of view of the "objective" observer. H. Richard Niebuhr talks of this as the difference between *internal* and *external* history.

It is one thing to perceive from a safe distance the occurrences in a stranger's life and quite a different thing to ponder the path of one's own destiny, to deal with the why and the whence and whither of one's own existence. Of a man who has been blind and who has come to see, two histories can be written. A scientific case history will describe what happened to his optic nerve or to the crystalline lens... An autobiography, on the other hand, may barely mention these things but it will tell what happened to a self that had lived in darkness and now saw again trees and

A New Look at Identity

the sunrise, children's faces and the eyes of a friend. Which of these histories can be a parable of revelation, the outer history or the story of what happened to a self? (1941:56)

Looking at events from the "inside" profoundly transforms the way theology is done. We must move away from viewing people as objects to seeing them as subjects. Niebuhr points out some of the dangers of attempting to understand people through the eyes of external history.

It appears, first of all, that the data of external history are all impersonal; they are ideas, interests, movements among things. Even when such history deals with human individuals it seeks to reduce them to impersonal parts. Jesus becomes, from this point of view, a complex of ideas about ethics and eschatology, of psychological and biological elements. Other persons are dealt with in the same manner. One may look for an efficient factor among such impersonal elements, though its determination involves the peril of forsaking the objective point of view, as when a Marxist historian chooses economic elements or an intellectualist regards ideas in the mind as the motivating forces in history. Internal history, on the other hand, is not a story of things in juxtaposition or succession; it is personal in character. Here the final data are not elusive atoms of matter or thought but equally elusive selves. (1941:60)

A propositional approach to theology can, therefore, not adequately describe the fundamental way in which life is interconnected. If we separate any particular event from the story that precedes and follows it in order to analyse it, we will fail because it no longer has a history and context to give it meaning.

If we take the claims of narrative theology seriously then Marcia and Erikson, et al, must answer the critique of external history posed by the narrativists. The

A New Look at Identity

psychoanalytical approach, as it has been represented by these theorists, is based on the assumption that it is possible to stand apart as an objective observer and deconstruct the personality in order to determine what type of identity it is based on. I do not think that this is helpful for our context, and would like to suggest an alternative which I will use in this study.

Obviously we cannot merely tell our stories and thereby hope to understand identity and solve the problems or crises facing identity that I have outlined above. We live in a society made up of many, many other stories which impact on our own. I hope to show how these stories can interact with each other and thereby bring criticism into the internal history within the story.

Sallie TeSelle says that:

to see belief not as a set of beliefs but as a story, an experience of coming to belief, means that theological reflection ought itself to be shaped by the story and to take to itself, both in form and content, the story. (1975:160)

In doing so, she argues that as theologians we should take courage to focus on the experiences of coming to belief, more than the "beliefs" themselves. This is the crucial task, the task of "locating, testing, and understanding those stories - artistic, personal, social, and political - which carry experiences of coming to belief." She points out that this is what the story of Black oppression means to the Black theologian, and perhaps we could say something similar about the "experience of Whiteness" and its meaning to us as White people. We learn who we are by the stories that we embrace as our own,

A New Look at Identity

as our story is structured by the bigger stories (social, political, mythic) in which we understand our story to have taken place. Applying these insights to the particular problem at hand, we could say that it is more important to focus on the process (or story) of coming to "White identity" than to attempt to categorise what type of identity it is. Also, we must then locate, test and understand these stories in the context of the larger stories in which they have occurred.

As Christians it is important that we maintain interaction between our story and *The Story*. But this is a lot more complicated than we might at first imagine. What is *The Story*? And more importantly where do we find it? Robert Brown (1975) says that we have to "enter into" other stories. There is a dialectic of similarity and dissimilarity in operation between the story I am being told and my own story. The story which is too similar to my own does not retain my interest, while that which is too dissimilar gives me no point of contact and increasingly frustrates my attempts to understand it. Brown suggests that in those other stories we encounter *The Story* - he wants us to see that when the Christian story has lost its power to inform and engage, by reflecting on what happens when *other* stories are told, we can get clues as to how *The Story* might once again be told in such a way that we might respond, "That's my story too." One way in which we can enter into stories that are not our own, according to Brown, is simply by a comparison between different stories. We have many ways of telling our own story - in my case the masculine version, the White South African version, the university graduate version - which we are constantly juggling and balancing. But we are also constantly reviewing these in the light of the other stories of our time - the female version, the Black version, the poor version, the Afrikaner version. Several things can

A New Look at Identity

happen in this interaction. On the one hand my story may be bolstered and authenticated as other stories confront it supportively and enable me to refine and sharpen it.

But things may not go well. My normative story may be rudely challenged by another story or by several stories. It may be so badly shattered that I must painfully reconstruct a new story for myself, either out of the debris of my former story or by using materials that come from one or another of the stories that created my predicament. (Brown 1975:167)

I, Ian, White, male, English-speaking, university-educated South African might choose to keep each of these versions of my story subservient to the Christian version. This is called making the Christian version normative. But I cannot tell my Christian version of the story in isolation from these other versions of the story, and I must strive to keep the delicate balance between them. And this is not all, for I cannot tell my Christian story without recognising the increasing degree to which stories which are not part of my original story are interwoven with it. For the female story tells me how much my Christian story has been tainted and subverted by my male story. And the Black story tells me how much my Christian story has been undermined by my White story. If one, or a series, of these encounters is so severe as to shatter my Christian story I would not be without a story, but rather left, as Brown pointed out, with the painful task of constructing another story or stories which would become normative for me.

Opening up the dialogue

All of a sudden I am excited by the possibilities of external and internal history opened up by Brown, Niebuhr and others. Casting my mind back to Marcia and Erikson, I am

A New Look at Identity

left with the feeling that their approach sounds suspiciously like that of external history. If Erikson were to analyse me and my story, he would be able to derive a certain set of commitments with which I emerged from the crisis of adolescence. He would say I had successfully negotiated the crisis, because the commitments I arrived at were my own, and not simply those handed down by my parents. They were firm commitments which enabled me to structure my world around a set of values derived from the faith I had adopted. Furthermore, the fact that I carried them into adulthood shows that these choices had a permanence which makes them real commitments. However, without retelling my story, and moving beyond mere categorisation of my response to the identity crisis, this identity theory cannot reveal the whole picture. It is concerned with the *what* - what choices I made, and the *how* - how I resolved the crisis. It does not enter into discussion on the *why* and *who* elements of my story. The approach of narrative theology tells us that this is only half the story, and it is meaningless without the other half. Inner history communicates a whole new version of what happened that we miss out on if we do not take it into account. I would thus argue that any attempt to study identity which tries to understand it only from the perspective of Erikson and Marcia's crisis-commitment device will not be complete. The emphasis which narrative theology places on story, told through the eyes of inner history gives us a new perspective on identity which we must take seriously.

Thus, identity is not simply an objective reality which can be pulled apart and analysed like the internal workings of a mechanism such as a clock. Rather, the identity which we are talking about is a dynamic, subjective life-thing. It is shaping up in the battlefield of the encounters between White, poor, Black, rich, male, female versions of the Christian

A New Look at Identity

story being told over and over again in the melting pot that is South Africa.

The mechanism of metaphor

Throughout the above discussion, a worrying question has been gnawing at the back of my mind. It is all very well to shoot holes in normative, well-established theory, but one then bears the burden of suggesting an adequate replacement. Despite the weaknesses which I believe I have revealed, Marcia and Erikson share a clear method for the analysis of identity. Can I devise a mechanism which will adequately enable us to access and understand identity through the new method of internal and external history? Before trying to answer this, let me briefly recap what has been said so far about this new method.

Identity is the point at which our world-view, faith, self-perception, emotion come together in defining who we are. Erikson and the theorists who follow him have reduced identity to a set of commitments which tell us who the person is and what s/he believes. I have argued that in order to find these commitments, we have to resort to becoming external observers and from that distant position analyse a set of forces and events which make up the personality. This is inadequate, as it only tells us a part of the story. Identity is rather, precisely that - *a story*. Only through the language of story can we make sense of our lives. Objective propositions about identity do not explain its true nature. A better way of describing identity is to talk about *normative stories*. We all possess many stories. When we elevate one to the position of normative story, we claim that that is who we are. This normative story must then engage with our other versions

A New Look at Identity

of the same story (internal), and with outside versions of our story (external). In this harsh confrontation, our story is refined, or broken down and rebuilt with the pieces of the old.

Now back to that gnawing problem. How do we access identity as it is represented in the narrative that we hear. Can we just accept it at face value? This approach would involve merely retelling stories. We must search for something more. But we need a mechanism through which we can *enter* the stories and come to grips with this identity we have talked so much about. I would like to propose that that mechanism is *metaphor*.

Metaphors are locomotives of meaning. They bear the freight of insight from place to place. They roll into the settled cities of our ideas, blasting their horns to announce the new arrival, shining their headlights to dazzle the citizens. (Tilley 1985:1)

Operating on and below the surface of any story are metaphors. Within the Christian story, we could argue that the "key concepts of Christian faith - creation, fall, incarnation, atonement, church, eternal life, trinity - are all metaphors at rest, metaphors which have become Christian doctrines." (Tilley 1985:3). The key ideas of Christianity enter the lives of believers through the directness of metaphors rather than the indirect sense of propositional doctrines. For example, in ritual, such as the Eucharist, the metaphor of the body of Christ is central. The power of the ritual to impact on the life of the believer is contained not in our ability to define or explain what happens in the Eucharist - probably we cannot - but in the power of the metaphor that forms the substance of the ritual.

A New Look at Identity

A second way in which metaphor enters the life of the Christian, Tilley argues, is through the stories in which it is incorporated. So by probing our biography, a root metaphor appears - if we probe our life to see what makes it meaningful, we discover a metaphor which structures that life. For a committed believer, that metaphor must be: "I am a Christian."

To be a Christian is to use Christian canonical metaphors, to adapt or adopt the stories which carry them to one's own life, and thus to provide meaning and unity for one's life. This use of stories provides another way to answer the question of what metaphors, concepts or doctrines mean. By telling and exploring the stories which contextualise key Christian ideas, a person can show what they mean. That process of discovering, creatively transforming, and proclaiming the stories which carry the key ideas of Christianity is the distinctive work of a Christian narrative theology. (Tilley 1985:5).

Tilley sees the task of narrative theology as that of making our ancient religious tradition vibrant in a new context by telling new stories. In doing so, the central metaphors of the Christian story can be kept alive and true.

James McClendon (1974) uses metaphor as a device to examine the life stories of four men: Martin Luther King, Jr., Dag Hammarskjöld, Clarence Leonard Jordan and Charles Edward Ives. He digs out of their biographies images which had the power to transport the "objective dogmas" of their faith into their lives.

Dag Hammarskjöld and Martin Luther King, Jr., it can be shown, were each possessed of certain characteristic images - for Hammarskjöld, servant, Brother, the "One," the unheard-of; for King, the Egyptian bondage of segregation, the Pharaohs, the promised land; for both, the cross - by which each understood himself, faced the critical situations in

A New Look at Identity

his life, and chiselled out his own destiny. I take it that the convergence of such images in a particular person helps to form his characteristic vision or outlook. (Moreover I believe that *the living out of life under the governance of such a vision* is the best way to conceive of "religious experience" ...) (McClendon 1974:90).

Because the lives of each of these people were rich, full lives which provided, in McClendon's terms, a "full warehouse of images," there was a lot for him to work with. Nevertheless, he was able to draw on one or two metaphors which dominated the rest of the images, and show how they functioned as a root (normative) metaphor in their respective stories.

I would like to suggest a similar use of metaphor in the context of this study. By drawing out dominant metaphors from the biographies of White people, we might thereby begin to grasp how they interpret their own story. It will allow us to see how they select and construct one normative story. Hopefully within this story we will be able to discern how that normative story has responded to other retellings of the Christian story and the South African story.

Chapter Two

THE STORY OF OUR COMMUNAL WHITE IDENTITY

No man shall see my grave
Before the evil sinks
Because death cannot bring life
Death sometimes is desertion

- James Pitse¹

In the last section I introduced a new approach to the study of identity. I argued that the Christian faith needs to listen to its external history in order to take seriously the criticism that it finds there. In this way, external histories can become events of spiritual significance. Also, it needs to listen to its internal history portrayed from the perspective of those who hold a different point of view. This must happen so that our faith story can be refined and strengthened, or broken down and reconstructed.

Goba has made the point that "any identity is anchored in a particular social context or in a specific set of social relations." (1988:34). Identity is by nature bound to the context in which it has its expression; but also implied is that identity has a communal, as well

¹From James Pitse's poem *No man shall see my grave* (La Guma 1972:161).

The Story of our Communal White Identity

as an individual character.

That identity formation process involves a dialectical relationship between the individual and society really implies that we become who we are as a result of a particular form of socialisation in which there are always competing claims of meaning, and negative power relationships. (Goba 1988:34)

Goba's aim is to develop a third world perspective on *Black* Christian identity. He argues that it is the ongoing task of Black and African theology to redefine the "nature of the Christian mythos from an African and Black perspective." (1988:32). This is a dynamic process which evolves as Black Christians reinterpret the gospel in our context. He says that Black Christians must adopt a praxis-centred theological approach that begins with the basic experience of oppression. Governed by a hermeneutic of suspicion this approach unravels the contradictions in life through a process of social analysis. In this task of social analysis the struggle for liberation is engaged in which results in new self-understanding. Social understanding does not bring a new sense of Christian identity alone, but must be accompanied by critical theological reflection "which involves a reappropriation of the basic affirmations of the Christian faith as decisive in shaping our praxis in a particular context." (1988:36).

Goba is clear that identity is first communal, then individual. If the reality of oppression demands a new struggle to reinterpret and define Christian identity by *Black* people, how much more does this imperative apply to *White* people? We too must start with the basic experience of oppression, because this is as fundamental a challenge to White Christian identity as it is to Black Christian identity. To appreciate that oppression, we must

The Story of our Communal White Identity

examine our history. I will argue that the history of racism in South Africa provides a fundamental challenge to Christian identity. Our faith must *admit* its history and we must reconstruct our identity based on a fresh interpretation of the gospel in this context of racism. "True memory" is in this sense the most potent antidote to the self-deception which has allowed us to deny our history.

I will begin by telling the historical story of racism in South Africa, and then I will tell the parallel story of the church's response to this history of racism. I will argue that racism has become an implicit part of White identity - it has impregnated our culture and history. Furthermore, the story of White racism undermines and threatens the Christian story which we claim is the normative story of our identity. White people benefit from racism and are responsible for perpetuating it. Racism is therefore a White problem.

Finding our White Christian story within our historical South African story

Historical overview

Racism has a long history in South Africa, and also globally. Contrary to often expressed popular belief, racism has not always been a feature of human society - certainly not in its current form (Rex & Mason 1986). Since the time White people settled on our shores, however, the story of our history has also become the story of how racism has infiltrated every aspect of social, economic and political life in South Africa.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

Racism was brought to South Africa by White settlers who invaded the area in the seventeenth century when they settled around the shores of Table Bay. During the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Whites carried out their policy of incursions, theft, fraud and aggression against the African people. They met with firm resistance (La Guma (1972); Motlhabi (1984)). The story of the Great Trek is well known to most White South Africans - this was the migration that spearheaded the occupation of the interior by White people.

In the meantime, mercantile capitalism had developed in the British-controlled areas of the southern Cape. The economic landscape was, however, to change forever with two important discoveries.

After months of curiosity and doubt, the matter was finally settled. The pebble picked up on a farm on the banks of the Orange River near Hopetown was the real thing - a diamond. And South Africa would never be the same again. The discovery of diamonds, and then gold, brought immense changes to the sub-continent, turning it from a forgotten corner of the British Empire into a fount of wealth to rival that ultimate jewel in the imperial crown: India. (Saunders 1992:163)

While the gold and diamonds created a furore in the hierarchy of the empire, it also engendered fundamental and long term changes in the economic structure of South Africa. Thus began the era of organised large-scale industrial capitalism.

...The discovery of gold and diamonds laid the foundation for racial discrimination in industry. The original skilled workers in the mines were Whites who came from Europe. Africans were employed in the more arduous labour as unskilled workers. This system proved profitable to mine owners and indeed to all capital in South Africa. The White

The Story of our Communal White Identity

aristocracy of labour [was] bribed to support the system of racism with better working conditions and higher salaries. The mining industry is also a marriage between international capital and local feudalism. (La Guma 1972:13)

Black men were not initially willing to migrate the long distances from their homes to work in hard conditions for meagre pay in the mines. But labour had to be found, and so a poll-tax (payable only in cash) was introduced to force them to go and work on the mines². This was the beginning of White manipulation of Black people as a commodity useful for the increase of White wealth.

Labour - and the difficulties of getting it - dominated southern Africa during the second half of the 19th century; and yet little credence was given to the golden rule of capitalism: that workers will sell their labour only if the reward is adequate. Instead, the bosses - farmers and mine-owners - preferred coercion to get Africans to work for them. The favourite strategy was to strip the African of his livelihood - the land on which he farmed - so leaving him no alternative but to sell all he had left: the labour of his hands. (From a White point of view, an added bonus was that the land he had been forced to quit became available for settlement.) Other methods included taxation - forcing Africans to earn money to pay the taxes - and employing worker/tenants, African families allowed to "squat" on White-owned farms in return for their labour. (Saunders 1992:164)

The complex of events which followed the discovery of gold in the Reef erupted in a struggle for power and control over the highveld between the British and the Boer settlers. While Britain won the war in 1902, it was not to be long before Afrikaners came to dominate the Union which followed in 1910. The treaty at Vereeniging to end

²Black wealth was previously cattle-based, a legacy of the barter economy that had existed prior to the Europeans implementing a cash-based economy.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

the war guaranteed the Boers that the vote would not be given to Blacks. This was formalised in the new constitution of the Union, despite the fact that the Cape managed to entrench their "colour-blind" franchise in the new constitution. Far from the unity it proclaimed, the Act of Union sowed the seeds of division. "By excluding Blacks it sowed the seeds of discontent that another generation, and another epoch in South Africa's history, would have to reap." (Saunders 1992:263). The formation in 1912 of the South African Native National Congress, the forerunner of the African National Congress (ANC) was a momentous event (Motlhabi 1984:37), but by the middle of the century Black people's efforts had failed to win them more political rights, they had not even been able to hold onto the few rights they enjoyed at the beginning of the century (Seleoane 1992:4). In 1913, the Natives' Land Act divided South Africa into "White" and "Black" areas, and this was followed in 1923 by the Native (Urban Areas) Act which made it possible to set up "native locations" dotting the peripheries of White cities. The foundation stones of Apartheid had been laid.

"Today South Africa belongs to us once more." - National Party leader Daniel Malan after the 1948 election. Forty-six years after its defeat in the South African War, Afrikaner nationalism finally triumphed on 28 May 1948, when the Reunited (*Herenigde*) National Party dislodged Jan Smuts' United Party with a promise to preserve White power in general - and Afrikaner power in particular. The instrument used to put this policy into practice was apartheid (literally separateness), designed to ensure that the interests of Afrikaans speaking voters remained dominant in a parliament representing a White minority, giving it the impression, if not the substance, of a Western-style democracy. (Saunders 1992:367).

Under the 1960's guidance of Hendrik Verwoerd, the policy of apartheid (now separate development) was implemented with great energy. Under the Natives' Land Act,

The Story of our Communal White Identity

homelands were created, and over the next twenty years, an estimated three-and-a-half million people were uprooted from their homes and moved there under massive-scale social engineering. In theory at least, South Africa was left with no African citizens.

Black resistance failed to halt or even retard the implementation of apartheid, despite a rapid revival of the ANC in the 1950s. The defiance campaign of that organisation, culminating in the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, culminated in the banning of all prominent Black political organisations and leaders. Resistance went underground and the armed struggle was adopted by both the ANC and the Pan African Congress (PAC). Resistance to racism in South Africa has consistently had serious consequences, especially, but not only, for Black people. Both those who actually did it, and anyone suspected of it, could expect to endure the full wrath of a system set up to punish, demoralise and dehumanise its opponents.

Black people in general, and those who defy the government's policies in particular, have suffered from four types of persecution from the authorities of the country. First, there has been general intimidation - which might be called a "preventative" measure - of Black people through raids and arrests for technical offenses as well as on suspicions of subversion and related activities. They have also been subjected to lengthy trials for improperly defined charges; unsubstantiated convictions; banishments and bannings of individuals and organisations; as well as detentions without trial involving torture, and often death. (Motlhabi 1984:28)

Resistance continued and intensified during the late 1970s and early 80s, and yet the apartheid regime, under Vorster and Botha merely intensified its efforts to defuse insurrection and entrench White power. During the 1980s widespread rebellion attracted

The Story of our Communal White Identity

international interest on a new scale, and sanctions began to close in on an already beleaguered economy. The response of the government was to impose successive states of emergency, and the regime increasingly took on the form of a security state. Army and police specialists gained increasing influence in the corridors of power. Normal legal processes were bypassed and as activists started disappearing in greater numbers, fear stalked an already fearful land. By this stage many senior cabinet ministers had become convinced that apartheid had failed, and when the opportunity came to remove P.W. Botha after his mild stroke in 1989, it was grasped with both hands. F.W. De Klerk replaced him, and within months announced the repeal of apartheid legislation and the unbanning of political parties. The major parties sat down to negotiate the future of the country at a series of talks, while the power struggle on the ground erupted in widespread violence. Finally a settlement was reached, and in April 1994 South Africa held its first democratic election which gave the ANC the lion's share of the transitional Government of National Unity, and Nelson Mandela the presidency.

What this brief look convincingly shows us, is that South African society is structured on racism. Our economic, political and social systems are products of racism. What does this tell us about who we are as White people? This is the central concern of this chapter. Yet we are not talking about all White people, but a special group - Christian White people. Let us, therefore turn our attention to the story of our Christian faith as it has entwined itself with our South African story. This story will show us that our Christian story has often failed to distinguish itself from our racist story.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

Our Christian faith and historical racism

If we are to examine the role of the church in relation to racism in South Africa, we must also brief this discussion with the greater history of the roots of racism in the Western church, from which the South African church is derived. Maimela (1993) argues that the church's initially positive view towards its diversity and different cultural manifestations crumbled for many reasons. Two of these are important. The first was the major transformation which the church underwent in the Constantinian era, when it changed from being a persecuted minority to an established, official institution, with the power to influence society. In gratitude to Constantine, the church allowed itself to be co-opted by the ruling class which expected it to "construct a theology whose purpose was to advance and legitimate the cause and interests of the Roman empire." (1993:101). Secondly, the collapse of the churches in North Africa and Asia Minor under the assault of Islam transformed the church into a White church. That church then piggybacked the exploration, conquest and colonial expansion of Europeans all over the globe. Maimela claims that the upshot of this is that racial problems:

have their roots in the Constantinian takeover of the church and its subsequent Christianisation of the White nations which, during the modern European colonial period, resulted in a theological self-understanding of the western world that equated Christianity with western culture. Concomitant with this was the belief that those who belonged to western Christianity were superior to non-Christians who happened to be people of colour. Once religious privilege of belonging to the church of Jesus Christ who is Saviour and Lord of the universe had been transformed into the political, economic and social privilege of God's chosen people who happened to be White, it was a matter of time before social structures were created through which the so-called "White people" would enforce their presumed racial supremacy and thereby subject the people of colour to "White" plunder, domination, exploitation and oppression. It was during the European colonisation of Africa, Asia and Latin America that a colonial theory was developed to give religious

The Story of our Communal White Identity

sanction for slavery and socio-political and economic bondage to which people of colour have been subjected to in racist societies over many centuries up to the present. (1993:102)

If we take seriously Maimela's claims we must ask whether the church he describes is in fact not the church that we find portrayed in South African church history? I will argue that the church's position vis-a-vis racism has been equivocal.

The churches have an ambivalent history of the struggle. Beset by denominational and racial divisions, the South African churches have had their share of the struggle, that is if we include among the contributions of the churches, the witness of people like Bishop Tutu and Allan Boesak, the Kairos document, the concerned Evangelicals Witness document, the Rustenberg Conference, Black Theology, Contextual Theology, the National Peace Initiative (although credit for this is contested by Big Business and even the Government) and the recent Code of Conduct during mass action document. But the role of the church remains ambiguous - even those contributions of the church are understood differently within the church body. (Maluleke 1992:37)

Maluleke's statement indicates some of the difficulties involved in chronicling the role of the Christian faith in relation to apartheid. Hope and Young have argued that the church as an institution has "enormous power to promote - or to hinder - social change." (1981:vii). They continue to say that in this country the church has not lived up to the challenge of practising the essential message of the gospel. But why is this important to us, particularly for the purposes of this study? I have argued that South African society has been historically constructed on the foundation of racism. White privilege and economic and political power have been built on the exploitation and suffering of the Black people who shared this land before they were stripped of their rights and dignity by White people. This story tells us that White communal culture and identity is

The Story of our Communal White Identity

infiltrated at its most basic level by racism. I aim to show that our Christian faith shares this unfortunate predicament. *What this means is that as White Christians our normative Christian story is fundamentally undermined by other versions of the South African story. We must take seriously this challenge if we, as White people, are to construct a normative Christian story that does not deceive itself at its most basic level.*

The settlement of the Cape from the middle of the seventeenth century was quickly followed by the arrival of the church. Initial ministry efforts attended only to the settlers themselves (by the Dutch Reformed Church), but soon missionary work began. Various missionary efforts waxed and waned as political control of the colony vacillated between Holland and Britain, but by the early nineteenth century the missionary effort was well established. A tendency for missionaries to support the local people began, which promoted friction between the settlers and the missionaries, as John de Gruchy observes.

The basic reason that both the Dutch and English settlers resented some missionaries was that the missionaries not only evangelised the indigenous peoples, but took their side in the struggle for justice, rights and land. (1979:13)

In the Boer's decision to trek north lay a basic unhappiness, not only with British control, but also with their being placed on an equal footing with "heathen" Black people. For the faith of these Dutch settlers was closely tied to a fierce political ideology. de Gruchy reports on this outrage through the words of a Voortrekker woman.

It is not so much their freeing which drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God, and the natural distinctions of race and colour, so that it was

The Story of our Communal White Identity

intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines in purity. (1979:19)

This affinity between religion and political ideology rapidly developed into a form of civil religion which provided the cornerstone for the political policies of apartheid. During this period from inferiority to political control the Dutch Reformed version of this civil religion became formalised. From the 1890s it was the view of the church that independent, separate churches for different population groups was the answer. Despite the fact that today these churches are "joined" in the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches, in practice there is still a large degree of separation and even animosity. Although the odd prominent "radical" minister (notably Beyers Naude and Nico Smith³) resigned in protest at the position of the Dutch Reformed church, during the period of apartheid, the church gave unwavering support and theological legitimation to the policies of the National party government (Hope and Young 1981). It was only during the late 1980s that this support began to waver, but by this stage apartheid was crumbling and even some National Party politicians were changing their mind about it. It needs to be said at this point that the above story is the history of the *White* Dutch Reformed Church. Initially, the Black daughter churches were too timid and powerless to voice their opposition, but from the 1970s they became bold enough to rebel against

³Not all Dutch Reformed theologians who opposed the policies of the church elected to resign, the late David Bosch being one example. "David Bosch was a towering colossus in the South African church. In the context of the Dutch Reformed Church of which he was a member during its most recalcitrant and racist years his theology stood out as a crushing indictment of institutionalised racism. As a prophet to his church (although he consistently and vehemently disavowed the label) he suffered the rejection and vilification that is so often the prophet's reward." (Balcomb 1993:16).

The Story of our Communal White Identity

their "mother".

So far I have touched only on the history of the traditional Afrikaner churches. What of the so-called "liberal" churches, to which most White, English speaking Christians belong? In this group I include the Anglican⁴, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalists. In 1949 these churches came together at a conference in Rossetenville, near Johannesburg, which had been organised by the Christian Council (predecessor of the South African Council of Churches (SACC)). This was the first ecumenical Christian conference since the National Party had come to power in 1948, and it drew up resolutions stressing that unity remained important, and that this was the real need of South Africans, not apartheid.

Although the somewhat paternalistic affirmations reached at Rossetenville did represent an attack on the unfolding policy of apartheid, it did not mean that the English-speaking churches had been unflinching champions of equality for Blacks before 1948, nor that they would adopt an unwavering posture in the apartheid era. (Hope and Young 1981:49)

Of these churches, Hope and Young argue, the Anglicans have the "longest and most consistent record of protest against discriminatory legislation." (1981:49). For the purposes of brevity I shall thus examine their history as representative of this group of churches.

During the post-Union, pre-apartheid era, virtually all of the resolutions of the synod of

⁴The formal name of the Anglican church is the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA).

The Story of our Communal White Identity

the CPSA were related to the "race-problem," and at many points during this time the church criticised the race policies of the government. The basis of this criticism centred on the rights of all people. After the beginning of the apartheid era in 1948, the church continued to condemn racist legislation, confirmed universal human rights and pledged to keep its churches open to all. This position was further strengthened by the witness of progressive priests such as Bishop Lavis of Cape Town, Trevor Huddleston, Ambrose Reeves, Michael Scott and Geoffrey Clayton. There was, however, a certain ambivalence to the position of the church. Although courageous, statements of opposition to the government were hardly ever backed up by any other form of protest such as demonstrations, petitions and deputations or other forms of nonviolent direct action. Cochrane calls this:

a particular ambiguity in the South African English-speaking churches:
a consistent anti-apartheid record on paper coupled with a generally
manifest powerlessness to translate that record into practical policy,
except at the least threatening levels. (1987:2)

Nor was the Anglican church critical of *all* racially discriminatory legislation, and it did not necessarily practice what it preached. Until 1960 there were no Black Anglican bishops, and in education, for example, Anglican private schools in Cape Town refused to admit Black children. Hope and Young highlight some of the paradoxes which reveal the ambiguities in this position:

On the one hand, the church proclaims that its worship is open to persons of all races. On the other hand, this is hard to implement on the parish level because most parishioners attend churches in their neighbourhoods, which are segregated, and because of resistance from Whites... Secondly,

The Story of our Communal White Identity

although Anglicans have tried to help Blacks up the ecclesiastical ladder, Whites still hold most of the top positions. In 1980, for example, the highest ranking CPSA office holder, the archbishop of Cape Town, was a White, Bill Burnett. Only one of the ten diocesan bishops and four of the ten suffragan bishops in South Africa were Black. Thirdly, while the CPSA has continued in the forefront of opposition to apartheid, most of the opposition - when not in the form of prophetic statements of courageous individuals who may suffer for them - remains at the level of pious synodal resolutions. (1981:106)

A characteristic of this church, and all other mainline churches, is that there is a distinct difference between what is preached and decided at the level of top leadership, and what is thought and practised by members at the grassroots level.

The gap between resolutions at the top and practice at the grassroots is as evident in the CPSA as in other churches. In the prickly field of education, for example, the Anglican bishops gave their support as long ago as 1976 to Catholic initiatives to integrate church schools. By early 1979 all the independent private schools linked with the Anglican Church in the Johannesburg diocese had accepted the principle of no racial bar. Yet in early 1980 only one school had actually accepted Blacks - two pupils. As Father David Bruno put it in a conversation with us, "The church has little power at the parish level. It is really laypersons who run our private schools. Some of them murmur, "Well, we really shouldn't move till the government says it's OK." Others reject Black applications as not capable enough, not able to hold their own with Whites. This becomes a vicious circle, of course - a very vicious one. As for local church structures, they are dominated by Whites. The synod recommends that more Blacks be in office, but White parishioners vote for a White, and a great many Blacks do too. Whites say that Blacks lack a time sense and a sense of duty, that they fail to show up for meetings, or do not stick to formal rules of order." (Hope and Young 1981:107).

Thus there exists a strange dichotomy in the approach of the CPSA to apartheid. On the one hand, the prominent leadership of the church has taken a more or less consistent

The Story of our Communal White Identity

stand of opposition to apartheid in the form of declarations and synodal statements. On the other hand, rank and file White members (for the majority of the members are Black) have not supported the directives of their leadership. The result has been that the church has, for the most part, done little as a church to stem the tide of racist government.

The story of the Anglican church is representative of the mainline "English-speaking" churches in South Africa. Most other denominations have been far *less* outspoken against racism. The Roman Catholic church have perhaps a prouder record than the CPSA. Catholic mission schools were primarily responsible for the emergence of an educated Black elite in the first half of this century, and have for the most part been at the forefront of educational reform. Like the Anglicans, the Catholics have had outstanding personalities who have been at the forefront of the struggle - Archbishop Dennis Hurley is one who comes to mind. And yet the situation on the ground in White parishes has not been terribly different. The Roman Catholic church has suffered the same ambiguities and inconsistencies which have afflicted the CPSA in regard to their witness against racism and oppression in South Africa.

A third grouping I would like to examine is the evangelicals. The label "evangelical" refers to an uneasy mix of independent pentecostal and fundamentalist churches together with more established denominations such as the Baptists, Assemblies of God and Apostolic Faith Mission. While these churches represent the hub of the evangelical movement, it is also true that evangelical sentiments form the basis of the faith of many Methodists, Anglicans and other mainline Christians also. David Walker (1989) has argued that within the Evangelical movement there is evidence of two contradictory

The Story of our Communal White Identity

traditions. On the one hand evangelicals have played an important role in the legitimation and support of apartheid. On the other, Walker argues that there is a strong tradition within the evangelical movement of struggle towards justice and liberation. Let us turn our attention toward his first claim.

Firstly, he says, experience teaches us that evangelicals tend generally to be socially and politically conservative. This conservatism in general political character has had the overall effect of supporting the political status quo. Citing an investigation by Robert Buis, Walker argues that conservative theology is amenable to conservative politics. Secondly, he says that evangelicals are often characterised by pietistic withdrawal from socio-political concerns. This attempt to remain aloof from politics has been practically impossible, and has resulted in support for the status quo. This has had a "decidedly negative effect on the credibility of the gospel, especially in the townships." (1989:48). Walker's third point is that evangelicals are more concerned about personal than social ethics. This has focused evangelicals on personal sin, and led them to ignore social dimensions of sin. His final point is that evangelicals exhibit "extreme caution and reticence when confronted with social evils." (1989:48). An example of the way this caution operates is in evangelicalism's apparent tendency to backtrack on its social declarations.

The effects of this reticence are patent - evangelicals in the main are seen to be supportive of the South African apartheid system, the social consequence is not strong enough to overcome conservative pressures or motivate consistently bold opposition. (Walker 1989:49)

Walker notes that this is only one side of an unbalanced picture. He argues that the

The Story of our Communal White Identity

recent history of evangelicalism attests to an awakening to social awareness on a world-wide scale. South African evangelicals, sharing something of this impetus, have been stirred to take a stand against racism. Probably the best examples of this have been the *Evangelical Witness in South Africa* (EWISA) document (1986) and the Concerned Evangelicals movement. Other notable events have been the National Initiative for Reconciliation's *Statement of Affirmation* (1985), and the Baptist Union Assembly's *Memorandum to the State President* (1985).

Unfortunately, there always appears to be a backlash against radicalism within the church. The more progressive activities to come out of this awakening (such as EWISA) have thus not, by and large, been accepted and adopted by the evangelical churches. In the case of the less virulent statements (such as the Baptist memorandum) the tendency to backtrack and back down has applied.

While Walker sends out a message of hope about the possibilities for evangelicalism - and he has vested interest in doing so, being himself an evangelical - he raises a number of fundamental concerns about the implicit conservatism in evangelical theology. We must bear in mind the fact that his article was written in 1989, after the final collapse of apartheid had already begun. It would appear that amongst evangelical churches the phenomenon of protest and opposition to apartheid was even less common than in the mainline "English-speaking" churches. There can be no denying that a tradition of protest did and does exist⁵, but within the evangelical movement as a whole it is

⁵Frank Chikane is an evangelical minister, and he has also been a prominent and respected political activist for many years. He is but one of a substantial number of political activists to come out of the group of churches who bear the name

The Story of our Communal White Identity

definitely a minority tradition.

This brief and somewhat sketchy outline of the historical relationship between the (White) churches and apartheid has intended to raise a basic point. Apart from a few inspired but isolated leaders, who failed to take their followers along with them, the church has failed to rise to the challenge presented by racism in the form of apartheid. Despite an awareness of the contradictions between Christian faith and racism, White believers at grassroot level have not resisted in any significant way the march of racism to infiltrate and influence society at every level. At this level, White Christians' normative story has been revealed, not as *The Story*, but the *White* story, the *racist* story.

In the following section I will discuss how racism functions in society. I will make the point that racism is embedded in the major institutions of society, as we have seen in the overview of South African history. Furthermore, racism is maintained and underpinned by a deeply rooted ideology of domination. I will argue that if we reflect on our history in the light of these understandings, we must come to the conclusion that our identity as a White Christian community has been saturated at its most basic level by racism.

"evangelical."

Understanding racism

Racism became a life-threatening reality that impacted every facet of my life. It was like an imprisoning cage destroying community, dehumanising persons, and locking Blacks and Whites alike into confrontational roles and identities. It determined what we thought and believed, how we acted and reacted, who we trusted and who we dare not trust.

-Joseph Barndt⁶

The definition I will present here is derived from the work I have done with *Koinonia Southern Africa* in the field of anti-racism. It is structured in such a way that makes it intelligible to ordinary people who attend our workshops. Its aim is to allow them to understand how racism works, and particularly how racism impacts on their own identity. While the definition views White people as perpetrators of racism and Black people as victims, it must be stressed that we are all victims of racism. Racism denudes us of our humanity, whichever end of it we are on. By treating other people as if they are worthless, we become worth less ourselves. By complying with injustice we lose our self-respect.

Institutionalised racism

Racism is not merely something that happens between two individuals or groups of people. It is bigger, more overwhelming than any single belief or action. What the historical overview presented in the last few pages has shown us, is that racism is embedded in the structures which make up South African society. We call these

⁶Barndt 1991:vii.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

structures the institutions of society. Jones (1981) differentiates between individual, institutional and cultural racism. I am not going to use the same divisions, but his definition of institutional racism may be useful to us:

Institutional racism consists of those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in... society... *whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions.* (1981:28; my emphasis)

Racism becomes institutionalised in different ways in different societies. In South Africa that institutionalisation has taken a particularly vigorous form. The legal system has had racial discrimination entrenched at its most basic level. Black people have been denied the vote, and any consequent stake in political power. They have been told where to live, education of their children has been carefully regulated and controlled. They have been excluded from most forms of employment other than unskilled labour. The hated homeland or bantustan system, while ostensibly allowing separate development, was merely a sophisticated attempt to enforce control over Black people more effectively in the rest of South Africa. Underlying all of this has been rigorous suppression of any attempt by Black people to exercise political organisation and expression that might threaten White control over South Africa.

While this institutional character of racism is particularly obvious in South Africa, I would argue that it is a defining characteristic of racism everywhere. Some readers may throw up their hands in horror in objection to this analysis. Surely, they might say, you cannot argue that racism is institutionalised in North America or Western Europe, where democratic political systems are in place. In many cases these governments have

The Story of our Communal White Identity

legislated against any form of racial discrimination being practised. This is true, but contrary to appearances, legislation has not brought about the demise of racism. The writings of Black American authors are packed with stories about their current experience of racism. All of these have one theme: racism is alive and well⁷. Studies done in Western Europe, notably by Philomena Essed (1988, 1991) have exposed the level of racism encountered by Black people in everyday life. This is despite the fact that there is, in many of these countries, a strong denial of racism.

One common factor of racism in the United States and in the Netherlands is the denial of racism. Today many Whites condemn more blatant forms of racism and are often motivated to maintain nondiscriminating self-concepts. However, only a few actively challenge the current consensus on race as it is expressed in increasingly covert forms of racism merged with apparently nonracial issues. In the United States many liberals have come to share the conservative conviction that racism was dealt with sufficiently during the 1960s and that Blacks are no longer discriminated against on racial grounds. In the Netherlands the dominant opinion maintains that the Dutch are tolerant and that there never has been a problem of racism. This version of Dutch society is defended despite the fact that research shows that Blacks and other immigrants are excluded and marginalised in all sectors of society. (Essed 1991:6)

The conclusion arrived at by these authors is that racism is deeply woven into the very fabric of modern society. Even in democratic nations, racism is systematically encountered by Black people in commerce and industry, education and politics - all the major institutions of society. It is not of the brash, unsophisticated, obvious variety that

⁷The list of sources here is too long to quote, but one notable name is that of Derrick Bell. In a recent book entitled *Faces at the bottom of the well* (1992) he has argued that racism is a "integral, permanent and indestructible component of this society." Far from it being a diminishing force, he reckons that racism is a key component in the stability of society in the USA.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

we have been conditioned to for so long in South Africa. It is something of a very different kind. Essed calls this new form of racism "covert racism" (1988), the term referring to something that is hidden, or unacknowledged. The reality that it exists is undeniable.

The ideology of racism

The very fact that racism has such deep roots and has continued to grow and manifest itself at a time when it is ostensibly difficult to practice racism must draw our attention to something else. There is obviously a strong driving force which compels people to hold attitudes and behave in a discriminatory way towards other people. This force operates at a very deep level within the psyche, at the level of ideology. I would like to call it an *ideology of superiority*. The term ideology is a contested one which has different meanings, depending on who is using it. I would like to borrow from a definition developed by Antoinette Zanda for the *Challenging Racism Programme*. She says that ideology is

a system of economic, social and political thought that reinforces itself through a standard of measure based on the values benefitting a defined group [of people] over a long period of time. (Zanda 1993:89)

This definition purposely rests on the Marxist understanding of ideology. It is a critical and restrictive use of the term. It is used to "refer to ways in which meaning... serves to create and sustain power relations of domination." (Foster 1991:13). For example, an Afrikaner nationalist ideology

The Story of our Communal White Identity

holds a systematic view of a nation controlled by "White" Afrikaans-speaking people only. Their belief in "White" Afrikaner nationalism influences their way of experiencing all issues such as education, land use, language, employment and religion. (Zanda 1993:90)

Zanda argues that since the time of colonialism, the dominant group have maintained control, through power, over key social processes and social institutions. They have used this power to maintain themselves within the systems of society. Because of the implicit way in which ideology functions, the dominant group have imposed what they value and the way that they prefer doing things on all others in both *conscious* and *unconscious* ways. Because the dominant group holds group power, they have made the values of their group the standard against which all else is measured. An automatic result of this ideology of superiority is that racism takes a cultural form, which means that the dominant group impose *their* culture on society to the exclusion and marginalisation of all others.

The point is that racism could not survive and prosper as it does if it were not for the ideology which underpins it. For members of the dominant group must actually *believe that they are superior*, and act this dominance out. It is not simply enough to argue, as Bonacich has done (Banton 1987:155), that racism in South Africa is primarily an outcome of the suppression of class conflict by the structure of labour around racial lines. Nor can racist practice be explained purely as the outcome of greed or opportunism. The foundation of racism is the implicit and deep-seated conviction by members of the dominant group that they are superior to the group of people that they are dominating. Likewise, racism would not be what it is if members of the dominated group were fully aware of what racism was doing to them. Like members of the

The Story of our Communal White Identity

dominant group, people who are on the receiving end of racism are also forced to believe information about themselves - that they are inferior. The very power of ideology is that it does not operate only on the conscious and rational levels. It is both subconscious and irrational. Black people in our country have, over a long time, been convinced that they are worth less than White people. They have been told over and over again that they are inherently less intelligent, less rational, less capable human beings. Sooner or later, and to differing degrees they have come to believe it. This is what Steve Biko was challenging when he told Black people to be proud of their heritage. It is indicative of the threat he represented to White domination in South Africa that he should have been killed by the state.⁸

Definition of racism

I have argued that racism is institutionalised in society; I have also argued that we can understand why racism is so deeply rooted and difficult to eradicate if we appreciate that it is reinforced by a very virulent form of ideology. Racism is not merely something that we do, it is something that we *believe*, something which is part of our *identity*. I would like to turn now to a precise definition of racism. Here I am relying on the definition developed for the *Challenging Racism Programme*.

⁸Steve Biko was the founder and leader of the Black Consciousness Movement. "Black consciousness was, and perhaps still is, a new way of looking at the world. Liberation, its proponents argued, would only come about when Africans threw off their shackles of fear and their feelings of inferiority, and conducted their own political campaigns instead of relying on white liberals to map out their strategies. Whites, it argued, were too enmeshed in the apartheid system ever to be allies. Black consciousness engendered a new sense of pride in millions of Africans: blackness became something to be proud of, to be defiant about and worth fighting for." (Saunders 1992:441).

The Story of our Communal White Identity

Racism is the practice of discrimination by a defined group, which holds a common ideology of superiority and which has the power to institutionalise it systematically against a group of people, based on their common origin and/or skin colour. In order to perpetuate racism a group needs to maintain institutional control (power). (Zanda 1993:142)

And she continues,

In South Africa it is therefore not possible for "Black" people/people of colour to be racist. Prejudice alone does not enable a person or a group to practice racism. It is, however, possible for "Black" people to be prejudiced [toward White people] or to discriminate "racially." (1993:142)

Obviously White people need to hold negative attitudes towards Black people to practice some form of discrimination. These might vary from hatred toward Black people, to a mild stereotype that all Black people think or act in a particular way. We are familiar with this component of the "cycle of racism." Normally we accuse fellow Whites of racism if they express one of these attitudes verbally. Yet it is the act of discrimination (ie. actions not thoughts) that is the building block of racism. It is the *act* of discrimination that excludes Black people politically, forces them to live in certain areas and allows or denies them access to education.

By mentioning institutional control, Zanda does not refer simply to the organs of government, but to the many informal and formal institutions in society. Important institutions which hold power in South Africa are the finance houses, Big Business, the media, and they are in the hands of White people and will continue to remain so for the foreseeable future. It would be foolish to presume that because the ANC has become the

The Story of our Communal White Identity

new government, power will automatically shift to the extent that White racism will cease to be a feature of our society within the next few years.

It is a common theoretical approach to divide racism into three or more different types. Jones (1981) uses this approach when he argues that racism operates on three levels - the individual, the institutional and the cultural. The individual racist is a person who considers Black people to be inferior to Whites, and that this inferiority is a legitimate basis for the mistreatment of Black people. I referred earlier to his understanding of institutional racism, but to recap, Jones argues that institutional racism occurs when racial inequalities become *objectified* in established laws, customs and practices. It is irrelevant whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions. Cultural racism is then "the belief in the inferiority of the implements, handicrafts, agriculture, economics, music, art, religious beliefs, traditions, language and story of African peoples." (1981:28). The division between these three different categories of racism (or at least between individual and institutional racism) is a popular, yet I feel flawed approach. This is because it fails to show how the individual person, and "individual racism," relate to institutional manifestations of racism. Essed argues that the fault with this approach lies in its very structure:

One major problem was the distinction between institutional and individual racism. It places the individual outside the institutional, thereby severing rules, regulations, and procedures from the people who make and enact them, as if it concerned qualitatively different racism rather than different positions and relations through which racism operates. (1991:36)

The advantage of this approach to understanding racism is that it suggests that White

The Story of our Communal White Identity

people have a choice to be or not to be racist. Its downfall is that it fails to adequately show what the connection is between the institutional and the individual. It is almost as if institutional racism is simply *there* - there is no link between the practice of racism and those who practice it. Even the question of a choice to be or not to be racist is problematic. Obviously as White people in South Africa we can support or oppose racism. However, in examining the issue of identity, I am trying to show that to be White in South Africa implies that racism is part of who we are. We cannot separate ourselves from the reality that as a White community our history is a history of racism, the story of our faith a story of how we have compromised our commitment to the commandment to love God and neighbour as ourselves.

Essed uses a similar understanding of racism, but approaches the problem from a different angle. Over the last ten years, or so, she has conducted research into the way Black people experience racism in the USA and the Netherlands. By analysing reconstructions of reality gathered in many interviews conducted with African American women in California, and Black Surinamese women (first generation immigrants) in the Netherlands, Essed has developed an understanding of racism based on its everyday manifestations. She attempts to combine daily experiences of individuals and a structural account of racism within a theoretical framework that integrates developments in such disciplines as macro- and microsociology, social psychology, discourse analysis, race relations theory, and women's studies. She says that racism:

not only operates through culture, it is also the expression of structural conflict. Individuals are actors in a power structure. Power can be used to reproduce racism, but it can also be used to combat racism. This study shows how power, operative in everyday situations, perpetuates racial

The Story of our Communal White Identity

and ethnic oppression. Note, however, that I focus on racist practices, not on individuals. To talk about "to be or not to be a racist" [over]simplifies the problem. Although individuals are the agents of racism, my concern is practices and their implications, not the psyche of these individuals. (1991:viii)

Essed's insights, in the light of our earlier definition, make us examine closely the position of White people within the structure of racism. As individual White people we are part of a web of racist practices. We have, deeply bred into us, a culture of racism and a pervasive ideology of White superiority. We are actors in a power structure where we can choose to reproduce or combat racism. This makes racism a *White problem*. For the most part, studies on racism have focused on Black people, and the impact of racism on them. It has been assumed that the struggle to defeat racism is their struggle. It has been assumed that racism is a Black problem. If education or living standards or culture could be changed (improved?), then racism would disappear. Far too little attention has been given to White people, White community, White culture, White ideology as the source of racism. The problem lies not with "them," it lies with us.

Racism is a problem which White Christians cannot ignore!

The purpose of non-violent protest, in its deepest and most spiritual dimension is then to awaken the conscience of the White man to the awful responsibility of his injustice and sin, so that he will be able to see that the Negro problem is really a *White problem*: that the cancer of injustice and hate which is eating White society and is only partly manifested in racial segregation with its consequences, is *rooted in the heart of the White man himself*.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

- Lerone Bennet Jr.⁹

Let us briefly recap the argument thus far. I began this chapter by arguing that identity has a context, which is community. There is an implicit relationship between individual identity and communal identity that we cannot ignore. By reflecting on our history as White people, we see that our Christian identity is fundamentally undermined by the reality that racism has infiltrated our society at every level, including our religious life. Why is our history important? Because we are defined in terms of our history. Our identity is constructed in the story which we tell of ourselves. It is in this story (read history) that we know ourselves. When we listen to other versions of our South African story, however, we find that our White identity is based on an unChristian ideology of domination. We find that our faith has not been true to what we fundamentally say it is.

Joseph Barndt offers two contrasting metaphors of the church which may be of use to us here. Throughout the history of the church, he says, there have been two divergent, and mutually exclusive metaphors which have given the church, and our faith, a schizophrenic character.

On the one side it is strong, successful, and confident to the point of brashness and arrogance. It identifies comfortably with the rich and powerful, with rulers and generals. It holds the poor and rejected of the world at a distance, yet places a high priority on works of charity and social service. It emphasizes a "*theology of glory*" or "*triumphal theology*." The other side of the church seems weak, unsuccessful, and

⁹Bennet 1966:4.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

the English-speaking churches? Just as modern racism has adopted a new, cunning, covert form, has this type of theology not been present in the implicit acceptance of the status quo by these churches? Our evaluation of the history of these churches earlier in the chapter shows that they have not actively promoted support for the status quo. In fact, they have ostensibly been committed to bringing about the downfall of apartheid. Yet our conclusion was that in practice these churches have not actually done much to bring this about. They have rather resorted to becoming uncomfortable bed-fellows with racism - complaining, but compliant.

At the same time, throughout history there has existed a servant church which has followed an altogether less visible, narrower and seemingly weaker path. This is the identification with the poor and suffering, the way of the cross. For millions of Christians all over the world, and throughout history, this way has not been a voluntary choice. It has been an implication of poverty, exploitation and suffering. "Moreover," says Barndt, "they were scarcely aware of their identification with the servant church, for which they gave their loyalty to the triumphal church and state, which in return gave them work, paid their meagre salaries and forgave their sins on Sunday morning." (1991:133). This has for the most part been the lot of Black Christians in South Africa. In the twentieth century, the blind acceptance mentioned here has been challenged by the conscientisation of oppressed people who have become politically involved. The proponents of liberating theologies have asserted the "theology of the cross" as the true theology in our times and criticised the triumphal church. Yet sadly White people, for whom the servant choice has been a choice, have largely failed to heed the call.

The Story of our Communal White Identity

What Barndt has hinted at, is that the choice between triumphalism and servanthood has historically been more than a choice of practice, it has been a *theological choice*. This is very important, because change has to do with more than altering our behaviour. The problem lies not only in what we have done, but in *who we are*. If we, as Christians, begin to appreciate that it is our *faith* that is in need of transformation, then we can at least start in the right place.

It has been pointed out many times that a major root cause of this theological problem is the tendency to interpret faith in individualistic terms¹⁰. Nolan has something to say about this in his discussion on sin (1988). He argues that sin is not a very popular word today.

It conjures up visions of punishment and hell and produces neurotic feelings of guilt and seems to be chiefly a matter of sex. I wonder if there is any other word in the Christian vocabulary which has been so thoroughly misused and whose meaning has been so thoroughly distorted. (1988:31)

Nolan says that we should view sin as an objective reality in society. We inherit the sinfulness of the world by being born into it.

The stories of the first eleven chapters of Genesis... were, among other things, Israel's theology of sin in narrative form. The stories are meant to explain how the world became so corrupt (6:11,12), so full of violence (6:11,13), so divided (11:7) and so full of hardship (3:14-19). It was not God who made it that way. Human beings are responsible for it. The

¹⁰See, among many other sources, Barndt (1991), Clark (1966), Earl (1993), Hale (1993), Katz (1978) and Walker (1992).

The Story of our Communal White Identity

personal sins of Eve, Adam, Cain and many others changed the world and its social structures and this in turn influenced other people to be sinful.

...In Romans 5:12 - 8:13, Paul speaks of sin (in the singular) as an objective reality that has dominated history since the time of Adam. It is like a power or a master that rules over us and enslaves us. Moreover, sin does this to us from outside of us and also from within us. As an external reality sin manifests itself *through* the principalities and powers and the law. As an internal reality it manifests itself as a force that dwells in us and divides us against ourselves, in other words, as the experience of human weakness or alienation." (1988:47)

If we take seriously Nolan's analysis, then we must conclude that sin is not only a personal act. It is much more than that. It is a rampant disease which has infected society from without and within. In fact, Nolan's definition of sin sounds very much like our definition of racism. I have argued that racism is part of our identity as a White community in South Africa. In the same way, we cannot talk about who we are as White Christians, without admitting, too, that we are sinners. Sin is part of who we are, not just as individuals, but as a community.

It has been said many times that our failure to resist the sin of racism calls for repentance, and turning from our past ways. But if we stop here, we are failing to see that we have a theological problem. Just as we must become aware that racism is embedded in the institutions of society, that it is deeply rooted in our identity as an ideology of domination, so too we must realise that sin (read racism) is embedded in our theology. Sin is not only an external force, it works inside us, it is part of us. While we proclaim as a people "Saved by the grace of God, set free and made whole," we must in the same breath cry, "Slaves to sin, in need of conversion and liberation!" This

The Story of our Communal White Identity

realisation calls for a renewing of our identity as a White Christian community.

In the next chapter I will turn my attention from the White community to individual White Christians. In this section I have asked the question, "What does it mean to be a White Christian community in the context of racism that is South Africa?" In the coming section I will personalise this problem. But we shall not forget what has been said here, for I believe that the only way to talk about individual identity is to talk about it in the context of community. I will examine the stories of four White Christians, and attempt to dialogue with them by projecting their stories against the foil of the story of the White community. It is vitally important that we make this connection, for our goal is transformation, and the only way to transform a nation is to transform the lives of real people.

Chapter Three

BIOGRAPHY, IDENTITY AND RACISM

Examining personal identity of White Christians

I am eager to confront life a second time, but I am not impatient to get out. There is still my entire childhood to work through before I can expect to get to the bottom of my story... I ponder and ponder. I have high hopes of finding whose fault I am.

- *J.M. Coetzee*¹

In the last chapter I examined communal White identity as the context of personal identity for individual Whites. I said that as White Christians we have proclaimed that our identity lies in the Christian story. However, when we examine the history which makes up that story in South Africa, we get a different picture. From outside the church we are told the story of how an ideology of domination has underpinned a social structure founded and built on racism. From inside the church we listen to the story of how our theology has sold itself out to the gods of conquest, colonialism, apartheid. Instead of laying down our lives to the God who loves and cares for all, especially the downtrodden, the poor and the marginalised, we have respected and payed homage to

¹Coetzee 1974:49

Biography, Identity and Racism

to conduct a study on the Afrikaans community. I believe that my intimate knowledge of my own heritage allows me to both appreciate the subtle aspects of English-South African culture and allows me the credibility to criticise it. I cannot say the same about Afrikaans-South African culture.

There is much debate among experts in the social sciences about what type of research methods are the most accurate and useful for finding out information from a group of people. All have their ardent supporters, but my choice was made easy by the agenda I brought to the study. The approach I used required that I gain detailed information from my respondents in the form of their own *story*, rather than answers to a particular set of questions or criteria. This immediately ruled that any type of statistical research based on questionnaires would be useless. I soon found out that highly structured, interviewer-directed interviews would also not be helpful.

The unconventional approach of Elliot Mishler is very helpful in providing an alternative method for conducting the research. He argues that:

current views and practices of interviewing... reflect a restricted conception of the interview process. This view obscures the essence of interviewing - that it is an occasion of two persons speaking to each other.. I propose a reformulation of interviewing, one that attempts to redress the problems engendered by the standard approach. At its heart is the proposition that an interview is a form of discourse. (1986:vi)

He goes on to say that:

questions and answers, for example, are regarded as analogues of stimuli and responses rather than as forms of speech. This approach has led to massive efforts to standardize questions and interviewer behaviour so that all respondents will receive the same "stimulus." The assumption that

these efforts have succeeded underlies an elaborate technology of coding and statistical analysis. The suppression of discourse is accompanied by an equally pervasive disregard of respondent's social and personal contexts of meaning, both in the interview itself, where standardization overrules the particularities of individual and setting, and in the modes of interpretive theorizing about responses. Where issues of context are addressed, they are treated as technological problems rather than acknowledged as essential components of meaning-expressing and meaning-understanding processes. (1986:viii)

Mishler's alternative approach covers a family of methods, varying in form and purpose, but all embodying the view that an *interview is a form of discourse*. He then develops a framework to systematically exposit his new method. Four propositions are specified as its essential components:

(1) interviews are speech events; (2) the discourse of interviews is constructed jointly by interviewers and respondents; (3) analysis and interpretation are based on a theory of discourse and meaning; (4) the meanings of questions and answers are contextually grounded. (1986:ix)

Mishler relies heavily on theory of discourse and meaning to analyse and interpret the content of the interviews. Without going into an extensive discussion about discourse and meaning theory, which I believe is beyond the scope and interest of this study, Mishler appears to retreat into the same trap as the theorists who he criticises. He challenges traditional approaches to interviewing based on their reliance on coding and statistical analysis to derive meaning from the texts of interviews. It appears to me that the discourse and meaning theory which he applies to his interviewing method attempts to achieve the same credibility by standardising the interpretation of interview texts.

Biography, Identity and Racism

I have thus elected to use a much simpler form of analysis to the interview texts. I have allowed the respondents to tell their own *internal* story, and critique those stories by relating them to our White communal identity. This process allows me to involve both external accounts of the White Christian story, as well as retellings of that story from the perspective of inner history.

To select respondents for the interviews, I used the "grapevine" approach reported by Louw-Potgieter (1988). I attempted to select my respondents so as to attain a good spread in terms of sex, age, education and wealth so that one of these factors would not undermine my findings. I managed to achieve what seems to be a good range of respondents in this respect, although in this type of study I believe that the aim should be to account for, and not eliminate, the effect of these factors. How poor or badly educated I am is part of my identity, what makes me who I am. Stripping me of these things will not reveal some truth which was hidden under their cover.

In all, eleven people were interviewed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were non-directive, and respondents were allowed to set their own boundaries and direct the discussion; they were encouraged to tell their stories. In the end I decided to choose four of these biographies to be discussed in detail. The narrative method I am using demands that I tell the story of each subject in some detail - to repeat this process eleven times, I felt, would be repetitive and dull. The biographies I have chosen to use were selected for their vividness and clarity, and in order to highlight some of the differences within the group. In order to preserve confidentiality, I have not used their real names. Where used, quotations from the interviews are lifted

directly from the verbatim transcripts, and are therefore not grammatically correct. A full version of each of these transcripts can be found in the appendix.

I turn now to the first of these biographies.

David

David grew up in the 1940's, the only son of a single mother. When David was only three-months-old, he and his mother were deserted by his father, who moved to Australia with his pregnant mistress. This sad turn of events was to shadow David for most of his life, because he was not told who his father was, or why he was not around, until much later in his life. His mother responded to this rejection by developing a deep distrust of men and burying herself in her work. She worked a seven-day-a-week job running homes for physically and mentally disabled children. The 'forties were not an easy time for a single parent and she was shunned by society. People, particularly other women, viewed her with suspicion, assuming that she must be out to "get their men" - even though she had in fact never agreed to divorce David's father. If they had known how "anti-men" she was, perhaps she would have been more widely accepted. Because of her treatment by her husband and society in general, David's mother became a very hard person. He says that she was highly domineering, and because of his stubborn personality, he often ended up in confrontation with her. This continued after he had left home, and when he got married he instructed his mother not to visit him and his new wife for six months, in order to give them space to establish their own life together.

Biography, Identity and Racism

When David was still in primary school an accident left him with undetected lesions on the brain. This physical defect impaired his concentration and was later to cause epilepsy, but a more subtle manifestation of the illness was his inability to perform academically because of his inability to concentrate. He left school after failing matric and went to work on the tanning extract plantations in Northern Natal, but his failure to attain that "dirty piece of paper," as he calls it, has plagued him all his life. Unable to substantially "improve himself" he has never progressed beyond clerical types of jobs. He regards this simply as a burden he has had to bear as a result of his physical condition.

While David recalls his mother labelling herself a "liberal," he says that she was really quite conservative. Certainly, David conformed with the societal norm in his relationships with Black people. He was hard and uncompromising, and expected respect from them. He would often resolve differences by getting into a fight. At work on the plantations he was put in charge of a group of labourers with whom he developed a bad working relationship. They came to despise and distrust him, although this was mainly due to the way his supervisor undermined him. The man would give David one set of instructions and the labourers another, causing obvious conflict and difficulties.

In the past four years, David has twice been attacked by Black assailants attempting to rob the business where he works. These two events have only increased his fear of Black people in general. He says that he cannot tell whether a Black person can be trusted or not, and as a result he is suspicious of all Black people who he doesn't know. Unfortunately it appears that he has not had encounters that have had sufficient impact

Biography, Identity and Racism

to break down his conception of Black people as one homogenous group who all act and think in the same way.

I think at the moment, even now, I still battle with the Blacks, simply because of what they've done to me in the last couple of years. And what I've picked up from that, every bloke as he's walking along with a smile on, the moment he pulls a gun or a knife out, you can see his eyes change. So it could be anyone walking along, and I don't know whether he's a Christian or not a Christian, he's not wearing a badge.

Some years ago, David came to faith through the persistent attentions of a small group of Christian friends. He calls this experience and its consequences "life-changing." For the most part, he remained a member of the Anglican church, and he quickly became involved in charismatic faith experiences, and attempted to bring this spiritual awakening back into the parish where he worshipped. This was not well received and he was, to all practical intents and purposes, forced to leave the church. Several years later he suffered this indignity again when he had to leave another Anglican church because of conflict over the issue of adult baptism.

He developed what he calls a "close relationship with the Holy Spirit," and through a process of intense discipleship under a minister, really began to feel as if all areas of his life were being transformed. He example of this change that he cites is the toning down of his temper. He admits to having a terrible temper, and after he suffered a heart-attack in 1979, the doctor insisted he took care of it. He was told that letting his temper get out of hand could kill him. David says that over the last ten years or so he has been able to relax much more and control his temper. He attributes this directly to the work of the Holy Spirit in his life.

Biography, Identity and Racism

David says that he experiences a close relationship with the Holy Spirit, and is able to hear what God says to him in this way. What is significant about the event I am about to relate, is that he apparently heard God telling him something that was totally contrary to his own belief system. It was also not something over which he was agonizing at the time, but came "out of the blue." About four or five years ago, David had a significant experience which he argues has changed the way he views Black people. It is best told in his own words.

...I was sitting at my shop, I was looking out of the window, and I saw this African woman, lady, walking by. And the Lord said to me, "Now look at her." I looked at her very carefully, and I said, "Ya. I'm watching." He said, "That is a person." I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "That is a person. And I love that person. And *you* have got to change your attitude to that person." Now I thought I had changed my attitude... Ya, I mean I was faced with it. It wasn't anything I was consciously working through at the time or anything, but I was just shown, "No, that is a person and I love them." Now the Lord loves me and I know that, and the Lord loves them, and I must accept them as another person. Not as... not as an animal, it wasn't as an animal, but just as a non-entity. You know what I am saying? I didn't ever say that they didn't have a soul... like the far right.

David goes on to explain that he never really came into direct contact much with Black people after leaving work on the farms, many years ago. In the industrial context, contact was avoided as much as possible, certainly on a social level. When he became a Christian he started to encounter Black people in church meetings, and was forced to change his attitude - at least towards Christian Black people. He recalls a meeting of the Christian Businessmen's Fellowship where both Black and White men stood up and gave testimonies about how God had taken away their fear, anger or resentment towards people of other races. He found this a big challenge and argues that it has caused him

Biography, Identity and Racism

to re-examine his own values.

When asked about his hopes and fears for the future of South Africa, David expresses concern that White people are being "pulled down to the level of Black people," rather than "Black people being lifted up." He argues that if *he* had to struggle all his life to achieve what he has, and has had to live with the consequences of his failures, why shouldn't they? He feels that affirmative action programmes do little more than give Black people things on a silver platter. He thinks that they should be striving to achieve in the same way that White people have to do.

David's faith is very important to him, and he attempts, in his own way, to apply it evenly to all areas of his life. At least once he has put his job on the line by challenging his employer over dishonest business practice. Also, when a new job involved serving people over the counter in a shop, he decided that as an expression of his faith he would try to treat people as equally as possible. This means that whoever comes into the shop first is served first, regardless of the colour of their skin.

I think, ya, one of the other things that I faced, that came out of the discipling, is how do I, David Mann, in my little environment, be an effect on other people. And as a result that's made my relationship towards the Black man more... trying to help. Just as though he were another person. Come into the shop, treat them civilly. And I've had to come to... you know it's a small thing, but when people come into the shop - first come, first served, whether you are White, green, grey or purple...But I had to work out something that was fair, and something I could live with. So I couldn't live with making people just wait because of the colour of their skin. It's not how I've been brought up.

Biography, Identity and Racism

There is no question of David's commitment to his faith. He is an elder in his church, and a respected and loved member of that community. While a picture may have been painted here of a hard, even aggressive personality, to those who know him he is a "gentle giant," always prepared to be of assistance to others. He is caring and kind, and a greatly respected and appreciated member of his Christian community. It is perhaps a testimony to his tenacity and commitment that he has become these things - in the light of his experiences as a child and a young man.

David's story offers us a huge store of images - especially conflicting images. To sift out of this one or two dominant images in order to help us understand David's faith-identity would seem to be a difficult task. One gets the feeling that throughout his life, he has been "up against it." He has had to fight to make a place for himself in the world and overcome substantial difficulties. As a child his mother was largely absent from home because of her work commitments; when she was there she was a dominating personality and they frequently clashed. David was never allowed to ask about his father and had to live with confusion and uncertainty about his roots; he also lacked a male role model. In the outside world he bore the brunt of discrimination for these things. Because of an invisible physical disability he has never achieved academically and this has restricted his career options and personal development in that area. While his faith has been alive and vibrant, and very important to him, he has twice had to leave churches because of the particular content of that belief. While he has been involved in physical conflict throughout his life, especially as a young man, he has twice been on the receiving end of physical abuse in recent years. With these events in mind, we might easily think that a predominant metaphor in David's life would be that of a battlefield, where one has to

Biography, Identity and Racism

fight for survival. Certainly that is true in part. In many ways he sees life as a struggle to survive and achieve. He is relatively satisfied with his eventual lot in life, and he clings to this metaphor without really seeing its inadequacies and ironies. He shows no anger or resentment against the system which has resulted in him holding the position in society that he does. He appears to feel that one must do the best that one can in the game of life - yet he does not question the rules of the game, even when they might appear to be unfair to us as external observers. Instead of questioning the bigotry of a society which condemned his mother for her victimisation by his father, he seems to accept it as a given. Instead of questioning the systems of materialism which divide rich and poor, he merely accepts his place in the strata and works to better himself - despite the certain reality that he will not get very far because of his disabilities.

This metaphor, "life is a battlefield," appears to be at the base of his racial identity. He applies this same attitude towards life, to his relations with Black people. He sees the solution to racial problems in South Africa simply as "bringing them up to our level." He expects that Black people should adopt his world-view and do what they can to improve themselves in life. When they have achieved what he has achieved then they will be of equal value to him. David clings tightly to this achievement-related value system, despite his acute awareness of how far he is down the scale. While quite deeply angered at his lack of a matric certificate and the adverse implications it has had for his life, he accepts this as one of the hard facts of reality, and does the best that he can.

Perhaps one explanation for all of this is that David grew up in the 1940's and deeply imbibed the dominant world-view of the time. It would appear that this entailed a

Biography, Identity and Racism

heightened sense of awareness about economic-class (which was closely tied to race). If one was not a member of the wealthy class (and David was not), then one's aim in life should be to get there. The route was through hard work and achievement. This world-view was a very sacred thing, and not to be tampered with. Fitting in with its terms was the key to success, undermining it was taboo.

So, a central peg in David's identity is this image of the struggle for survival. He does not have the insight to be able to see the deficiencies in the image, and has constructed his life around it, despite the fact that it has been a costly and painful process for him. His racial identity appears to have been hung on that peg. This has implied that he think of Black people simply as a lower "class" who can achieve upliftment through work and achievement. However, there are other metaphors in the cloakroom of David's identity. One of these is "Christ the good shepherd." Acceptance is something which David lacked tremendously from his domineering mother (and absent father). A crucial step in his coming to faith was the openness with which that small group of Christians accepted him and his wife into their midst. This experience of acceptance, and watching first-hand the way those Christians treated each other, made David and his wife want what they had. A short while afterwards, they both became Christians, and he now tries to express toward other people the acceptance, love and caring that was shown to him. Yet it would appear that this is true only in his relationships with people whom he knows and trusts, and generally Black people do not fit into that category.

Sasha

Biography, Identity and Racism

Sasha is the daughter of devoted Christian parents and has one brother and a sister. A second brother died almost ten years ago, and this was a highly significant event in her life - but more of that later. The Christianity of her parents is of the Baptist flavour, and Sasha is quite critical of the rigid worldview that this has spawned. While she relates well to her father, whom she admires and respects in many ways, she harbours deep seated resentment against her mother for her outlook on life, which Sasha perceives to be very narrow. So strong is this schism, which is not openly acknowledged by either Sasha or her mother, that Sasha feels she lives a lie to her mother about her "real self". She believes that if she were to reveal what she really thinks and believes it would be too much for her mother to cope with. Sasha's father has a career in education, and as a result the family has moved several times in her life. She grew up in Natal, but was moved to Mafeking in the Transvaal when she was still at primary school. After a year or two there, a decision was taken that would have important implications for her life. Along with her brothers, Sasha was moved from the predominantly Afrikaans school in Mafeking to the multiracial school at Mmabatho (multiracial in this context meant eighty-five percent Black-African students, and the rest Indian, "Coloured" and White - according to the apartheid classifications). While it was hard for her at first, Sasha soon began to develop strong friendships and the experience turned out to be an overwhelmingly positive one. The education system used at the school was a very good one, and Sasha feels that her powers of critical thinking and analysis were better developed there at standard five level than later, in matric, at a White school².

²The highschool which Sasha later attended operated under the system of Christian National Education, implemented by the National Party government. Despite the title "Christian" this system was a thinly-veiled propagation of the ideological worldview of that government. It has been widely exposed as a system which discouraged dissent and free thought, and encouraged obedience, discipline and indoctrination to

Biography, Identity and Racism

Unfortunately, after only a couple of years in Mafeking, her father moved to Pretoria to assume a post with the Department of Education and Training (DET), and Sasha was moved back into a White school. When she was in standard eight, her brother (who was a year older) died. She had had a deep friendship with him and admired and looked up to him greatly. His death initiated a severe identity crisis within Sasha, which she later realised was because so much of her identity was bound up in him. In fact, it was only half-way through her university career that she managed to put the broken pieces of her identity back together. Analysing her life up to this point, Sasha points to her Baptist heritage as one of the main root causes of her failure to develop an identity of her own. Instead of being given the freedom and space to develop a healthy personality and identity, she felt as though her personhood was subject to *rules* of "morality" and "Christian living." She remembers her mother warning her not to "play naughty games" at a young age, when innocent sexual exploration is a normal part of development. These taboos continued into adolescence...

And stuff which is supposed to be natural experimentation turned into very bad, taboo sort of stuff. And my teenage years - we've all grown up with incredible sexual hangups because anything that is vaguely sexual... you just don't do that because you won't be accepted, you're sinning. And we all... I have had to work through a lot of warped ideas in terms of sexuality.

In her standard nine year at school, Sasha became a Christian (by her own free choice). But this did not initially help her in her search for identity.

the worldview which underpinned apartheid.

Biography, Identity and Racism

And then becoming a Christian, it was sort of, okay, now there's God, but that sort of added to the fragmentation, because now there was an extra place to find identity. And then because of being in a Baptist church, it's not in God that you find your identity, but in the system. And so I started adopting doctrines and all that stuff - and that just added another dimension...

After a few years at university a series of events brought her to a crisis point in her struggle to find identity. However, with the counsel of a sensitive and caring minister, she was able to explore her identity, examining issues such as her sexuality and her self-perception. During this time she was able to rediscover her relationship with God in a constructive way.

And I did, and I feel... it was a gradual thing of finding me, finding God, finding that he likes me... and it was amazing, because the more I realised that he likes me, the more I could start liking myself, cause at that stage I totally loathed myself, I wanted to be anyone but me...

If there was one decisive moment in her pilgrimage towards wholeness, it was this awakening of her relationship to God. She relates how she increasingly started realising that God accepted her fully, something she felt she was really lacking from her mother.

You know when you discover someone who you can absolutely be yourself with, there is this fitting together inside you... You feel whole when you are with that person... I think it's even more so with God, because there is something that is within us that is made for him - the thing of made in his image and all that, and it's a thing of wholeness and togetherness and thereness, and sort of - I've found my place.

All this change also had a vital impact on her ability to relate to Black people and her

identity as a White person. Looking back to her childhood, Sasha remembers how she internalised racist attitudes from her parents or elsewhere - expressing this in terms of mistreatment of the family's domestic worker³. However, because of the example set by her father, and her involvement in a school where she had the opportunity to mix with Black children and form friendships across the colour line, that seemed to gradually change. Her brother was fiercely anti-establishment and anti-apartheid, and she adopted his world-view. When he died, her role model was gone, but she continued to relate well to Black people and dabbled a little in political activism at university, although she admits that this wasn't really where her interest lay. What the renewal of her relationship with God did for her, was that she was able to stop trying to "fit into an identity in the system." The "guilty White" syndrome was particularly strong for her, and she felt she had spent a lot of energy trying to earn acceptance from Black people. She also had a strong conviction that as a White person she had sinned against Black people.

...it was this whole thing of earning acceptance, and that whole area, and it does more harm to yourself than anything else, because you start undermining yourself in favour of the principle of earning Black people's respect...

At certain times she is still very aware of her Whiteness, especially in encounters with strong Black cultural expression, for instance some church worship services. But she has

³Interestingly, almost all of the respondents reported that as children, they had mistreated the domestic workers working for their families. It appears that whatever racist beliefs had been internalised as children could be acted out on this "soft target." Obviously most domestic workers were in no position to retaliate in any way. Many respondents reported doing things they would never have considered doing to a white person - particularly a middle-aged woman as many of the domestic workers were.

learnt to accept the fact that she is White, and started to view that positively.

...I don't think of myself as White in everyday life, but it's not a label that I attach to myself at all, but something that's incidental... and I've become quite happy with that... and this is another quite significant thing... at the beginning of last year we had the warden [her job] training thing, and we had to get together with a Black person or someone from a different stereotype grouping, and we had to say to the Black person, "I like you White because... and I dislike you White because..." so speaking about our own race group. I could say a hell of a lot about disliking Whites, and I hardly had anything to say about liking Whites. And that struck me, and I realised, whew, you have work to put in here. And it's different... I like being White.

Sasha is working towards the future. She is over the crisis about her own identity, and is gradually beginning to feel more like a whole person. She tries to take less responsibility for people now, as she feels she has been destructively involved in others' lives in the past, trying to bear burdens for people rather than distancing herself a bit. She feels she is moving in the right direction.

This study of Sasha's story is a fascinating one, not least because of the depth and extent of the crisis in identity she has faced over the last few years. Because of the onset of that crisis, Sasha was able to challenge the dominant (and destructive) image in her life and adopt a new and healthy one. The influence of her rigorous religious heritage had made her develop a highly legalistic view of life and herself. The judge in the image stood alternately for her parents, God, Black people and her peers. After she left school and entered an environment, at university, where she had more control over her actions and decisions, this dominant metaphor did not change. Sasha talked at length about the guilt that plagued her as a White person, and how she attempted to resolve it by earning

Biography, Identity and Racism

acceptance from Black people, as if somehow one or two individual Black people could grant her the credibility she felt she needed from Black people generally.

... it was trying to fit into an identity in the system, and what was going on, and so it was picking up the guilty White, and trying to earn acceptance of Black people, who I have sinned against and all that sort of stuff, and trying to compensate for being White and ending up being abused a lot... and it does more harm to yourself than anything else, because you start undermining yourself in favour of the principle of earning Black people's respect.

This legalistic system dominated Sasha's entire life, and although she resisted it, she had to come to a point of crisis before she could understand the root cause of the problem. When her brother was still alive, Sasha hero-worshipped him, and adopted many aspects of his identity, particularly his rejection of racism and apartheid. These sentiments are still very much part of her, but as we review her life it becomes clear that adopting her brother's identity was only a futile attempt to escape her inability to establish her own identity. In the end it was futile because she had not broken down the basic metaphor of legalism which dominated her identity.

The death of her brother, then, began a protracted identity struggle which was brought to a head by a crisis in her closest friendship. At this point Sasha's self-esteem was at rock-bottom and her identity was in tatters. She reports that what turned things around for her was an existential confrontation with the grace of God.

And the more I realized that he fundamentally accepts me, not loves me because of obligation, but likes me, the whole... things just started fitting together, coming into place.

Biography, Identity and Racism

The legalistic system under which she had grown up had made her pointedly aware of her dire need for acceptance - especially from her mother. This need had not been filled, but in Christ Sasha became aware of a profound acceptance and love. This transformation had a fundamental impact on all other departments of her life. In terms of her racial identity, Sasha has worked hard to deal with the guilt which caused her to relate to Black people on the basis of attempting to earn their acceptance.

... ya, I'm privileged and stuff, but I do... I give what I have a heart to give, and I don't owe it to give every Black person something, and I think that comes with a confidence in who I am... it's just not seeing a Black person straight away as a Black person and a victim, but seeing them as a person, and sort of along the way they happen to be Black and there is a whole lot of stuff that goes along with that... but that's not the first thing I think of.

At the basis of Sasha's shift, is the doctrine of atonement. Her identity had been dominated by a very central image of judgement, which compelled her to attempt to achieve the acceptance and love which she badly needed. The very attempt to achieve it, implicitly denied her that acceptance and brought her to the point of brokenness. In accepting the love of God and His gracious and free acceptance, Sasha was confronted by the reality that there was nothing she could do to earn acceptance and that this had been done for her, on her behalf. When she became a Christian at highschool, Sasha was confronted with the contrasting image of "God the loving parent," but it took some six years for that image to become normative over the other image which had ruled her life for so long. When this happened it was to have a profound impact on her life in all areas - particularly her racial identity where she turned from viewing Black people as a source of acceptance and identity (objective), to viewing Black people as ordinary people and

relating to them in that light (subjective).

Making sense of the narrative - biography, faith and identity

There is much that can be drawn from these biographies and applied to our concerns about identity. Being about to embark on this discussion, it has become immediately clear to me that attempting to relate the lives of individual people to our larger claims about community and history is a complex task. When analysing history in more objective terms, as we did in the last chapter, it is easy to make profound statements about our common White culture, to talk about *the faith* in sweeping terms and to paint a scenario of what the world in general, and South Africa in particular, should really be like. But when we return to the actual lives of living people, it is more difficult to make glib judgements, to analyse and critique. Or is it? Perhaps our task should merely be to apply external criteria to people. It would certainly make our task simpler:

"You White! You are racist, materialistic and lack insight. You say you worship Christ, while in reality you worship racism and your Whiteness. Change or risk forsaking your humanity!"

But I am really not so sure.

I will now present some reflections on the two biographies I have outlined. I will look at the emotional impact of racism on identity, I will examine alienation as a symptom of

Biography, Identity and Racism

racism, and I will look at the relationship between awareness and identity. I will then apply some of these findings to an analysis of the other two biographies I have chosen for discussion.

Emotional impact and racial identity

Within the anti-racism programmes that I have been involved in running, a substantial proportion of the time is allocated to a practice called co-counselling. This simple form of counselling involves two people spending time talking to each other in a focused way, and thereby aiming to release stored emotion around the experience of racism and oppression in general. This is not purely a device for smoothing the passage of the workshop, but is central to the theoretical framework underlying the entire programme. In the pages which follow I will discuss a theory which helps us understand the emotional impact of racism. It is based on work done by Harvey Jackins, who developed the theory and strategy of Re-evaluation Counselling (RC)⁴. I hope to show that this theory can help us understand how racist attitudes and behaviour are adopted by individuals, and become part of our identity.

Jackins (1978) argues that White racism is part of a larger phenomenon of oppression - the one-way, systematic mistreatment of one group by another, which is societally enforced, encouraged or endorsed. Racism also affects Whites. Although its primary

⁴Jackins has written several books which outline the theory and method of Re-evaluation Counselling, and strategies for implementing it in RC "communities" (1973; 1975; 1977; 1978; 1981). Other discussions of RC and "liberation workshops" can be found in Lipsky (1968) and Sherover (1979a; 1979b).

Biography, Identity and Racism

victims are people of colour, White people are deeply hurt by racism, although many never realise it. Examples of how this happen include the following (Karp 1981:89): isolation of White people from Black people helps maintain general isolation among Whites. Racism prevents different interest groups among White people from acknowledging who their true allies are; it disguises the overlapping interests of *all* workers, women, young people, and others who have limited power in society. Many White people also allow false fears based on misinformation to control and limit how they live their lives - such as where they choose to work, live and play. A major result of racism for Whites is guilt and shame, along with feeling bad for being White. Racism leaves most Whites with a distorted picture of reality - Black people are not adequately represented in all sectors of society, from advertising and television to the history we read in textbooks. While Karp may argue this with justification from her American perspective, how much more is this true in our South African context? As we have seen in the two biographies already presented, racism has generated a burning need for justification and acceptance within White people.

The use of the term "hurt" to describe the impact of racism implies that this impact occurs primarily on an emotional level. In the theory of Re-evaluation Counselling, racism on the individual level is understood to be based on "distress recordings." These are postulated as mental processes which can selectively control aspects of human activity - racism being a major example. While ideas about memory traces and unconscious processes are familiar to psychology, the concept of distress recordings is unique to Re-evaluation Counselling.

Biography, Identity and Racism

According to RC theory, racist behaviour stems from accumulations of distress, which, it is posited, limits natural capacities to think clearly, to act in a way beneficial to all, and to resist the distortions of racist conditioning. (Karp 1981:90)

There are certain assumptions held by Jackins about the natural functioning of human beings which must be understood in order to appreciate what RC theory says about how racism functions on an individual level. Jackins believes that infants begin life with a sense of kinship to all human beings. Babies are open, loving and comfortable with anyone who is relaxed with them. Babies are born highly intelligent. These inherent characteristics are interfered with by experiences of hurt - physical injury, illness, emotional loss, fright, ridicule and the like. A person's natural ability to evaluate new information and store it so that it can be retrieved, somehow malfunctions during the experience of being hurt. Instead, the information resulting from that experience is rigidly recorded without being evaluated or differentiated. These "distress recordings" can then be triggered by new situations which are similar to the original hurt experience. This results in some degree of unwanted re-experiencing of the original incident, including the related feelings of hurt and difficulty in thinking clearly. The inherently loving, cooperative, flexibly intelligent natures of all human beings are thus interfered with by experiences of hurt.

Any chronic emotional difficulty can take on racist implications in interracial situations, and/or a White person may assume that a racial difference is the "reason" for some difficulty. Negative experiences relating in any way to persons of colour can result in racist attitudes. Even indirect experiences, such as being frightened by a news account or television programme, can create a "distress recording," which can later be triggered and distort future situations. (Karp 1981:91)

Biography, Identity and Racism

Jackins argues (1973) that much racism in White people is rooted in previous experiences of oppression of the individual White person. While not being oppressed as a White person, that person will have suffered other forms of oppression. Beginning with, and based on feelings of powerlessness experienced in childhood, White people "internalise" the misinformation they hear and the mistreatment they receive, thus coming to doubt their full worthiness and humanness. These feelings of distress from being mistreated may sometimes be endured better in the psychologically more "comfortable" role of the mistreater. Hence the stereotypical, but often true account of the White male worker who is abused by his superiors at work, and in turn comes home and takes it out on his wife, who then vents her frustration and anger on the children.

As young people, we all initially resist racist information. But we are subject to heavy conditioning, and so we soon begin to believe blatantly false information and learn to take out our emotional hurt on other people. This kind of interference in the lives of young people is sanctioned, not only by racist attitudes, but also by the socially accepted notion that children should not have control over their own lives. Karp argues that there is a strong relationship between this process of conditioning and the prevalence of guilt among White people.

Whenever someone gives up to inhumanness (which includes all Whites who succumb to racist conditioning), feelings of guilt and shame are almost always experienced, although not necessarily on an aware level. The young person begins disliking her/himself for accepting racism. First of all, the guilt and shame have a snowballing effect; the worse one feels, the harder it is to think clearly, and the more likely one is to repeat the rigid behaviour. Guilt in particular exerts a deadening psychological effect. Guilt and shame are painful to feel. Some people try to escape feeling them by being defiantly racist, while others act in a "do-gooder"

Biography, Identity and Racism

fashion, condescendingly being supportive of non-Whites [sic]. People trying to uncover the origins of their own racist attitudes have to contend with these emotions first. When they are able to get beyond the guilt and shame, which is difficult to do, they find, not the monster they expect, but a heartbroken child. (Karp 1981:93)

As White people we must therefore feel *responsible* for inappropriate, negative nature of these distress patterns, but not feel to *blame* for them. We have a choice to condone racism or to combat it. We must take pride in our heritage as Whites and as human beings.

The strategy of Re-evaluation Counselling is thus based on these theoretical assumptions outlined above. Through a process of emotional discharge in pairs or small groups, co-counsellors try to eliminate the effects of past hurtful experiences. The aim is to abolish compulsive, inappropriate behaviour and attitudes through fully evaluating original information, objectively understanding it and storing it to make it available for future use. Jackins (1975) argues that this is a natural healing process which happens spontaneously in children, although it becomes suppressed by social conditioning. He says that it can be recovered by adults. The discharge of the distress thus happens when a person is able to recognise his/her feelings for what they are, instead of believing that they are an accurate reflection of current reality.

I would only like to give this brief glimpse into the practice of RC, since my focus is more on its theoretical assumptions. For a fuller discussion of the practice of RC groups, the best source is Jackins (1975). How then shall we apply Jackins' insights to our present investigation into identity? I believe that his approach allows us to appreciate

Biography, Identity and Racism

how racist thinking becomes so deeply embedded in our individual identity. The concept of "distress recordings" explains why we, as White people, find it so difficult to avoid approaching a particular situation or problem without preconceived patterns of thinking and acting towards Black people. I would like to examine this in more detail in relation to our two subjects, Sasha and David.

An incident which I would like to pick out of Sasha's story is her mistreatment of the family's domestic worker. As I mentioned earlier, this experience is common to most respondents, and it indicates that she had begun to enact society's message that Black people are worth less than White people and do not deserve respect. What is interesting about this, is that Sasha's father would certainly not have sanctioned her behaviour - it thus had a furtive quality to it. Yet, it is clear from Sasha's later identity crisis that she had internalised distress recordings from her mother at an early age. It is possible that when this distress became restimulated, she enacted it in the more "comfortable" form of mistreating the one person over whom she had power - the family's domestic worker.

At the same time, guilt and shame have been strong themes in Sasha's life. After her brother died, Sasha attempted to find identity in adopting the beliefs and attitudes of a close friend. This meant adopting the friend's racist thinking as well, and although Sasha did this for a while, it obviously caused her a great deal of pain. Jackins argues that when we give in to inhumanness in this way, feelings of guilt and shame are almost always experienced, and this was certainly true in Sasha's case. He says that we begin to dislike ourselves for accepting the racism. Sasha's identity was thus attacked on two fronts: from her mother she felt criticism and lack of acceptance, and she felt guilt and

Biography, Identity and Racism

shame because of her acceptance of racism. She appeared then to adopt a "do-gooder" stance of trying to support Black people, but in a way that was functional neither for herself nor those people. Jackins explains this by saying that guilt and shame have a snowballing effect: the worse one feels, the harder it is to think clearly, and the more likely one is to repeat the rigid behaviour. Because guilt and shame are painful to feel, we try to escape by acting in a "do-gooder" fashion to alleviate those emotions. In Sasha's case, the experience of counselling and examining the distress recordings from her early childhood has helped to break this cycle. She has begun to be proud of who she is and started liking herself. This has proven to be a platform from which she can become increasingly aware of the ways she is responding to other people, Black people in particular.

In the discussion of David's story, I made the point that his life is governed by the images of struggle and conflict. From an early age, he had internalised a great number of hurt experiences. One example of this is his relationship with his mother. Her absenteeism and her domineering nature, combined with the lack of information about his father have imprinted themselves as a very deeply rooted distress recording. In his relationship with his mother this hurt was easily restimulated and enacted in the form of stubbornness and defiance - he developed a strong temper. In his relationships with other people these rigid patterns would easily take over - especially when those people were Black, which implied that society gave him the power to mistreat them. For the most part, David has not been able to re-evaluate these distress recordings - if anything they have been reinforced by the hurtful experiences of being assaulted. His attempt to act in a "do-gooder" fashion points to the fact that he is responding to guilt and shame, but I

Biography, Identity and Racism

am not convinced that this is happening on an aware level.

As I pointed out, there are two conflicting metaphors in David's life. The "Christ the good shepherd" metaphor points to the fact that there is a "heartbroken child" at the base of his identity, who cries out for acceptance, care and love. If we understand both of these metaphors, we can understand why David is at the same time hard, aggressive and violent, and loving, caring and kind - the embodiment of the "good shepherd" image.

As reflected in these two biographies, I believe that Jackins' theory thus gives us important insights into the way racist thought and behaviour is adopted by the individual White person. An important assumption made by Jackins is that racism alienates White people from themselves and their own community. I would now like to discuss this in more detail, drawing on the work of some other theorists.

Alienation - symptom of a common disease

What is apparent in the stories of the respondents, and not only the four discussed in this chapter, is that the need for acceptance is a common theme. All of them talked about this need, and reported that they had found it fulfilled in Christ. This empowered them to accept other people. At first I merely noted this desperate need for acceptance as a symptom of our fragmented and alienated South African society. But thinking more carefully about it, I came to question why this alienation is so strong that it is reflected as an important theme in the stories of all my respondents. Perhaps this is an implication of racism, and would support my earlier thesis that a direct result of apartheid is the

Biography, Identity and Racism

alienation of White people from our own humanity. Breyten Breytenbach points to this when he says:

Apartheid is the state and the condition of being apart. It is the no man's [sic] land between peoples. But this gap is not a neutral space. It is the artificially created distance necessary to attenuate, for the practitioners, the very raw reality of racial, economic, social and cultural discrimination and exploitation. It is the space of the White man's [sic] being. It is the distance needed to convince himself of his denial of the other's humanity. It ends up denying all humanity of any kind both to the other and to himself. (1972:138)

The fact that racism alienates White people from their own identity is one of the central theses of the American author Joseph Barndt.

To begin with, White people, too, live in a "racial ghetto." Although we may have built the walls ourselves, the resulting isolation and its effects are equally harmful... It only takes one evening of television, or one day in a public school classroom, or a walk through a suburban shopping mall to recognise the deterioration of our values, the insipid nature of much of our self-expression, and the ugliness we often create out of our affluence. Isolated, sterile, and devoid of stimulation behind our cultural curtain, our lives are increasingly flabby, boring, dishonest, and corrupt. (1991:110).

He argues that this isolation has left its mark not only on White society in general, but also on the White church.

Long after the deliberate and historically traceable decisions were made that created the predominantly White church in a predominantly White society, and long after the church first began to express its desire to help undo the effects of racial separation and isolation, the marks of its imprisonment in racism remain clearly visible. They manifest themselves

Biography, Identity and Racism

in the church's inability to express itself as an inclusive unified people of God. The marks of its imprisonment are evident in the reality that in most congregations it is difficult, often impossible, to talk about racism and issues of racial justice, either as subjects for biblical and theological reflection or as matters of social concern. The marks of its imprisonment are most clearly seen, however, in the comfortable, generally unquestioning way that the European American congregations exist as White ghettoized churches in White ghettoized neighbourhoods, locked in the same prison as the other institutions we have been describing. (1991:140)

I think that the profound need for acceptance which was expressed by most respondents is a symbol or metaphor of that alienation. It is reflected also in the attempts of White people to justify themselves to Black people, and in seeking to receive affirmation and acceptance from Black people.

In my own experience of doing anti-racism work I have found that very few White people acknowledge this alienation and fewer still understand its causes. This is reflected in the biographies I have related here, especially David's. In terms of Jackins' argument this is, however, totally understandable. The concept of distress recordings implies that powerlessness substitutes for thinking. Guilt and shame swamp insight and understanding by having a deadening psychological effect. Guilt and shame, in particular, make us very reluctant to engage in analysis of racism, and its implications for us as White people. As Barndt found out, this is especially true in the context of the (White) church, where concentration on racism is suppressed under the excuse that there are more fundamental matters of faith that need attention. Balcomb found that for many White people, particularly middle class White people, there are huge, almost impenetrable barriers around the political department of our faith.

Biography, Identity and Racism

But the sheer intensity of the outrage with which he was faced when drawing attention to these things taught him another great lesson - that when you preached about the evils of a political system to those who benefitted from that system you were touching the gods of the inner sanctuaries of their lives. Here awaited another traumatic discovery - that in all the departments that constituted our service of God there was one department that had a huge "KEEP OUT" sign - the department of the political. The strenuousness of the reaction against "political" sermons far exceeded anything else that had ever been preached of a controversial nature from the pulpit. *Quite clearly there were interests at stake here that were the strongest of all the interests amongst God's people. The essential idol had been discovered, the essential ideology exposed.* (1994:5)

The metaphor "God accepts you" is central to both David and Sasha's stories. At first this message would seem to have two contradictory functions. On the one hand, it can dull White guilt, and turn our focus away from racism. The effect of this could be simply to grant implicit legitimation to White supremacy. On the other hand, and we see this clearly in the story of Sasha, the message of acceptance imparts a new sense of confidence and security to examine White identity honestly and openly. These appear to be mutually exclusive options, but perhaps they are not. Jackins argues that White people need to know that it is good to be White, and that they have reason to be proud of themselves. Pride is not the same thing as oppression, and he suggests that even Whites who condone racism still have a right *and a need* to feel fully proud of who they are - for this pride can eventually lead to an awareness of the injustices and irrationalities of racism. In the light of Jackins' argument, dealing with guilt is a good thing, even if it appears at first to divert the focus of the person away from dealing with racism. Doing away with guilt creates the space to examine the origins of racist attitudes, even if this is not immediately and consciously done, and it gives the opportunity to take pride in our Whiteness. Simons (1977) has tested the practical impact of these propositions in his

Biography, Identity and Racism

investigation of Re-evaluation Counselling, and found it to be successful with White persons of all classes, ethnic groups, ages, and orientations.

Let me briefly summarise the discussion thus far. I have presented an understanding of how racial attitudes become part of our identity. I have used Harvey Jackins' theory of Re-evaluation Counselling to explain how distress recordings from hurtful childhood (and adult) experiences establish rigid patterns of relating to Black people. As White people we have a responsibility to address these attitudes, which we can do by releasing stored emotion and regaining the ability to think clearly about racism. I have suggested that a major impact of racism on White people is alienation - both from ourselves and our community. Examining the narrative material we see that within almost every White person is a deep need for acceptance, which can often be met in relationship with Christ. This experience of being accepted prepares us to address racism from a new sense of pride, confidence and security.

Belonging, awareness and identity

When I chose the topic of this thesis it was not simply a question of interest. My own pilgrimage to come to terms with what it means to be a White person in South Africa is totally bound up in this investigation of identity. This has its dangers, the principal one being that this study has become nothing more than a set of personal opinions. I hope I answered this challenge adequately in the first chapter. However, this also has advantages. I am in a position to be sensitive to the subtleties of the problem, and my analysis moves beyond being merely a subjective account, to become a dialogue between

Biography, Identity and Racism

my own story, and the stories of my subjects. The desire to investigate identity has been born out of a long-standing commitment to combat and challenge racism. I mentioned above that a faith encounter with the Christ which brings the gospel message "You are accepted." can be a powerful tool to orient the recipient towards understanding racism and their own identity more fully. I also hinted that these encounters might not always produce this desired result.

When I became a Christian, it was in response to the evangelistic message of a charismatic, evangelical preacher. When I left boarding school and gained the freedom to choose where I would worship, I decided to join the church that this man came from. That church was at the forefront of what has been called the charismatic renewal. There I discovered an alive, vibrant spirituality which was highly attractive to someone who had a background of a particularly dour version of Anglican high-church practice. As mentioned earlier in my biography, however, there were other stirrings that were coming to prominence in my life at this time. I was developing an awareness of racism and a growing commitment to be involved in challenging it. While this church professed to be "multiracial," and was proud of the few Black members in their midst, "politics" was seen as anathema to true faith in Jesus Christ. Within six months of joining the church I began to feel that the gospel being promoted there dulled, rather than heightened my awareness of the realities of life in South Africa. After coming into conflict with the leadership of the church over this issue I realised that it was time for me to leave, and I stopped attending services there.

This experience left me greatly confused. On the one hand I was certain that these people

Biography, Identity and Racism

were encountering God in a vivid, profound way that I had not previously encountered. At the same time, something was happening to convince them that there was no need to address the reality of racism and what it was doing to their Black brothers and sisters - never mind themselves. A strong theme which I began to notice among these dedicated Christians, and which I have subsequently encountered over and over again, was a tendency to reduce racism to an individual problem affecting encounters between Black and White people on a personal level. There was an attempt to disassociate themselves from the realities of institutional racism. I also noticed that this way of thinking became especially strong after a person had undergone a profound spiritual encounter.

We see this shift to a certain extent in Sasha's story. Over a long period of trying to resolve the acute identity crisis into which she had been plunged, she had a very deep and meaningful spiritual encounter. The acceptance which she found in Christ liberated her from the hold of guilt and shame on her life, and she was able to review the rigid patterns of behaviour that she had previously been captive to. Yet as a result of this, she has focused on honest personal encounters as a solution to racism, and tends to evade the challenge of institutional racism. It is difficult to explain why this happens, but possibly it has something to do with the sense of powerlessness that appreciation of the enormity of racism engenders. Another factor which cannot be discounted is the fact that to analyse racism in personal terms is a safe thing to do, for it implies that one can deal with it on a personal level. The analysis of racism put forward in the previous chapter, in contrast, demands that we engage racism on the much more threatening level of power and ideology. As affluent Whites in a context of poverty and suffering, this is a threatening thing to do, because it places our position of privilege at risk. Since I became

Biography, Identity and Racism

aware that deep personal commitment to Christian faith does not imply deep awareness about racism, I have wanted to understand why this is so - for in my case the opposite has been true. Since the early beginnings of my Christian commitment, my faith and my worldview have been in constant dialogue. At times my faith has challenged my worldview to become more consistent and based on justice, at other times my worldview has challenged my faith to become more contextually rooted in the realities of South Africa.

Adam Curle has written a book entitled *Mystics and Militants* (1972), in which he studies the relationship between identity, awareness and social action. I believe that his insights might help us to resolve the problem I have outlined above. In a nutshell, his argument is that our propensity to engage in social action is dependent on the type of identity that we have. He says that we exist within a worldwide system which enables the rich and privileged to establish and maintain power over the poor and less privileged. He calls this system the *exploitative network*. There exists also a psychological corollary of the exploitative network which is its great stay and support. He calls this *competitive materialism*, and says that while it has been a part of human society from its earliest beginnings, it has been given fresh impetus, and a frightening hold over us, by the advent of powerful new technology. Curle continues to argue that we can understand human behaviour in relation to the exploitative network and competitive materialism if we understand the relationship between awareness and identity. Awareness, meaning essentially self-awareness, and hence insight into the conditions of others, can be higher or lower. He argues that the easiest way to understand awareness, is to begin by looking at the condition of low awareness:

Biography, Identity and Racism

Perhaps the best way to approach the concept of awareness is to start with states of low awareness. These are conditions, experienced frequently by virtually everyone and by some for a great part of their lives, in which people have little understanding of their motives, their actions, or the sources of their feelings. In a state of low awareness we act and speak relatively automatically, *without in the fullest sense knowing what we are doing*⁵... Above all, we are not self-consciously aware of our own identity. When we are operating at a low level of awareness it is as though we have switched to the automatic pilot and gone to sleep. But the automatic pilot may lead us in a direction we would not have taken had we been awake. (1972:14)

He says that the type of identity we possess corresponds closely with our level of awareness. Identity is a correlate of two factors, both of which can be high or low: identity can be based on awareness (that is awareness-identity), or, what is more usual, a sense of belonging (that is belonging-identity).

When the belonging mode dominates, we define ourselves in terms of what we belong to, and what belongs to us, whether it be a civilization or cultural tradition, family or country, material possessions or social position, professional achievements or tastes in music, or any combination of these or innumerable other things. (1972:9)

Briefly, he argues that the combination of low awareness and strong belonging-identity produces the stabilizing, conservative force in society. People whose identity is defined in terms of the way things are, do not want those things to change. They will sometimes persist with this even to the extent of preserving what they know intellectually to be

⁵Curle's concept of low awareness, and Jackins' concept of distress recordings appear to be very similar. In both cases it is argued that we are driven not by creative, independent, free thought, but by predetermined, set patterns. Instead of thinking for ourselves, we merely act out the conditioning we have absorbed from society.

wrong. Now the mystics and militants of the title of his book, are those who have sufficiently high awareness to perceive that society is in need of change. This awareness, coupled with a weak belonging-identity, means that they have little vested interest in ensuring the survival of the status quo. This is obviously a simplification of Curle's argument, for he develops a number of categories within and between these two positions into which he says people fall. He points out that this is not a rigid typology under which people can be classified, but acknowledges that we all vascilate between two poles on the scale. He suggests, however, that each of us can identify a point on the scale which basically describes our identity. He says that most people fall within the categories of medium-to-strong belonging and low-to-medium awareness. Those with very low belonging and strong awareness-identity are few and far between. We most easily identify them in the popular figures who are well known to us - Curle cites Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr. as two examples⁶. He does, however, point out that fame is no criterion for membership of this elite group.

It is important to note that in the case of people who have strong awareness-identity this does not mean that they do not care about things such as cultural tradition, country, professional achievements and the like. Ghandi and King were obviously both men who were highly committed to the plight of their own nations. What it means is that their identity is not defined in terms of these things. To appreciate and love one's family out of respect for each member is not the same as to depend on one's family or marital partner for security and affirmation. In contrast, people with strong belonging-identity

⁶Surely Nelson Mandela would qualify also. Curle suggests that Albert Luthuli and Alan Paton were two South Africans who would fall into this category.

Biography, Identity and Racism

define themselves in terms of those things. They find their identity in them, and are therefore resistant to allowing those things to change or progress. As a father my belonging is strong, for example, when I define myself in terms of my role as parent or spouse, and pride myself on the achievement of having such beautiful or successful children, or caring for them so well.

Although I do not want to fall into the trap of using Curle's typology in the same way that I argued we should not use Erikson and Marcia, I believe he might be very useful to us at this point. Curle is not trying to define identity, but to explain the relationship between identity and social action. His ideas were worked out over many years of mediating in conflict situations around the world, and attempting to understand why people responded in an irrational way to their enemies. His conclusion is that this happens as a result of strong belonging-identity, and argues that our focus as individuals should be to raise our level of personal awareness. In the context of our community or nation, the key to weakening resistance to transformation is to raise communal and national awareness.

Applying Curle's theory to our respondents' stories, then, I would argue that David quite clearly shows a low level of awareness. This does not imply that he will not have flashes of insight where he becomes self-aware and sees with perspicacity into the conditions of others, but for the most part this is not the case. Correspondingly, his belonging is strong. He finds his identity in terms of his job, his family, his church and his faith. He feels secure, and with his personal history of great insecurity he is not willing to put that on the line. He has a conservative approach to social change, despite the fact that the

Biography, Identity and Racism

system in which he finds his belonging does not really benefit him. His levels of awareness are low, but he can see that if South African society were to change, then the position which he has eked out for himself in the current one might be threatened.

Let us return, now, to the business of telling stories. In this section we have made certain claims about how we might analyse and understand identity, which I would now like to apply to another two biographies. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the concerns of our first chapter. What is primary is not theory, but narrative. The voices of these external critics are valid to the extent that they are able to bring fresh dialogue and perspective to the internal life of our stories. So we must listen to their argument in the hope that we might be able to absorb them into our stories as events of internal significance.

Michael

Michael came to Natal to study at university, having grown up in the Transvaal, in Vereeniging, an area not far from the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. His parents are conservative, he says, and the area where he lived was predominantly Afrikaans speaking, and both socially and politically conservative. Michael's father is a CP⁷ supporter, and more conservative than his mother. Both parents, however, engendered negative attitudes in Michael towards Black people. His father's negative attitudes toward the Black people he worked with bordered on hatred, and he often used to make statements such as, "Ya, you may think they're okay, but you haven't worked with them yet." While Michael's mother may have been slightly less vitriolic toward Black people she appeared to share the same basic prejudices and stereotypes as his father. "Don't. Put that down, maybe a Black had it," he remembers her telling him on one occasion when he picked up a toothpick.

These early experiences transferred a deep-seated doubt of Black people to Michael, which he admits still catches him out now and then. It is important to note that this does not operate on a conscious level. It is emotional and subconscious, and often leads him to question his intellectual commitments. It became clear in my interview with Michael that he holds principled ideas about the equality of all human beings and the fact that everyone is entitled to fair treatment. Yet this often clashes on an emotional level with the feeling that White people are superior to Black people and especially that Black

⁷Conservative Party. Until the 1994 democratic election, the C.P. was the official opposition in the white parliament. It is politically more right-wing than the National Party.

Biography, Identity and Racism

people are not capable human beings. He is aware that this is happening, but tends to accept it as the way things are. Let me cite one or two incidents which he related to me that will illustrate this point.

The issue of affirmative action is something that currently worries Michael a great deal. He is looking for a job and has been refused many times because the jobs he applied for had been reserved for Black candidates.

That really gets to me, because you'll stand there and you'll think, "But I can do that and probably far better than this person, but because of the colour of my skin..." And I've noticed as well, although I have this theory that any Black person can do the job as well as I can because they are a human being, because they can learn, I still have this, this ingrained thing of they can't... it's like it's not an intellectual thing, it's a feeling... I sometimes see a Black person put in a certain position or doing something and I think, "Ah, that'll never work." I don't sit and think about it, it just kind of happens... Ya, then I think about it, I think, "Wow! I am a racist."

Another incident comes from an honours course which he has been attending over the last year at university.

Ya, I think it's a case of: I'm better than Blacks, although I know intellectually that I'm not - I feel intellectually that I shouldn't feel that way... I sit in my class and there's a lot of Blacks doing the same course that I'm doing, and I just feel they're idiots, probably because some of them are... a lot of them don't work and they don't try... like for Finance it is quite a tough course, and they didn't try, and that irritated me. It kind of leaves me feeling superior.

There is something extremely interesting about this conflict that is constantly interfering

Biography, Identity and Racism

and reports that he "had a lot of problems with what White South African men are supposed to be." He felt insecure because he didn't have the interests in sport and technical things that he perceived was expected of him as a man. He is still sensitive to the feeling that some family members regard him as a disappointment. Michael's creative side was much stronger, and he has always felt that he has been able to communicate and relate better to women than to men. He has generally felt accepted by women, but this has clashed with those inbred expectations of himself and made him feel "unimpressive."

This need for acceptance and his basic insecurity heightened his feeling of alienation in the army, and he shortly began searching for some kind of spiritual fulfilment. This search began in the evenings in the army dormitories...

...it was the rules, at nine o'clock sit on your bed, at half-past-nine, lights out, you're not allowed to talk during that half hour. It was a quiet time. You're supposed to read your Bible, but if you don't want to you can just sit there... so I just started to read it, and I was kind of battling, because I was feeling kind of small, insignificant... what's it all about if I'm just a number. There are so many millions of people on the earth and I'm just nothing. I don't have an impact on anything.

One morning there was a church service at the camp, and he went along. The minister started talking about his experiences and Michael listened with increasing interest. This obviously had an impact on him, because that morning he decided to become a Christian. As a consequence of this he began to question things which he had never really thought about before. When he got transferred to another army branch and encountered a particularly racist officer, he read in his Bible the words of James 2: "My brothers [sic], as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favouritism," and was

Biography, Identity and Racism

challenged to apply it to the racism of his sergeant major.

This was the beginning of the first phase in his faith development. He feels that what he had was a close, personal relationship with God, which started causing changes in his life - evidenced by the fact that his parents had noticed and started a spiritual search of their own. The second stage began when Michael arrived at university and encountered a strong form of charismatic Christianity. He was impressed by the spiritual power which the members of the group appeared to exhibit and so he joined in and started seeking to express that power in his own life. All this stage of "naming and claiming" appeared to do was destroy the closeness and intimacy which he had previously felt in his relationship to God, and after six months he was depressed and searching for something new. Eventually he found a church which offered an acceptance and openness which he had not encountered before.

I think God's kind of become more and more real to me, and I think I've become pretty sensitive to Him, at times... it's kind of allowed me to be myself more because I've found a lot of acceptance in Him, and a lot of acceptance with a lot of His people - strangely enough some of the people who make me feel depressed... and there has been a lot of acceptance there that has been quite meaningful.

During this time his general awareness about himself and his relationship to other people appears to have grown. His honesty and openness to the Black staff at the hotel where he was working made them welcome him into their friendship circles, a privilege none of the other White staff at the hotel were accorded. This allowed him to see and experience first hand why the relationship between White management and Black workers was so bad. It was something he couldn't work out at first, as the managers

Biography, Identity and Racism

appeared to treat the staff fairly and cordially, but he soon began to notice the subtle ways in which the managers dehumanised the workers. This was a new revelation to Michael, and he is grateful for the experience. He also became sensitized to the way his White Christian friends adopted "their token darkie" friend as a statement of their nonracism. Michael is critical of their hypocrisy, particularly as it just feels like an attempt to keep up a Christian appearance which he feels is bigoted. He says that he feels no compulsion to relate to Black people in any special way. He does not have much contact with them, and says that when he does, he reacts in the same way as he would to a White person - he will start a relationship if he likes the person, and won't if he does not. As in the White community, Michael feels that he relates better to Black women than Black men. He says he, "finds that there is a cultural arrogance in Black men," which has the same affect as the male "macho" ego of White men.

It is easy to find Michael's story confusing because of its many contradictions. On the one hand, he has developed an uncommon ability to be honest about himself. He has few pretences, and is willing to admit his true feelings and attitudes. This makes him critical of the bigotry which he feels that his friends, especially Christian friends, display in their relationships with Black people. By being willing to risk opening himself to Black people, he has developed a sensitivity to the way White people mistreat Black people. Yet we must balance this against another side of Michael's character. He has failed thus far to deal with deep-seated prejudices toward Black people. While he has managed to understand how White can people treat Black people in a degrading way on a personal level, he does not see the implications of this for wider society. The objective realities of racism in South Africa appear only to confuse and frustrate him.

Biography, Identity and Racism

I believe that Jackins' approach might be very useful in shedding some light on these difficulties. Michael has obviously internalised many hurt experiences from his childhood. The process of working through his own identity, and feeling accepted, has enabled him to re-evaluate some of these distress recordings. I believe these new insights give him the openness to understand how Black people can be similarly degraded on an individual level. While he has all the right ideas concerning justice and equality, however, these ideas are often undermined by a deep emotional reaction against Black people. This tells us that he is still plagued by some strong distress recordings about Black people which do not allow him to think in a clear way about these issues. It is probable that these distress recordings come from the conditioning provided by Michael's parents from an early age.

The experience of God's love and acceptance is a very important factor in Michael's life. Like Sasha, he appears to have suffered from a severe lack of acceptance. Also like her, this need was met in a powerful way through spiritual encounter with God several years after his initial conversion to Christianity. Michael tells us that he used to find himself trying to gain justification from Black people, but that this has stopped since he began the process of re-evaluating his own identity. This is a positive sign, for it shows that Michael has realised that he *is* acceptable, and that he does not need to try to find that acceptance in other people.

These are encouraging signs that Michael is starting to come to terms with his own identity, in that he has started to deal with many deep-seated insecurities about who he is as a person. This change has empowered him to reach out to black people on a

Biography, Identity and Racism

personal level. Yet at the same time, he finds it very difficult to come to terms with his identity as a member of the wider White Christian community. This process involves discovering that racism is a fundamental part of that story, and I do not think that Michael is prepared to do that yet. If Barndt (1991) is right about the extent to which alienation is a feature of the White community, then he can help us to understand why Michael has such difficulties. Although it may feel to Michael as though he has come a long way, he has only just begun the long and arduous task of confronting that alienation within himself.

Evan

Evan's story has interesting beginnings. His father had grown up in the Freestate, and moved to Natal as a young man who didn't understand a word of English. Here, he met and married a Natal woman who did not understand a word of Afrikaans. Because his father's job caused the family to move often, Evan was sent to boarding school aged twelve, where he gained an uncommon independence and self-reliance. His family background was, however, a relatively stable one. After leaving school, he qualified as an engineer, and went to work, like his father, on the railways. When he moved to Pretoria a few years later, he was forced to become fluent in Afrikaans for his work, and to survive socially. The three years he spent there sensitised him to Afrikaans language and culture, and when he returned to Natal, he became aware of the racism suffered by Afrikaners at the hands of English speakers. On the railways at that time, the engineering profession and many others, he says, were "closed shop" to Afrikaans

Biography, Identity and Racism

people. They certainly experienced first-hand the reality of economic victimization because of their heritage. Reflecting on this later, he says that he fails to understand how people who had experienced such oppression themselves could knowingly impose it on others without thinking about the consequences.

At highschool Evan became aware of racism for the first time when he was confronted by the extreme anti-semitism directed at Jewish pupils by his classmates. It was 1948, and the Arab-Israeli war and the establishment of the Jewish nation had heightened anti-Semitic sentiment⁸. There were two prominent highschools in the city where Evan went to school, and the Jewish pupils as a matter of course went to the other one. The three solitary Jews at his school suffered badly at the hands of their classmates. Although he later became friends with the one Jewish student in his class, Evan said that he did nothing to prevent the victimization he witnessed in his first year there - even though he did not participate. It was just the way things were! He says that this exposure to a virulent form of racism had a strong impact on him. It sensitised him to what he was saw around himself every day in terms of White racism toward Black people.

Politically, Evan had always been a liberal. He voted for the liberal political parties and, in theory at least, argued for the abolition of apartheid. He was aware of some of the inconsistencies and absurdities of apartheid, and on the moral principles of justice and fairness, was opposed to racism:

⁸As I write this I am astounded to reflect that this is less than five years after the end of the Second World War, and the revealing of the horrific facts of the holocaust. A stark reminder, indeed, of the resilience of racism and the human blindness which continues to accept and propagate it!

Biography, Identity and Racism

I remember being puzzled by the anomalies... I went to my Grandad's farm in the Freestate, and the different way Blacks were treated... how they treated their own staff on the farm, and my grandfather was a very religious man - they had family prayers every night, and the house staff came in for family prayers - they would sit on the floor... but they had that kind of concern for their souls... but take the old boy into town and his attitude to Blacks in town... whereas on the farm it was paternalistic, hard, but paternalistic - concern for them and their family... but in town a total disregard... get off the pavement.

But over the years his thinking developed. A turning point came when he attended the SACLA⁹ conference in 1979, three years after his conversion. The previous three years had been years of great personal change. Up until this point, in Evan's own words, "my own attitude towards Black people was one which focused on justice, and not on relationships." He realised that, while he could stand for justice, and feel sorry for the wrongs that were being committed against Black people, he was not able to get close to them. He later came to call this the "tin-mug barrier." He argues that White people have been so alienated from Black people, that they have to cross that barrier before they are able to share the same crockery and cutlery - both in a literal sense, and allegorically to imply an intimacy and acceptance out of which true relationships can be born.

The critical factor which made him aware of this and empowered him to change, was his Christian conversion in the mid-seventies. Brought up in a Methodist family, Evan had always gone to church. In fact for twenty-five years prior to this point he had been heavily involved in the church. As the seventies dawned, a charismatic renewal began

⁹The South African Christian Leadership Assembly (SACLA) was an initiative to bring together a wide cross-section of black and white church leadership so that they could encounter one another, and work out joint strategies for addressing apartheid. For a critical examination of what happened there, see Balcomb (1993).

Biography, Identity and Racism

to infiltrate the church, and people around him were talking of a relationship with Jesus Christ, something that was quite foreign to Evan. He points out that up to that time, Christianity was for him primarily a moral code, to which he was drawn by his sense of justness and fairness. When the Methodist church held a year of evangelism, he attended a course which prompted him to investigate a *relationship* with Christ. Faced by this faith crisis, he responded to the challenge of commitment, and accepted Christ in an intimate relationship that he had not previously known. This was followed in 1979 by the SACLA conference, which prompted him to investigate setting up encounters between his own Methodist church and Black Methodist churches.

Reflecting on what really happened to turn around his attitude towards Black people, he points to the existential experience of having his own identity assured and affirmed in Christ. For a long time he had been quite an insecure person, and his identity and security were closely linked to his performance as a husband, as a father, in his job - in all his functions.

The experience of knowing Christ was an assurance about my own identity, which enabled me then to recognise the identity of other people... I think the question of identity is key, because I think probably a lot of racism comes out of my identity, which is wrapped up in my race, and if my race is not secure, then I am not secure.

What changed everything was the realisation that what mattered was what Jesus said and thought, not how well he lived up to the standards he had set himself.

I think the Romans 8 passage, "for there is no now condemnation," became real for me, and gave me that identity, a secure identity.

Biography, Identity and Racism

As a result of these changes, Evan left the engineering profession and began working at a Christian mission organisation where he trained lay leadership for ministry in the church, and initiated a cross-cultural encounter programme. This programme of encounter between Black and White people is now in its tenth year, and although Evan has effectively handed over control of the programme to someone else, it has impacted on the work he is presently doing. Over the period of ten years, many adults and young people were able to meet across the "tin-mug barrier," sometimes for the first time, and many lives were transformed by the interaction.

More recently Evan has moved on from there to become involved in setting up a community centre for outreach into a local inner-city neighbourhood. A house was bought and it is used as a centre for various kinds of programmes and activities to try to bring the community together and show the love of Christ. The neighbourhood itself is a mixed bag of Black and White, poor and not-so-poor. There are many broken families and people with all sorts of problems, like alcoholism and unemployment. Because of the location of the area, many people who do not live there pass through it daily. Evan feels directly led by God in the work he is doing there, which consists of finding out what needs people have, and attempting to bring Christ's love and healing to the brokenness. The driving force behind the project is the attempt to bring *hope* to a place where there are many people who do not have much hope. At present Evan works with a small group of people who live in the area, but he hopes the ministry will become an established community centre which is accessible to the people who live there.

Biography, Identity and Racism

Evan is an aware, mature person who has made a practical commitment to bringing the kingdom of God to the lives of others. The community centre is an expression of that, and in a subtle way, through building friendships and bringing together people in the local community, he attempts to undermine racism at its most basic level.

My business now is to pick out, from this story, the image or images which will allow us to grasp Evan's central vision and apply it to our concerns about identity. We are confronted here, not by a tale of great heroics or the outstanding life of a saint who challenges our convictions and calls us to account for our own faith. Rather, this is the story of an ordinary person trying to follow his Christ in the complex and demanding world that confronts us all. Like the other biographies we have already examined, there may be much in Evan's story that resonates with our own. Yet Evan is also a special individual, in whose life the central metaphors of Christian faith take new and different meaning.

Evan increasingly tries to live his life in faithfulness to Christ and appropriates much of the Christian imagery. We must decide what dominates this warehouse of images. An image which ruled his early life was that of "justice and equality for all people in the sight of God." He points out himself how this image was hollow, because it was based on moral code and not relationships with people. "Christ's new community," is a better prospect. What characterised Evan's conversion was the image of God's acceptance of him as he was, imperfect and unacceptable. Contained within the Romans 8 passage he cites as central to his new faith perspective is the doctrine of atonement.

Biography, Identity and Racism

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

Now in an intellectual sense Evan interprets this doctrine very traditionally. Atonement is a spiritual act done by Christ on behalf of humanity. But if we look at Evan's story, the doctrine of atonement takes on a fuller, more exciting meaning. For his story tells us it repairs not only the relationship between Evan and God, but also the relationship between Evan and Black people.

Evan gradually began to view God's order as something distinctly different, if not opposed to, the worldly order - and yet superimposed upon it. Where the world evaluated people in terms of their achievement, God's order accepted all people through grace and affirmed the identity of all. Where the world told White people to fear Black people and oppress in order to affirm and elevate their own identity, God's order said that Black people should be accepted just as White people were. Instead of relating from a distance, God's order demanded that we cross the "tin-mug barrier" in order to share our lives intimately. Where the world says that our primary concern is self-preservation, God's order calls us to reach out to others with the gift of hope. By implication, one would assume from this that all Christians should partake in the new order of God's community - leaving behind the old order of separation and antagonism. However, Evan knows from experience that this does not happen. He has encountered too many

Biography, Identity and Racism

dedicated White Christians whose interpretation of their faith does not lead them across those boundaries of alienation and separation. He points out that White people have used their global power over centuries to develop an anthropology which sees White people as the crowning glory of the human race.

Don Jacobs, who is an anthropologist, did a teaching series on the gospel and culture, and he made one observation which has stuck in my mind because I think it's so true. He said if you take any textbook on the history of man and you look at the evolutionary tree, you will find at the top of the tree... is a White, caucasian male, and he says then you examine the text and you get the terms primitive, uncivilised, heathen, in describing groups other than... and so this kind of impression... is implanted from the earliest study... and I think that's what creates the "tin-mug barrier." I can love my dog, I can feel pity for my dog, I can care for my dog, but I can't have a relationship with my dog, and you can translate that into my Black for many White racists - I don't even say White South Africans, I think it's a world-wide phenomenon. I think we've fine-tuned it with apartheid...

Unfortunately the Christian faith does not cleanse its members of this world-view. Evan admits that the world is full of "born-again, spirit-filled racists." He cites the example of Peter - one of the first and most committed Christians, who still had deep-seated prejudices towards Gentile people.

He was born again, walked with Christ, spirit-filled... impeccable Christian credentials, but still a racist... and so the Lord has to do something in terms of our attitudes. And sadly, I think that much of our Christian experience gets tied up and wrapped up with our cultural experience.

So Evan's inner history articulates The Story as his normative story. He is aware, at

Biography, Identity and Racism

least on one level, of how his White racist story is a threat to that Christian story. A central metaphor in that story is that of "God's new community," which he sees it as his role to build. This tells us that his identity is bound up in an active and alive faith.

Evan shares Barndt's concerns about alienation of White people as a consequence of racism. Most of the last ten years of his life have been committed to breaking down the walls around the White "ghetto." Compared to the other narratives I have recorded here, this is a unique aspect of Evan's story. He has used the message of God's acceptance to reach out to other people, from a base of confidence in his own security. The insight with which he addresses racism suggests that he has been able to decode many of the distress recordings of his earlier life. If we apply Curle's insights to our understanding of Evan's story, we could argue that he exhibits a relatively high level of awareness. This is evident in his insight into his own story, as well as his openness and understanding of other people. His willingness to accept and welcome change suggest that his belonging-identity is correspondingly low.

Overall, I have painted a picture of a person who has come a long way in his pilgrimage to come to terms with racism, and to model all aspects of his life around the message of Christ's love and acceptance. Something about Evan's story still bothers me, however, and this is his attitude towards racism as an institutional phenomenon. Evan's work is focused around addressing racism on the personal level - attempting to challenge people and move them forward towards personal liberation. At the same time he is distrustful of political processes. He feels that when Christians get involved in politics they automatically also have to compromise on ethical issues, which is unacceptable. While

Biography, Identity and Racism

this might have validity in certain circumstances, the implication of this way of thinking is that we fail to understand the bigger picture of how racism functions in society. If we attempt to change only attitudes, and leave power and ideology untouched, surely we will be fighting a losing battle in our attempts to eradicate racism? I believe that the fact that there are so few White Christians who appreciate this is an indication of the hold that racism has on our ability to think clearly and critically about racism.

Summary - dialogue between the personal and the communal

In the chapter preceding this one, I argued that our White Christian story must take seriously other versions of the South African story, which tell us how racism has become part of the very foundations of our society. I concluded that we cannot talk about our communal White identity unless we talk also about racism, and the way it has infiltrated that identity. I argued that when we tell the story of our faith, we must not leave out the story of how we remain captive to the sin of racism and desperately in need of liberation.

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate identity, and I have argued that identity has both a communal and a personal character. Like the Israelites of the Old Testament, if we want to tell the story of our community, we must also tell the story of the personalities who make up that community. I have thus talked about identity also in relation to individual White Christians.

Biography, Identity and Racism

As I discovered, this is quite a difficult task. It is one thing to talk about the story of our community, for while I am a member of that community, the story of the community is a collation of many stories, and therefore, to a certain extent, objective. It is quite another thing to analyse and critique the life stories of living people. Here the boundaries between what is right and wrong become less clear. When we talk about the story of a community it is simpler to analyse the impact and interplay of historical forces - in the life-story of an individual there are only people - nothing is objective. While this would seem to make our task more arduous, it is a good thing. For if our approach truly is narrative, then our concern is with people and historical events, not with abstract systems and "historical forces."

So we examined the biographies of four ordinary people. We travelled with them through the peaks and valleys of their personal pilgrimages to find themselves and to meet Christ in a confusing and difficult world. We heard about their battles to overcome deep-seated prejudices towards Black people, and talked about Harvey Jackins and internalised hurt and distress. We heard their need for acceptance, and talked about alienation as a symbol of a society divided by racism. We wondered why they were so reluctant to combat racism outside of the safety of personal relationships and questioned about how awareness and belonging impact on identity. And as we draw the stories to a close, I am reminded that to talk about identity is to talk about who we are at our deepest level. There is no doubt that our identity, both as a community and as individual people, has been deeply damaged by racism. Contrary to appearances White people *are* real victims of racism.

Biography, Identity and Racism

But this process of peering into ourselves has also taught us something very important. Racism is a *White problem*, and the only way we will solve it is to continue on the long pilgrimage of re-evaluating, questioning and challenging ourselves about who we are. As I pointed out at the beginning, this study was motivated by my involvement in running anti-racism programmes. In conclusion, therefore, I will draw out some of the learnings that have emerged during the course of this study, and try to suggest how they might be applied to the work of bringing transformation and renewal to our White community.

CONCLUSION

You said one could be deformed by this country, and yet it seems to me one can only be deformed by the things one does to oneself. It's not the outside things that deform you, it's the choices you make. To live anywhere in the world, you must know how to live in Africa. The only thing you can do is love, because it is the only thing that leaves light inside you, instead of the total, obliterating darkness.

- Creina Alcock¹

In the introduction to this thesis I said that *The Struggle Within* is a pilgrimage, a long and difficult road toward liberation. Along the way I have been helped and assisted by many people, and it has also been my privilege to be of assistance to others. One of the ways I have done this has been through my involvement in running *Challenging Racism* workshops. I have drawn extensively on that experience in writing this thesis, and at various points I have mentioned that part of the motivation to even begin, has been the hope that I could plough some of the learnings gained back into the programme. In

¹The words of Creina Alcock, quoted by Rian Malan (1990).

Conclusion

conclusion I would thus like to draw the discussion to a close by looking at some of the ways this can be accomplished.

We must re-learn our story

If we have only emerged from this investigation with one important discovery, it is this: to have an identity means *owning and telling our story*. Having a story and being able to tell it is part of the essence of what makes us human. Non-one can define our identity on our behalf - we know who we are and make sense of our lives by the way we tell the story of our life. Andrews (1986) and Earl (1993) have related how escaped slaves from the American Deep South told their story as a means of claiming their place in society.

Autobiography became a very public way of declaring oneself free, of redefining freedom and assigning to it oneself in defiance of one's bonds to the past, or to the social, political and sometimes even the moral exigencies of the present. (Andrews 1986:47)

Slaves were people who had been stripped of their dignity and their humanity. They did not know where they came from and their only status in society was as a possession of their owner. Autobiography was the psychological correlate of physical escape. They had no other way of drawing power from society in order to proclaim who they were.

Our story *tells us who we are*. This is more significant than we might initially realise. I have argued that a result of racism is the alienation of White people from ourselves, as a community and as individuals. When we become alienated from ourselves our identity becomes broken down - we lose the ability to tell our story, because we no

Conclusion

longer know that story. Dennis (1981) has argued that racial divisiveness gives rise to a social and psychological "double consciousness." From childhood on, we are conditioned to accept a double existence - we are taught both to love and hate, to trust and fear, to be both Christian and racist. As Jackins (1978) tells us, this is a painful experience, and we record it in such a way that it prevents us from thinking clearly about the issues involved. Nolan puts Jackins' argument into religious language by saying that sin is self-deceptive. He says it blinds us so that we no longer understand what we are doing.

Hypocritical blindness is a characteristic of all sin. We can only sin by fooling ourselves at that moment about what we are really doing. We try to deceive ourselves by making excuses for ourselves. We lie to ourselves. (1988:41)

Ultimately, it is this loss of identity that allows us to remain isolated in our "White ghetto." Without a story we cannot know that we are, trapped, for we have built the walls very high and it is difficult to see out.

The only way we can begin to penetrate the walls that encircle us is to claim back our story. We must become conversant with our history. We must know who we are and what we have done. As an individual White person, I own my identity only by telling both my personal story, and that of my people. In this thesis I have argued that the story of the White community in South Africa is a story of how racism has become insitutionalised in our society. We must come know that story intimately. At first it will cause us to become defensive, and we will try to rationalise its contradictions. But as we get to know it more fully, we will have no choice but to realise that our White story is

Conclusion

not a happy story, but a story of how untold suffering has been brought on the Black community in South Africa. As Christians, this also involves re-telling our faith story. To do this means acknowledging how sin has infiltrated and undermined that Christian story. We need to know what White Christians have done in the name of Christ. We also need to know what White Christians have failed to do when other interests have suppressed the demands of our faith.

This is the first step. Only when we know our history, as individuals and as community, can we in truth say that we know who we are. To attempt to rebuild our identity without doing this is to risk building on faulty foundations. Another reason to learn our history is so that we can begin to take pride in our heritage. For within our story we will find much to be proud of. Within the history of our community we will discover that there were people who resisted racism, who rejected the ideology of White superiority and worked to transform White society. Within the history of our faith we will hear the stories of White Christians who have chosen servanthood before triumphalism. In our own personal story we will also find much to be proud of. We will discover that we have resisted learning racism. We will see that we, too, are victims of racism and that we have learnt much from our own experience of other forms of oppression that can be put to use in combatting racism.

We must learn to overcome alienation

In the process of reclaiming our own story, we will not be able to avoid encountering other versions of our story. Brown (1975) tells us that this is an important part of

Conclusion

coming to know our own story. By listening to other versions of both the South African story and the Christian story, we are forced to be honest about our own story. When we hear these other stories we will realise how alienated we have become -both from the Black community, and from ourselves.

Our own story will tell us how racism has made us suffer guilt and shame. It will tell us how we have a burning need for acceptance which we cannot seem to fulfil. As we have seen in this study, that need for acceptance can be met in relationship with Christ. For God knows our story - we cannot deceive *Him*. God accepts us because we are made in His image, because in Christ's incarnation into our suffering world and in His death on the cross, God has carved a path through the sin that hides us from Himself. The message of God's acceptance can set us free to relate to other people out of love and not compulsion. The message of acceptance can also release us to feel pride in our heritage. Alienation means that we feel guilty and shameful about ourselves, our people and our history. Acceptance means overcoming guilt and shame and dealing with what alienates us from ourselves and other people.

We need to learn awareness

This study shows us that if we are to overcome racism, we need to become more aware. I have argued that racism is institutional in character - it is deeply embedded in the structures of our society. I have also said that racism is driven by a powerful ideological force which operates on both conscious and unconscious levels. Like sin, this ideology does not only work from the outside, but it perverts us from within. It tells us, as White

Conclusion

people, that we are superior, that we have a right to mistreat and oppress others. Likewise, it tells Black people that they are worthless, and it weakens their resistance to being degraded and dehumanised. This ideology is what gives racism its permanence, for racism is no longer just something that we do, it is something we believe in.

We must become aware of our thoughts and actions - our prejudices toward Black people, and the ways in which we discriminate. Yet we must remember that rejecting racism is not as simple as deciding to discard negative attitudes. Ideology operates at the deepest level - the level of identity. The ideology of racism is an illness which will take a long time to cure, even with powerful medicine. To accomplish this means adopting a new identity, learning a new story. This is not merely a matter of choosing a new story, but a *struggle* to submit old to new. It is a long and hard pilgrimage.

If we are to have any hope of success, we must become aware of those things that hold us back. Curle (1972) tells us that we resist change and attempt to preserve the status quo when our identity is defined in terms of our *belonging*. Growing in awareness means recognising that belonging emerges out of a need for acceptance, for status, for security - all symptoms of alienation. Growing in awareness means gaining the security in identity to relate to people freely, out of love and appreciation.

We need to undertake this pilgrimage together

We have learnt that identity has a context - the community in which it finds its expression. As we have already said, learning to combat racism means reclaiming our

Conclusion

story, forming a new identity. We cannot do this alone. In the discussion on personal identity, we learnt that overcoming alienation involves finding a supportive community. Here we can find the security to release painful stored emotions and the confidence to move into the uncharted waters of claiming a new identity.

We must find ways to make this supportive community a reality. Racism, and oppression in general, is a powerful force which we cannot resist alone. Supporting each other means acting as co-counselling partners, it means challenging each other to become aware of self deception. The ideology of racism is so powerful particularly because it operates on a subconscious and nonrational level. Supporting each other means taking the time to explore those parts of ourselves which we normally just allow to lie fallow. For together we can stand against the tide - alone all is lost, but with you by my side we shall not be defeated.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

- *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

APPENDIX

This appendix contains the full transcripts of the interviews conducted with the four respondents who were cited in this thesis. They represent, as far as possible, the exact content of the interviews, and are thus not grammatically "correct." Formalities at the beginning of the interviews, such as an introduction to what the study was about, were not included. Each transcript thus begins at the point in the interview when the actual discussion commenced.

Each respondent was told that they should try to tell their story wherever possible. They were not only asked what they thought about certain issues, but were asked to talk about the events and experiences in their lives which brought them to that position.

In the interests of confidentiality, certain names of people and places have been changed or removed from the transcripts.

Appendix

David

IH: So let's start with you telling me a bit about how you became a Christian, and what brought you to that point.. and what that meant for you.

DAVID: Okay. I can't remember the date, but even before we were married I used to look at the Bible and wonder where people at the time got all these phrases about were you born again, and all this kind of thing. But before I came to a commitment, I had read through the Bible from Genesis to the Acts, I didn't go any further than Acts because.. And when we got married it used to drive Denise mad. I used to pick the Bible up every now and again, and I used to read it. What it meant I don't know. Obviously I was seeking for something and I couldn't find it, because I did get a little bit involved in Eastern mysticism, you can call it that, and that used to drive Denise.. it had me completely foxed as to what she was looking for. And then around about 1974..

IH: Had she been a Christian all along?

DAVID: No, she was and atheist. It used to worry her that I was looking for something. About 1974 I had got to the stage where I had said, obviously the Anglican church hasn't got it, I had better go back to the roots of the church. Let's go back to the Roman Catholics. And I've got a couple of Baptist friends and that just about sent them up the walls. So they led me to a non-denominational little house Bible-study.. all denominations. And they were looking at all sorts of things. And we went there and the people looked us up and down, accepted us, and we saw the Holy Spirit must have been working amongst these people.. and what they had, we wanted, and that gave us both tremendous hunger, and we went back that night and said, "Well if that's what Christianity is, we want it." Meanwhile, they on the other hand, said, "No there are two lost souls, now we are gonna pray for them." And that night I had a pen like this and I left it there, and the next morning I went round to the person's home and I said, you know, I left my pen here. And that just opened up a whole thing of her being able to witness to me, and I went home with a pile of books and my pen and a whole lot of food for thought. And I'd say within a couple of months we made a commitment in the Full Gospel church down in Chase Valley. If it hadn't been the person who was preaching we possibly wouldn't have made a commitment, but both Denise and I made a commitment at the same time. It was the Lord's planning, because if it hadn't happened that way I don't know that Denise would ever have made a commitment. Obviously the Lord worked in her heart, and very shortly after that, after being preached at in pulpit in the Anglican church that what I wanted and was looking for was not acceptable, and after there was a Holy Spirit conference in the Anglican cathedral here, and we tried to take it back into the Anglican church, and they didn't want us. That was really when the change came home - more than when I was born again. Okay, when I was born again there was a change in

Appendix

me. Some of the things have changed. In [factory], where I worked.. people were just swearing and cursing and screaming all day long. Probably about after a week, as I was sitting at my desk, the Lord said to me, "No more." And that made a difference for one, I started making a.. witness to the people around me. And then there was a small group of us that used to meet, at work or wherever, and look at the Bible. And I didn't even know which Bible to read. But it started in me then, and then I went to this Holy Spirit conference.. and from there the Business Man's Fellowship in Pietermaritzburg. They called us up the next week and we had to come and testify about being born again, and what the Holy Spirit had done, and then various people of various colours and backgrounds started testifying about how the Holy Spirit had moved in their lives and their anger and frustrations against, whether it's Black or White, had been taken away. They were able to meet people on an equal footing, and it happened for me in the same way. And it was meaningful. I got very involved in activities within the church, but Denise couldn't, because we had small kids and she had to look after them. And I was actually bad and naughty - I used to run away to this meeting and that meeting. But I think..

IH: Which church was that at that stage?

DAVID: I was in the Anglican church in Howick. And he actually preached from the pulpit and told us to move along, which we did. A whole lot of Anglicans moved out and we all went and joined, um, what was his name, [minister], and we used to meet on a Tuesday or a Wednesday night. And it got so big that we decided that we would like to make an Assemblies out of it, which is now the assemblies at Howick. But that's how that started. There were about 40 of us, and it was tremendous, because there was the freedom which was not allowed in the Anglican church. And that made me sad, because I came out of a background of absolute, not Atheism in a way, but my mother didn't believe, and she was challenged when I was baptised by the Anglican minister at Hilton.. from then onwards I sort of thought about what my mom had said and what that minister had said to her, because he didn't say it in isolation, he said it with me around. And my mom was trying to get away from him. That's basically it..

IH: And your history as a Christian since then?

DAVID: Well, we joined, we heard Peter was coming to Hilton. And we had to make a choice, because here was this assembly just about starting, and here was the Anglican church that we had been kicked out of. But we heard that Peter was a believer, born again.. I went and saw him, and I was the second person in his stay there who joined the church. What I saw, I liked, and it was something that was new. The renewal in the Anglican church in Pietermaritzburg was new, and it was easier for me to fit into the newness of the Anglican church than to get into the oldness of the Assemblies, although it was a new thing. And we just got involved in all the things, I became a sidesman, I became a helper, whatever you call him, up at the altar, and things like that. Just sank myself into it. And what I found was, here was a group of people who

Appendix

accepted me as I was. Whereas, out there, because of my epilepsy, and because I was like I was, I was alone. And these people had time for me, and as a result I had time for them. And I still have time for the people in the church, although I don't - I've never really mixed with the Black and African and other people, because I just don't meet them. I think at the moment, even now, I still battle with the Blacks, simply because of what they've done to me in the last couple of years. And what I've picked up from that, every bloke as he's walking along with a smile on, the moment he pulls a gun or a knife out, you can see his eyes change. So it could be anyone walking along, and I don't know whether he's a Christian or not a Christian, he's not wearing a badge. And this is the thing I've had to come to terms with, because it's been, it's been quite traumatic. Even the other day, a bloke came in and he wore dark glasses and he looked a bit of a squiv, you know, and I just got so uneasy because there was nobody around but me. And my partner came in, and he was obviously okay. But I'm having to adjust.

IH: I believe you were assaulted a short while ago. Was there a previous time as well?

DAVID: Ya, but he didn't assault me. The previous time was two years ago in November, maybe it's three now. They came in the evening.. the boss had come back from Cape Town, and we'd been talking there, and the boss said, "Oh it's time to go home now." And he pulled out the door..

IH: This is at the shop?

DAVID: At the shop. And I said, "Okay I'm coming," and I went to my case and I found a floppy disk. And I said, "Cheery-oh, I'm just going to put this in the safe," and as I came back into the shop, there were two Blacks waiting for me. And I walked towards them to help them, and when I got from here to the chairs I realised, it was just a sixth sense, this is not genuine. And they wouldn't show me their features and their faces. And the one bloke cocked a revolver, and I said, "No man, what do you want?" He said "Turn around and get behind the counter," and they tied me up. And as I turned around, I saw about five of them coming in through the door. So they tied me up, and when they got to the back, I gave them the keys, and they tried to open the safe and couldn't get it open. So I opened it for them, and then they pushed me under the table. When I was lying under the table they were standing at the end there, and one bloke was left to guard me, and the biggest thing he was doing was to make sure I looked down. And whenever I looked up to see if they were still watching me, then I'd get shouted at. And they didn't do anything to me because I was out of the way. When they walked past I wasn't there, and they didn't kick me. And they tied me up but they did a slack job, so when they left I got free very easily. And it wasn't pleasant anyway.

IH: Ya, for sure!

Appendix

DAVID: The first time I had angina for days and days afterwards, whereas the second time when they actually beat me up, I didn't have any angina, nothing at all. But I believe.. I got a tremendous fright. I was bruised, they walked all over my body and my testicles, everything, and they were hitting me. One bloke was hitting me with something hard, I can only presume it was a revolver butt. The bloke with the knife who was tying me up kept on just hitting me in the face, he bent my glasses all out of position. But then it was getting light, so they left me and went. In fact when they took my till my, they took all my fifties and hundreds, it had a whole lot of these credit card slips, so they left them. So my till had a lot of money in it..

IH: That was the most recent time?

DAVID: Ya. But it's, it's really given me, I see any Black man, and unless I know him I'm anxious. I get really anxious sometimes. Other times I come in and I have no hassles. I don't know whether it's the Lord telling me something and I'm extra cautious, or I make sure when that happens I'm on opposite sides of the counter. But I'm forever expecting somebody to come up with a rifle, a revolver or a knife, or something..

IH: So has that had quite an impact on the way you've been able to relate to Black people generally?

DAVID: I've tried, I try in my way to be the same, because basically what I feel is everybody is not the same, and they are not all there to bash me around. But I think the thing that worries me is that they all look the same until they pull a gun or a knife.. you can just see their eyes change, they become hard.. presumably it would be the same with a White man, but a White man hasn't done that to me. I mean if these blokes had come at me and they hadn't had firearms I could have faced up to them. I'm not a chicken and I'm not an old man yet, for sure, and I think this is the hard part, because when I came out of heart surgery in 1979, 1974, I can't remember when it was. One thing the doctor said to me was, "Never lose your temper, it'll kill you." And I'm man with a violent temper; when I say I am violent, I am violent. And the Lord has done something for me. When I became a Christian it started going off, but it still wasn't the end of it. But when I had my heart-attack I had to change my whole life-style. So, you know, that's a bit of it. But I can remember even when I was a Christian and there was a guy who messed me around at [factory] and I was on the phone, and I just put the phone down and the next thing I knew I was walking into his office three hundred metres away. That's when I came to myself again, and he, he obviously got the message and he got out of his office. And when I realised what I'd done, and where I was.. I calmed down as much as I could and I went back to my office and kicked the door, sort of thing, you know. But if he had been there I don't know what I would have done to him. I'm not physically a hell of a strong guy, but over the years I've done physical work, you know when I was farming I was physically chopping down trees, I was physically loading wood. When I was in the factory I was physically working on the machines

Appendix

at times, just to keep myself fit.. But my Christian life has calmed me down, it has made me look at things with a bit more perspective, I suppose. I feel for people, man, I feel for the Black man. You know, I don't like seeing what's happening around, but at the same time I don't like seeing what the government's doing. Because as I see it they're bringing the White man back down to the Black man, instead of bringing the Black man up to the White man. And I say this for a couple of reasons. The one that really sticks out is Gary my son, he's in Thailand now. He didn't do well at school, simply because he didn't apply himself. When he was in the army doing his stint on the border, he wrote me a letter and asked me to get him into university. And I did, I got him into.. the one down at Sarsfeld, and he wanted to do forestry. And when he came back, he said, "Dad, I don't want to do it." And I said, "If you don't want to do it that's fine, but don't ask me to go and stop everything. If you don't want to go there, to university, you write letters and tell them you're not coming, and do whatever you want to do." Which he did, and it was stupid. He should have gone there, started, and then changed his directions, which he didn't do. And he couldn't get into university because he didn't have enough points. He should have had over 35 or something, and he only had 30 or something like that. But there were Black people who were getting in with only 6 points. And to me, that, you not helping the Black man by doing that, you're not helping. You've got to bring him up so he gets the 35, or whatever it is. And that's how I feel about it. I don't mind if the Black man wants to be like me, let them be like me, but why take us now and try to bring us down.. This other thing, this Black consciousness thing I don't agree with, it's just apartheid in reverse, and that's not what it's about.

IH: Are there other specific areas in which you have felt that White people are being brought down?

DAVID: Well, that's the main one that I can explain, but um, I don't believe that this country is ever going to be better by what's happening at the moment. If you want to be like me, you must work like me. You must achieve, like I've had to do, and you must also, if you haven't achieved like I haven't achieved, you bear the consequences. I mean, I haven't got a matric, I've borne the consequences, simply because of the epilepsy I've had I haven't the ability to concentrate, and things like that. So I haven't been able to improve myself. Now, I can't blame that on the government or anything, but what I am saying is, because I didn't achieve, I couldn't attain that level. And these people who haven't achieved are expecting to get that level without attaining anything. And that, that's one thing that I, you know, I find difficult. But I really do, I find that difficult.

IH: Um, just getting back to your, sort of, your Christian walk. The last ten years? And after joining the Anglican church? What happened after that?

DAVID: Well, we got very, very, very involved with discipleship. Peter used to disciple us, and it used to, it improved my outlook on my work situation, how I worked and how I related to

Appendix

people. It improved how I related to other people in the church, and how I related to people outside the church, outside of my work situation, you know, meeting people it helped a lot. Um, self-discipline..and you know, some of the things that, for instance, I was sitting at my shop, I was looking out of the window, and I saw an African woman, lady walking by. And the Lord said to me, "Now look at her." I looked at her very carefully. And I said, "Ya, I am watching." He said, "That is a person." I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "That is a person. And I love that person. And *you* have got to change your attitude to that person." Now I thought I had changed my attitude, but it made me realise that in my era of growing up.. I had a friend for instance at [factory]. When I say a friend, probably I should say more of an acquaintance, who was put into jail because he'd had sex with Africans, African women. And he was very bitter, and everybody looked down upon him and that type of thing. And because of the way it was done, anybody who was Black was taboo. And we grew up, well I only really came across that when I came back to Pietermaritzburg. When I was on the farm, where a lot of my hassles were, they were just other people. But when I came back into mixing in, in an industrial area where it was more prevalent, you didn't mix, you deliberately didn't mix. Now I tried to be as fair as I could, but I still wouldn't mix. Whereas the day I gave my life, the Lord would take me to meetings, there were Africans there in the Anglican church in Hilton we used to have a service on a Sunday where Peter and I used to share responsibilities with it. And there really, I have no hassles with other Christians. And I shouldn't think I would have much of a hassle with the people - I've grown up with them, I mean you can see from what I've said, I've grown up with them. But they're so different, and it seems to be such a deliberate thing today, just stirring all the time.

IH: This incident that happened when you were staring out of your shop window and the Black woman walked by - was that a recent thing?

DAVID: I would say it's four or five years ago.

IH: It's quite amazing!

DAVID: Ya, I mean I was faced with it. It wasn't anything I was consciously working through at the time or anything, but I was just shown, no that's a person and I love them. Now the Lord loves me and I know that, and the Lord loves them, and I must accept them as another person. Not as.. not as an animal, it wasn't as an animal, but just as a non-entity. You know what I am saying. I didn't ever say that they didn't have a soul and that.. like the far, far-right. So it came out of a background where my mother was a liberal english, but she wasn't so liberal.

IH: And your experience at Eagle fellowship? Has that been different.. did you leave the Anglican church with Peter?

Appendix

DAVID: Ya, well.. they excommunicated me.

IH: Oh, did they?

DAVID: Ya, they excommunicated me because I got baptised. And yet he waited for me to get back from Israel so I could be present when he was being baptised, cause my daughter was being baptised. And they excommunicated him. ..And I said, "Well, if they are going to do that to the minister on baptism, I had a believers baptism many years ago. I must get out, I can't live a double standard." So we all moved out. I just went up to the councillors and people like that and said, "Sorry, I can't stay, I'm leaving now as well." And there were a number of friends, Clive..

IH: Oh, was he also there?

DAVID: Ya, there were some others, others have moved out of Pietermaritzburg. If I think of it there's Joyce, Bronwyn, there's Clive, I can't think of anyone offhand, anyone else. And we started here and we did the wrong thing, and we realised that we had to be honest with one another and talk, because Peter started doing something, and we thought Peter being who he was, would hear the Lord and do the right thing, and he did the wrong thing. And the Lord brought us back again. And it's just that - as a check. Because it there's something worrying me now, if Peter does something, I won't go to him and say, "You've done the wrong thing." I'd say, "Peter, don't you feel, and I'd just put down what I feel, where the vision is going. And it's fantastic, and it's not a big deal, but at least it's making him think, "Wo, is this right or isn't it?" Because the vision we have now, and what's happening now, little churches, is what we had when we left the Anglican church. But we got involved with New Covenant Fellowship, and the other one which is that dentist fellow and another bloke who is no longer in the church. And it was enormous, and that's not what our vision was. And what I found personally was that my loyalty was to Peter, and I was hitting my head against other people, because I was doing what was right for Peter. And this caused me a bit of a hardship. But then again.. we had to go to the minister and say, "I'm sorry, but I can't do what you're wanting because it is in conflict with what we are doing." Gradually Peter went to Indumiso, as you know, and he came back and came out of that, he became fulltime minister again, for want of a better way of putting it.. When the bloke came out from America.. we thought, oh well, Peter knows, and if we had just said, "Hey Peter, the vision was like that, and now you are doing that." If we'd had the confidence, and said to him, he would possibly have stopped and said, "Hey, hold on, you're right, that's what the vision was. Now what are we doing? Are we changing, are we still going the same way, or is there some other.." I think, ya, one of the other things that I faced, that came out of the discipling, is how do I, David Mann, in my little environment, be an effect on other people. And as a result that's made my relationship towards the Black man more.. trying to help. Just as though he were another person. Come into the shop, treat them civilly. And I've had to come to.. you know it's a small thing, but when people come into the shop - first come, first served,

Appendix

whether you are White, green, grey or purple. Come in through that door and you will be served. If you're the last one, you will be served last. It's the only way I know of being fair. And that's the kind of thing..

IH: Did that change from earlier?

DAVID: No, before I wasn't working with the public.

IH: Oh, I see.

DAVID: But I had to work out something that was fair, and something I could live with. So I couldn't live with making people just wait because of the colour of their skin. It's not how I've been brought up.

IH: You said a little earlier that your mum was a sort of liberal. Did she teach you certain things about how to relate to Black people.?

DAVID: No, my mom was very bad. I don't know, I can't remember what I said, but she didn't get on with men, anyway. If people had only known that, she would have been more acceptable in society. Because every person around where I grew up, was scared that, my mom was a divorcee - she wasn't first of all, she wouldn't divorce, she only got divorced very much later. And she had no time for men, no time, no time what so ever. And that made life difficult. And as a result we were sort of ostracised, and as, and again, I grew up, I was an only child, and I grew up in my own way.

IH: How did her reaction to men affect the fact that she had a male son?

DAVID: She was very domineering, she was a very domineering women, and we battled for many years. When I was retrenched, I was retrenched a couple of times, the first time I was retrenched I moved into my mom's house because I had nowhere to go to. I had a wife, baby, and my mom now wanted to dominate, or domineer, I don't know which is the right way of putting it, my family. She started giving my wife hell, and I just come home one day, and I just sat her down, and I said, I said, "I'm moving out, soon as I can. But until I move out, you will just leave us alone." Because we had a fight before we got married. When we got married I said to my mom, "Now listen. I'm getting married tomorrow. Now you, I don't want to *see* you in my home for six months. After six months you are very welcome to come over. Because I and Denise have to sit down and make a start to life." 'Cause I was on the farm and Denise was in Joburg, we were engaged for something like two or three years. But, poles apart, hey, and here we are talking about bringing Denise out of the jungle, into the bush, and she had a lot of adjustments she would have to make. And I realised this. And I said to my mom, "No way. Give

Appendix

us a chance to get together, and make our life what we want it to be." And we battled, because Denise couldn't speak a word of Zulu. She could speak Afrikaans, she could speak English. But the Africans where I was couldn't speak English, they could speak Zulu. So.. then I came home, we had been on the farm for a week, two weeks, and there was a puffadder, and she saw this, and she started screeching and shouting. And the staff, they didn't know what she was saying, and she didn't know what they were saying, and I was miles away. So I came home, killed the snake, and then told her what to do. But it has an effect you see. You've got to learn to live with each other. It's two singles coming together and marrying, there's a lot to get used to. And I've often said, I watched my boss.. lost his wife in a tragic accident, and I saw him working through that, I promise I worked though a lot with that. And me, as I am today, if my wife had to die suddenly, I'm human and I'd want a companion. But there's another side to it. To now go and form relationships as I have over the years - not again, really. That's something that just blows my mind. Because people are not honest with each other, they really aren't. The *Free To Be* course taught me.. well I've always tried to be honest without hurting people. But that *Free To Be* course just did something inside of me. To be myself. And I guess I've always been a loner.. If you want to see me in terms of the church, I'm not a teacher, I'm not an apostle or a prophet, or.. I'm a pastor, I've a heart for people.. but that whole thing of forming a close relationship again goes against the grain. My mom was a pommie, and she had very different ideas.. she was eccentric.. You know we had reconciliation in my family many years ago.. and my mom just sat me down and said to me, "For all the things I've done wrong to you over the years I'm sorry, but I did my best." And I was able to accept that, and I accepted that my mom was being honest. She wasn't trying to be devious of anything. She was sitting down and being dead honest about it, and I appreciated it. And it made a difference, because when she was dying I said to Denise, I said, "here we go," and I started making ready for my mom to come home. I said, "Now we are going to look after this old lady." And she never came home, she died the next morning. I realised that my mom had probably a lot of fronts and shields that she had put up over the years to cope with life.. the few friends she had were genuine friends.. she had no time for Christianity..

IH: No time for Christianity?

DAVID: She worked seven days a week, she had no time for anything..

IH: Did she do that for a long time?

DAVID: All my life, all my life. When my dad left, he left when I was three months old. He left with a woman who he had an affair with, who was already three months pregnant.. and my half brother, who lives in Australia, is nine months younger than I am, and the interesting thing is, we both did the same kind of thing. When we left school we went far from home. He went into the outback, I went to Zululand, away from parental control. And we had to work through it.

Appendix

And we did the same stupid things, getting drunk, you know all the things that young people do. We did exactly the same. We had 24 hours together, and we shared this.. we didn't sleep, we stayed up all night.

IH: So are you still in touch with your dad?

DAVID: My dad has since died.. ya, we had reconciliation, through John. We had reconciliation between my dad and my mom, and my mom loved John, more than she would, I wouldn't say more than she loved me, but more than she would admit to.

IH: Did he come out here?

DAVID: John? He was on his way to Oxford to do a degree of some sort, an honours, and when he came out we sat down, and I wanted my dad, I wanted to know all about my dad, I wanted everything from my dad, because I'd had all sorts of fantasies about my dad as a kid because everybody asked me, "Hey, you got a dad? What does he do?".. If the teachers asked me then I went home and there was hooaha. My mom was at the school the next day. "You don't ask these kinds of questions of my son." And it doesn't make it easier on the son, because he wants to know, "What does my father do that I'm not allowed to tell anybody or find out?" And I wasn't allowed to find out where he was, we never met. One of the staff my mom had eventually gave Denise his address, which Denise very wisely never divulged to me. 'Cause when John came out and we chatted through everything.. And I got hold of my dad - I said to my half brother, "Go back, and if my dad is happy that I can get into contact with him, then he must please write to me, so that I'm not pushing him. I don't want to push dad, if he doesn't want to write, that's fine. I still didn't know Denise knew where he was. Well, I, actually I did then. And then he wrote to me, and we started a relationship from there. And he died a number of years later..

IH: Did you ever see him?

DAVID: No, sent him one or two photos, though. Cause he came from Empangeni, he was a sugar farmer there. Well his dad was a sugar farmer there - he became a reporter on the Witness. And he was, he must have been quite a good man, but, he went to Australia and became an accountant. Ya, in those days you used to go to night school, do what ever you did, correspondence course, and then you became an accountant with a firm. And he furthered himself well. When his son, my half-brother was born, his mistress left him with a little baby of about three months, so he got a housekeeper to look after the baby. And they, when my mom eventually divorced him, got married. And she, I believe, is still alive, but I've got no contact with her, with Molly at all. And John, my half brother, has a life that is not the same as mine. So there's not really a point of contact, we miss each other quite a bit. And I'm sorry, I should have kept in touch with him. But now I don't know where he is. He's a teacher, but he's not

Appendix

practical, oh-no. He went to England to do a degree, a masters or whatever is. And he got there, and went to see his mom, and the first thing that happened, his mom's companion died, so he had to deal with it. No sooner had his mom's companion died than his mom died, and he had to bury her. So, he was so busy with all these things that happened that he didn't get his degree. So now he had to get back to Australia. And he couldn't settle to do any work. His wife had to work. She went out and left him with the family, and she went out and worked, and saved, and they saved up enough money to get back to Australia. And this is the kind of thing that doesn't make sense to me. I find it hard that a man couldn't find something to do. But the thing that really interested me with my half-brother was his love for children. His love for his wife, aah, I could never love my children like that. . And it's because we had the trauma in our lives. He reacted in a completely different way to the trauma than I did. I reacted in anger, and he's reacted in love.

IH: And is he a Christian?

DAVID: No, he's not. He may be now, but I don't think so. The Aussies are a different crowd. Religion is something that is out there. Maybe since dad's died, maybe something's happened. Ya, it's changed my values too at work. I came to Peter one day, and I said, "Listen, I've got a problem here with my boss." He said, "Why." I said, "He's being dishonest. I'm part and parcel of the business, but how am I going to deal with this? ..Because I'm part of what's going on here." And we came to the place where we decided I'd go and I'd face him. And I faced him, I went to him and I said, "You're being dishonest. It's not my way, what are you going to do about it." And he got very angry.

IH: He did?

DAVID: Ya, he got very angry. And he said, "Ya, I don't have to tell you anything or do anything." He said, "It's my business." ..I said, "But it worries me, and it's against my Christian principles." I said, "I've said it to you this afternoon, I've told you." I said, "I'm not going to challenge you about it again ever. I need the job, thank you for the job you've given me." ..After nine years the Lord spoke to him, and he changed his ways.. Now, I don't know how much of that is because of what I did, but he's gone back to his bad ways now that I'm not with him and now that my son's not with him. Cause Neville is a Christian as well, and he worked with him for a year. But he's doing things he shouldn't be doing, and I just know it.

IH: So, you're not working with him any more?

DAVID: No, I'm not working with him anymore. But maybe cause I'm not there there's nobody challenging him, I don't know. For instance the man I'm working with now is a good catholic, he's a very nice man. His outlook on life is very different to Graeme's ..he's been straight down

Appendix

the line. And there are certain things he does I don't agree with.. but he's not going against God, which the other man was. And he should have known better, he was a Christian, you know what I mean. Confessed, born again Christian. And we Christians are funny. I'm a work Christian and I'm a home Christian. It doesn't work like that. It's meant to be everything - all or nothing. And I mean I still fall down in that area, I mean even myself. Over the years I've had to bend the truth now and again to cover people and to cover myself, because you don't want to lose your job. I try my hardest not to do things like that, but over the years I've bent the truth here and there. But it worries me, every time I've come to the Lord and said, "Sorry. I've done it again, Lord. And I ask for your forgiveness." ..Cause when you get to my age, it's hard to lose that job - there's nothing else I can do. ..there's this guy I know who also doesn't have a matric, although he's got his university degree in chemistry, it's still that dirty piece of paper, matric, that he can't have.

IH: They place so much emphasis on it..

DAVID: Ya, that bloke's older than I am, I don't know whether he's alive still.. But you can't tell your children that , they don't.. we saw Neville.. we saw him fail. He hasn't got the dirty piece of paper. Can't get a decent job. He's having to work his way, really having to work from the bottom. In the year that he's spent with Graeme, he's learnt more than many people have learnt in 20 years.

IH: So he's actually capable?

DAVID: Aah, nothing wrong with Neville, nothing wrong with Neville.. he just hasn't got that piece of paper, and he won't get it.. he's not wired up that way. But he's got the Lord on his side.. but even at the moment.. he's got to find his own faith. Gary had to find his own, and today his faith is very strong - he's in Taiwan, doing the Lord's work. And I just pray that Neville would do the same, cause Colleen, Colleen's born again, Gary's born again, Neville's made a commitment in the past, but he's drifting. He's having to find his own faith. And Christopher's born again. And he's going to be leaving home next year. So those two have got to find their faith..

Appendix

Sasha

IH: I would like it if you could just give me an overview of your early background, anything you think is relevant, and particularly stuff about your early memories of colour, and how you felt your parents thought about the whole issue of White and Black.

SASHA: ..I was born in Maritzburg.. and in terms of a colour thing, my first recollection of colour was our maid, and it was very much an "us and them", our way and their way. Even with my dolls, or whatever, I was taught to play the Black way, and sort of given that impression, but always with the feeling that we are better than them.. With the gardener as well, Ephraim, we used to have fun with him in the garden. But he was our servant, and even as little twerps we still treated him as our servant. So then that is sort of my earliest recollection of the race issue.

IH: Your parents - did they talk much about Black people, or about how you should feel about Black people, or anything like that? Or was it a very understated thing?

SASHA: Very understated. My mom and dad are coming from quite different places. My dad has always been.. had a heart for Black education.. a good heart. It comes across in a paternalistic way, but he's definitely, his heart is in the right place. Whereas my mom has just a mild tolerance level for Black people, but its always "they do this and they do that".. gross generalisations about them.. so it's sort of I'm not to sure.. ya, cause I definitely, I mean I picked up a whole lot of racist stuff, from younger, I think from both but I think mainly from my mom. But it was never overtly stated, it was always subtle attitudes and stuff like that. And then after about five or six years in 'Maritzburg we moved to Mooi River.. my dad taught at Treverton over there.. ya, my dad had been teaching out in Edendale here in 'Maritzburg, or he had had involvement in Edendale.. I'm not exactly sure, but I have recollections of going out a couple of times to Edendale.. at Mooi River he taught at Treverton, and there our last year of staying at Treverton, they were starting to introduce "non-Whites" [jokes] to Treverton, and that was quite the landmark. He was in favour of it, but some of the staff weren't, and there were quite a few ructions. I don't remember too much about it, I just remember thinking.. the impression I got and that I picked up was that, "Ooh, the school is going to go downhill now," and I believed that.. it was just one of those things I picked up. Oh yes, our other maid in Mooi River, Irene, I remember us ripping her off because of her smell.. incredibly rude stuff. But that's just the way kids are.. saying "Irene, why do you smell," and she'd say "You smell to me," kind of thing. And just treating her really badly, like an inferior, I am quite embarrassed about that.

IH: Did your parents see this?

SASHA: No, it was mainly when they weren't around. 'Cause she had to babysit us whenever

Appendix

they went to Bible study or anything. She had a phobia of frogs, so we used to go to her and say "Irene, I've got a frog here," and she used to go running and screaming out the house.. so that was Mooi River. And Mafeking.. we moved to Mafeking after that, and that was a real landmark in the whole.. my development in terms of race. The first three years we were there I went to Mafeking primary school - it was eighty percent Afrikaans.. and very, very racist attitudes there, but then my second year there, Mafeking became incorporated into Bop and that was a huge, a huge problem for most of the Mafeking community. They couldn't handle, because.. they were sort of expected to become a multiracial community.. so there was a lot of tension around that. But my dad was, at that stage he was teaching at the technical college, and was throwing himself totally into Black education, and enjoying it a lot and proving to be quite good at it.

IH: And was he able to relate to Black people on an equal level? Did he respect.. was it quite paternalistic or was he quite respectful?

SASHA: Not very paternalistic, I think he sees himself as being realistic, and not paternalistic, and I can sort of see where he is coming from.. he makes allowances a bit for colour, which for him, he says it's being realistic. So it's difficult to know how to label it.

IH: But he wasn't "part of the struggle" type of thing?

SASHA: No he wasn't that either, I think he just saw himself as someone who had been advantaged, and so trying to help disadvantaged..

IH: With a Christian motive?

SASHA: Ya, but also just with a personal enjoyment of that.. and, ya, he just really enjoyed his colleagues and the students on a human level, which I started picking up then, and I quite appreciated. And then after about three years at Mafeking primary school, this was an immense thing, they moved us to Mmabatho primary school and my brothers to the high school. And that was a totally multiracial school, although it was about 85% Black students and then a few coloured, indian, Whites.. and that was an excellent experience. It was quite difficult at first, I think I went through a bit of an identity crisis, because I had always.. sort of played with my brothers and they were now at the highschool, and I.. as a White not knowing how to fit in with the Black's games, because a lot of them were in Tswana, and they were.. you know all of the girls standing in a ring, and the one in the middle, and they sing and clap and swop places, and eventually I picked up the games and it was quite fun, but at first I struggled with that quite a bit and would just spend break times on my own, feeling a bit alienated.

IH: And after a while were there relationships there?

Appendix

SASHA: Yes, ya, quite soon actually..

IH: And were they real friendships?

SASHA: Yes, yes they were, that sort of happened. In standard four my best friend was Lindiwe, she was really nice.. and then you also develop worst enemies - President Mangope's daughter was my worst enemy, we used to get in big fistfights.. she was in my class. So that was a really good experience.. but still sort of racial attitudes. I remember.. because I hadn't learned about using deodorant or anything at that stage and I started smelling of sweat, and I remember thinking one day "Oh, I've started smelling like the Blacks, what has happened to me?" and that was my response to it.. and that sort of showed my ingrained attitude towards Black people. And I also remember.. because we wore the Black pinafore uniform, and cycling home from school and being called a "witkaffir" and "kaffirboetie" and all that by the whities, and we were quite alienated..

IH: Did your dad move you to the school, or why did you go to Mmabatho school?

SASHA: Ya, it was sort of a family decision, I think. The standard of education was very high.. it was semi-privatised with a very good system, the Leaf school system. And also just sort of my dad decided it would be a very good experience for us, which it was..

IH: ..there was a White school in the area?

SASHA: Yes, there was.. that was the one that was eighty percent Afrikaans.. but it was quite a scaly school.. so I spend Std 4 and half of Std 5.. the highschool started from Std 5 and so half of Std 5 I spent at Mmabatho highschool, and again a very good experience.. because educationally it was brilliant. I remember in Std 5 I was far more independent in the work that I was doing and in my thinking than I was in matric in the Transvaal. They encouraged individual thought, and how to criticise and analyse a text, and things like that, so at a Std 5 level, it was really brilliant. But then halfway through that year my dad was transferred - well he applied for a post in the DET with their technical education department and got it, so we moved to Pretoria [laughs], and that was a shock, it was a real cultural shock. Because of having grown up spending all my playing time with brothers and things like that, and also in a multiracial school, you don't pick up much about peer pressure and fashions and all stuff like that. So I arrived in Pretoria greasy-haired, pimply faced.. and that was awful.. and this sudden cut-off-ness from Black people. Where I had started seeing fellow Black students as friends, and to my mom's horror brought a couple of them home to play - like some of the guys, and my mom would get a bit tense about that.. but that was, I had learned to relate to them as fellow human beings, and in Pretoria there was just this "us and them" thing again..

Appendix

IH: How did you respond to that?

SASHA: I reacted against it.. and I became quite reactionary just in a sense of going out of my way to try and humanise Black people, and to show that I was doing that. And then in about Std 8 I started trying to be cool, and that didn't fit in with being cool..

IH: So did you abandon this?

SASHA: A little bit. Ag, at home I was always very friendly with the maids and things.. because I went through a terrible lack of identity stage.. after my brother died as well, at the end of Std 8, because he was very much into nonracialism as well, pushing for that, and anti the government.. but then he died at the end of my Std 8 year..

IH: How old was he?

SASHA: Std 9.. a real anarchist.. and because I had grown up with him and spent most of my time with him, my identity was very much linked with him, and we had similar values and stuff. And after he died my identity just went, I didn't know where my identity lay at all. I didn't know God then either, I sort of knew religion, but not God.. and so I started taking on the values of friends who were significant to me and who were strong enough in their own identity for me to sort of feed off that identity, or something like that. And one of my closest friends was a real racist, and used derogatory terms about Blacks and that, and I just picked up all of that rubbish, and it was awful.

IH: When you say it was awful, did you think that at the time, or was it afterwards?

SASHA: Yes, at the time I knew it was awful, but to go along with it, and to try and establish an identity.. so ya.. I went through about a year of just being a total little shit.. and I alienated my close friends.. a lot of friends who had had similar values to what I had had before. And then halfway through Std 9 I met God.. and it was quite a sort of radical meet God experience, and chucked out the whole being cool thing.. I think in quite a helpful way, because I had denied myself and my own identity to try and fit in.. and God, it was such a strong sense of Him kind of sending me an identity in Him, and that's okay, which was really good.. and it just freed me into being myself again. And so that was sort of a turning point in the whole personal thing. And then in matric I threw myself into matric quite a bit - and I became academically inclined for the first time in my life - till I got to varsity. And then when I came to varsity I became sort of a reactionary, but in my own way. I didn't go for joining groups that were fighting racism or anything like that.. ya, I had no vision for that, but I always, I had this deep urge.. which I think it was just because my mom.. she's a bit of an idiot, and I sort of reacted against her.. and she's incredibly conservative and.. just that thing of treating Black people in an incredibly derogatory

Appendix

way, but trying to be Christian about it at the same time, like trying to convert them to our way, but they're still less than us, and all that sort of stuff. And especially when I got to varsity, I went through an incredibly reactionary stage against that. Ag, it was fun doing one or two marches and stuff, but that wasn't really what I had a heart for. I think I just went out of my way to humanise Black people, almost overboard - making allowances I guess, and making a statement as well. And through it I started realising that I can communicate quite well with Black people, because it is often a thing - there can be a communication barrier because of language, cause of background, cause of culture and stuff, and I realised that wasn't there.. or not so much. I think the multiracial school was incredibly good in that, and just learning to fit in.. and I started going to SCF quite regularly at one stage, and I enjoyed that a lot, it was a really good experience, and just.. ya, a gradual sort of starting to see Black people as people, and not necessarily as Black people. I think looking back on it I'm glad for significant things happening: like the multiracial school, like my dad's value system, and like having a brother who was quite strong in defying, sort of social norms and things, and friends and stuff..

IH: How do you respond to the whole issue now of racism as a society phenomenon? How do you feel about it?

SASHA: .. It angers me. It think what is good, is that I don't react in principle anymore.. ya as a matter of ethics or morality I don't react to racism, but because of people I know who are Black and who are human and significant. If somebody is being derogatory towards Blacks, it's because of a person for me, rather than at one stage because of a principle.. and so it angers me, and I sort of get defensive, but for a person.

IH: Affirmative action - how do you feel about it, what do you think about it?

SASHA: There it depends on how it is done, because I think the principle behind it of addressing all the cliches - imbalances of the past and injustices - is really important and giving people a chance to get somewhere.. but the way it has been done, like at [work].. specifically, you can be the only Black person who applies for a post, totally underqualified, but you'll get it because you are Black, and you'll know that. And what does that do for who you are as a person? Because for me, when I got in here as an assistant warden, I felt incredibly good about myself, because the odds were quite against me, and I realised, Oh, I must be good. And if a Black person has applied, and sort of knows they are getting in because they are Black, what does that do to their sense of self-worth? And I think that it's dehumanising in a way, because you're not seeing the person as a person, you're seeing them now as a race again, and it's becoming self-defeating. If it's objectives are to lift people up, it's not doing that. I guess it's bound to be like that for a while, because you don't have that many qualified Black people. But I think also, what came out in that racism thing you were running, you have got to have a support structure, 'cause like Anne's first few days in the office, she just looked totally depressed and horrible, because

Appendix

she didn't know what the hell was going on, felt awful about herself, and it was just breaking her down..

IH: If we can just go back again - when you were talking about your experience through your life in terms of your relationships to Black people, and your formation of your ideas and attitudes about that, you talked a fair bit about your own identity development. Do you think you could just do a similar sort of story through your life about how your own identity as a person has developed over time.. because that is really relevant to our identity as White people..

SASHA: Well, with my parents being strong Baptists and everything, especially with my mom, the whole legalistic side was very prominent, and was sort of a thing of.. do this and you are accepted and do this and you are not. And one's personhood didn't matter.. like as an individual what I like and that.. if it doesn't fit in with what the rules say, I'd have to adapt or die. So I think from a young age, my personal identity was being undermined, and realising I'm not going to be accepted if I'm fully myself - I've got to do what's expected. All of us in our family have this same problem..

IH: When did you realise that that was what was happening to you, and how you were responding?

SASHA: As a teenager I was very much aware that I wasn't being accepted, but I didn't realise what it was doing to my identity.

IH: Why weren't you being accepted? By your folks?

SASHA: Ya, by my mom. My dad always affirmed who I was, but my mom.. ag, as a teenager you need to get a bit experimental, and testing.. Like as a young child I had been experimenting, when I was about six, with a friend of mine, a guy. And we were experimenting with each other's genitals.. nothing sexual, but just nakedness and stuff, which I've since discovered is fairly natural. My mom didn't even know this, but when we said we were going to go and play together, she said something like, "Don't play naughty games," and it came across as such a strong sense of condemnation - "You'd better not be doing anything evil, cause I will get you," sort of thing. And stuff which is supposed to be natural experimentation turned into very bad, taboo sort of stuff. And my teenage years - we've all grown up with incredible sexual hangups because anything that is vaguely sexual.. you just don't do that because you won't be accepted, you're sinning. And we all.. I have had to work through a lot of warped ideas in terms of sexuality. And so, and all the stuff I've discovered is a natural working through things.. and even going through smoking stages and parties - mixed parties and stuff.. like, we weren't allowed to go to any mixed parties and.. like all that stuff.. and then go into hiding about things.. I'm sure a lot of people of people are forced into that sort of thing. I learned to lie really well, and..

Appendix

with my mom I lived a lie, and I still do, and that's okay, because she wouldn't be able to handle who I am. But in that sense my identity became very fragmented because I was someone different in front of her, and then in front of my friends, and then, and trying to please God, and I wasn't sure who this God was until about Std 9. And also fitting in with my brother's identity.. it was just a whole lot of.. trying to fit in all over the place, and not sure where I did fit.

IH: And did the pieces start to come together at some stage? Do you feel like they are still fragmented now?

SASHA: No, they've definitely come together, and the thing.. my brother's death made me have to confront something hugely, because very much largely my identity had leaned on him. If he had said something was right, I would think, "Okay it must be," because I respected him enormously. And then my identity was utterly shattered and left in all these fragmented pieces. And then becoming a Christian, it was sort of, "Okay, now there's God," but that sort of added to the fragmentation, because now there was an extra place to find identity. And then because of being in a Baptist church, it's not in God that you find your identity, but in the system. So I started adopting doctrines and all that stuff - and that just added another dimension.. and then, ya, I started getting to know God better.. ya, trying to be a good Christian still, first and second year, a little bit in the things of God, and then.. fourth year everything fell apart, and I went through.. the deeply depressed Julie phase thing, and realised that I hardly know this God. I'm supposed to be a big Christian, and I hardly know Him, and that's where.. that's when I had to seriously confront the identity thing.. that whole sexual identity, everything. It was just.. it was a good thing to go through.. all of that, realising how shattered everything was, because if one doesn't realise that there's no way anything can build up from there. And even, I'd sort of been going to SCF and that, and that was a separate area of identity as well, and it was all.. ag, it was all all over the place. And from there it was a gradual "getting to know who I am," because I think I realised that a lot of who I was.. I was trying to be like Julie, I was trying to be like my brother, I was trying to be a good Christian, and I don't know what I like, what I don't like. That came up cause I was seeing [minister] for counselling at that stage about the whole sexuality thing, and he said, "Go and try and do what you like, and discover what you like." And I did, and I feel.. it was a gradual thing of finding me, finding God, finding that he likes me.. and it was amazing, because the more I realised that he likes me, the more I could start liking myself, cause at that stage I totally loathed myself, I wanted to be anyone but me. It's not a sort of formula, I can't even concretely say when things came together, but it's just like a process..

IH: It seems like you can say what made it come together, though.

SASHA: Yes, ya.

IH: And do you feel now like things are quite together?

Appendix

SASHA: Ya, the thing of just feeling like a whole person, it's really exciting.

IH: And your relationship with God has played a critical role?

SASHA: Oh, absolutely, it's been central.

IH: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

SASHA: Well it's a really big thing.. because Christianity before that for me had always been trying to fit into a structure. And God turned all of that upside down, and when I started getting to know him better I started realising that I can be me, and I'm 100% accepted, and there's no petty structure to fit into. The things of laws and that in the Bible are there because they're constructive, and so they mustn't be seen as a rigid thing. So whatever is helpful for my growth and development, my closeness to God, and my wholeness, is what God has in mind for me, that sort of thing. And it just turned the whole concept of what God is about around, and I think just realising his deep, 100% acceptance of me, no matter where I am, no matter what I do, that was the major part. I think because that was so much what I didn't get from my mom, and what I realised that is what God is about. And the more I realised that he fundamentally accepts me, not loves me because of obligation, but likes me, the whole.. things just started fitting together, coming into place, and I think.. there is a truth in the more one gets to know him.. you know when you discover someone who you can absolutely be yourself with, there is this fitting together inside you.. You feel whole when you are with that person. I think it's even more so with God, because there is something that is within us that is made for him - the thing of made in his image and all that. And it's a thing of the more we get close to him, the more there's that thing of wholeness and togetherness and thereness, and sort of - I've found my place.

IH: This transformation within yourself and the way you've related to this new relationship with God - has that had any major impact on your identity as a White person, and your relating to Black people? ..It seems like a lot of the changes in this area happened really early in your life.. but when you discovered this relationship to God in a new way, did this change anything?

SASHA: It did, because before that it was trying to fit into an identity in the system. And so it was picking up the guilty White, and trying to earn acceptance of Black people, who I have sinned against and all that sort of stuff. And it was trying to compensate for being White and ending up being abused a lot, and.. I mean I still do that a bit, but not as much. It was this whole thing of earning acceptance, and that whole area, and it does more harm to yourself than anything else, because you start undermining yourself in favour of the principle of earning Black people's respect. And for me, what's come together for myself is being a real person with other people, who have been disadvantaged and all that stuff in the past.. but I think because of being able to be happy with who I am as a person and knowing that God likes me, and doesn't have

Appendix

major.. all these expectations of me to try and fix things, in responding to people as persons, has broken through a lot of baggage that was in the way. And I find a lot of freedom with being myself with Black people rather than trying to fit in with who they expect me to be.

IH: And the guilt.. has that been a big thing for you?

SASHA: Mmm, it's getting better.. because at one stage, even at the beginning of last year, if anyone had come to my door and said "I need money," I'd have given them money.. out of guilt. But now, I'm happy to say...

IH: Why do you feel guilty?

SASHA: ..cause I'm rich, I've got a car, I've got money, I look all.. I've got this wonderful job, I'm White, I'm privileged.. And they haven't - so feeling like I owe them something. Whereas now I think.. ya, I'm privileged and stuff, but I do, I give what I have a heart to give, and I don't owe it to give every Black person something. I think that comes with a confidence in who I am. I feel confident to say to somebody, "If I give to you I have to give to 540 other students, so I'm not going to do that." Whereas in the past I would never have been able to do that. So it stands.. it's just not seeing a Black person straight away as a Black person and a victim, but seeing them as a person, and sort of along the way they happen to be Black and there is a whole lot of stuff that goes along with that.. but it's not the first thing that I think of.

IH: Do you feel like you have a White identity in any sense.. do you feel like that is something that is strong for you? Do you see yourself as a White person, and if so what does that mean for you? Or do you not see yourself as a White person?

SASHA: Umm.. not very strongly. I think when I'm faced with something that is different to my cultural expectations or, like, different mode of worship, then I realize how White I am, and how comfortable I am with that. But I don't think of myself as White in everyday life - it's not a label that I attach to myself at all, but something that's incidental.. and I've become happy with that. And this is another quite significant thing.. at the beginning of last year we had the assistant warden's training thing, and we had to get together with a Black person or someone from a different stereotype grouping, and we had to say to the Black person, "I like you White because - .. and I dislike you White because - .." and so speaking to our own racegroup. I could say a hell of a lot about disliking Whites, and I hardly had anything to say about liking Whites. And that struck me, and I realised, "Whew, you have work to put in here." And it's different.. I like being White..

IH: If we can look at acceptance/rejection by groups.. has the White group been a safe place to be? Have you felt acceptance from White people? Or do you feel rejected and excluded from

Appendix

White people?

SASHA: In my teenage years I felt really rejected by White people, and I found far more acceptance from Black people, which is quite interesting. And at varsity a bit, White people as a general grouping, I have never fitted in with the group as a general group at all.. I have always fitted in on the sidelines with less conventional people. And in a sense also.. ya, first and second year, feeling more accepted by Black people.. but I think a lot of that has to do with who I am, and that I'm quite different from the general people. I don't think I identify totally with general White South African groupings..

IH: And with Black people you felt accepted?

SASHA: To an extent.. every now and then, like at SCF meetings, something political would come up, something to do with this government, this White government that has hurt us.. and I would suddenly feel incredibly White, and like I should never, ever, have been there. That happened about twice, and not a lot.. but it was really strong, and I just wanted to run away. And I mean.. some of that was just my perception, but others was also because some of the Black people hadn't resolved issues about Whites either.. and understandably so.. and occasionally one encounters a student who has a huge load of bitterness, and any White person they come across they just dump on.

IH: How have you felt about your relationships with other Christians in terms of your whole pilgrimage around issues about racism? Has it been a supportive community? Has it been a critical community? What role have other Christians played in your life?

SASHA: General baptist community wasn't very helpful. It was very much support your local government.. be all nice. But I think my dad being quite a staunch Christian as well as being on the side of Black people in his way, has been quite significant for me. And then at varsity, YMSCA group was very significant.. most of the Christians there had a similar agenda to mine.. and then church, one never feels rejected for one's view and things..

IH: If I had to ask you in a very open ended way what's important in your life, what would you say?

SASHA: Relationships.. I think at the moment I am not very materialistically minded. Ya, if you take away God and you take away people who are close to me, I will die. That's where my energy and my life comes from.

IH: And looking at the future, and your own personal future around all of these issues associated with White identity, is there anything which you really feel you need to work on? Is there any

Appendix

area in which you really feel you need to develop? Or do you feel pretty fine about who you are, and how you relate to people?

SASHA: There's one area.. how much I take responsibility for other people, trying to make sure things go right for them. I think I feel a bit of a burden.. because things have come together so wonderfully in my life, I want it to happen for other people. But then I get a little bit destructively involved, well destructive for myself, because I sort of take on quite a bit of burden for the person instead of being able to distance myself a little bit..

IH: Does that impact on your relationships with Black people, or is it a much more general thing than that?

SASHA: It does a little bit, because then.. the sort of thing of feeling like one owes things to people a little bit comes in with that, taking responsibility for that, and trying to fix the problem, or whatever. I think what I need to do is find a more constructive way of directing my concern for people and my compassion for people, because at the moment it is not very helpful...

Appendix

Michael

IH: To get going, why don't you tell me about your background. I would like to know what you can remember about where and how you learnt about racism - particularly from your parents.

MICHAEL: I grew up in pretty much an Afrikaans society, so I mixed mainly with Afrikaans people.. but my family is English, ya.. I think my parents were at loggerheads most of the time themselves about their views. My Dad, at one stage, was very much CP - very conservative - my Mom less so, but still conservative. I think it was not spoken about, so there was never ever any talk about anything like that, except.. I remember.. my Dad had quite a few bad experiences with Blacks, at work and that, which made him very anti, hateful. My Mom on the other hand wasn't that hateful, but I can remember her, if I picked up a toothpick, I remember her saying "don't, put that down, maybe a Black had it."

My Dad often used to talk about how the Blacks were getting away with anything at work. I remember one specific incident where one guy got off where he should have been, he should have basically gone to jail, but he wasn't even fired because basically the whole system and the way it worked.. there was a lot of theft involved, and what have you. I can remember that incident particularly, because he was just so anti - they can get anything they want, kind of thing. And comments like, "Ya, you may think they're okay, but you haven't worked with them yet." But otherwise it was very much unspoken about.

IH: Can you tell me about your very earliest memories? These things that you have mentioned, were they only later in life?

MICHAEL: No, I think as a small child. We had a maid, she was an old woman, like in her 70's. She had been with the family for years and years, she worked for my grandmother before my Mom was born and she was kind of part of the family, because.. she just was. She knew all of us well and I think she really loved and cared for us, and I think we felt similarly for her. But at the same she was Black, so, she was kept separate. No, it was different, she was Black so she was treated as such, even though there was this kind of, she was a part of things. I became kind of aware of that.. because I was maybe a bit sorry for her, maybe a bit.. awkward about the situation. Sometimes I used to think, right, this is the way it is.

I remember.. this old woman that worked for us came down the passageway and my sister and I started belting her with pillows, I mean we wouldn't do that to anyone else. I mean you wouldn't belt a 70 year old woman with your pillow and run away giggling, whatever.

IH: And how did you feel afterwards?

MICHAEL: I think we pretty much thought it was funny. We got into trouble afterwards from her. She smacked us.. we used to write on the walls of her room, and scribble and run out and

Appendix

she would chase us with an axe.. obviously there is an attitude problem there because I would never do that to a 70 year-old White woman ever, and yet I would do it to her.. and we would run away and laugh.

IH: It would be helpful if you could tell me about your own identity. How do you feel about yourself now, and has this changed from when you were a child? Do you appreciate and value yourself?

MICHAEL: I had pretty much a low self-esteem most of the time, for various other reasons, they're not race-related reasons. Ya, so I haven't been the most secure person.. it's changed a bit because I'm working through lots of things. If you're wanting to know about my identity in relation to other cultures or whatever.. I never felt like I measured up to what I was supposed to be.. I have a lot of problems with what White South African men are supposed to be, you know, as coming up from my past.. 'cause I never, ever measured up to that, and I always felt very insecure about that. So that's been a problem, and I still battle with it, because a lot of my friends, my guy friends, hold on to that. I can't describe it, it just rubs me up the wrong way. It's a conservative thing, so I felt insecure because I haven't measured up, I don't even like rugby, so I don't fit the mould, which is disappointing to some people in the family.

IH: Does your Dad fit into the mould better, and has he always expected you to?

MICHAEL: ..he's not a fan either, but he's kind of.. he does the right things.. he's also the man's man. He kind of likes to go out with the boys and talk about those kinds of things, which I don't identify with at all. He's very technically orientated, I'm not at all. I'm the very opposite to him. He doesn't fit quite into the mould, but he has other things which redeem him. My grandfather, on the other hand, I remember him passing comments like, "this is an odd kid," because I just wasn't interested.. I used to sit and draw, and that didn't go down. I didn't have any redeeming factors either..

IH: Have you always thought of yourself as thinking differently to other people around you? Have you ever had a good support group in terms of a group of friends or anything like that?

MICHAEL: I think yes and no. I found people who, kind of have a similar thing, where they also struggle with it. I don't think anybody sees things exactly as I do all the time. I feel more comfortably, usually, talking to women about who I am, I have found a little bit more acceptance there.. it's kind of an acceptance, but it also makes me feel unimpressive, but generally I think most of the time I just make pretty much normal friends who just irritate me part of the time, and I have to adapt myself to that.

IH: Tell me what things are most important to you at the moment, the things which you feel most

Appendix

strongly about.

MICHAEL: .. probably the most important thing at the moment I wouldn't talk about.. but after that I think at the moment a lot of relationships are important to me - not just because I've found a group of people that I really enjoy, but also because they've kind of been supportive. That's important. I think, obviously, God's important to me. I used to talk about it to anyone, but now I choose who I talk to. Affirmative action - I talk about a lot. I think usually if a conversation gets pretty serious it goes that way, because it affects me a lot. I kind of feel a bit divided over it because at the same time I can see that there is.. that things need to change and people need to see a change, especially oppressed people who need a bit of hope, or whatever, they need to see some change; but at the same time I can't justify tokenism, and I can't justify being totally excluded just because I'm White. That's just the same thing again, and it's just changed.. most of the places I've applied have kind of disguised it. They've said you need to speak Zulu.. other places have said it's an affirmative action post - "forget it" - other places have said "no thank you". It's pretty much, I've been looking around in newspapers for jobs that have been advertised and the first thing on a lot of advertisements has been "This affirmative action post, blah, blah.." which means I can't even apply. Some stories make me sick, where you get a whole lot of people applying for the job - one Black person with not half the skills, and not half the training, getting the job. Because I feel if you're going to do it, why not do it properly, why not rather do something to raise the level of education first, so that you do have people of quality.. so that you don't have people who don't know what's going on doing the stuff. It can't be helpful for them either, they can't feel secure. That really gets to me, because you'll stand there and you'll think, "But I can do that and probably far better than this person, but because of the colour of my skin.." And I've noticed as well - although I have this theory that any Black person can do any job as well as I can because they are a human being, because they can learn - I still have this, this ingrained thing of they can't. It's like it's not an intellectual thing, it's a feeling. I sometimes see a Black put in a certain position or doing something and I think "Ah, that'll never work." I don't sit and think about it, it just kind of happens.. Ya, then I think about it, I think, "Wo, I'm a racist." And I think, "Okay, theoretically this person can do it, he's a person like me, he can learn, he can do this, he can do that, he may have his cultural differences, he may do it very differently, I may not accept that, but he can." But something inside still says, "You know, maybe not." I remember, as well, playing tennis against Durban, and in their ladies' team they had put two Blacks in, because of putting Blacks in - for no other reason - it was affirmative action. And it was horrendous, because I know the Durban girls' team is not the best tennis team in the world, but they're okay, and these two Blacks were useless. And I've seen all the Durban girls play so I know that there are girls that are far better, and they were put in because they were Black. And it was terrible, because they couldn't play.. and they lost, 6-0 6-0 6-0, every single match they played. They got hammered, and Durban lost, so from that point it's impractical for their tennis team.. And secondly these players, they were embarrassed. They came here, they played here, they were the only two Blacks around, and everyone was, like,

Appendix

joking about it because they were so useless. It was shocking. So that's a good example of how I feel about some affirmative action, even more so if it's a business thing, people's livelihood.

IH: Do you ever think of yourself as a White person? Is that something that is strong for you?

MICHAEL: Ya, I think it's a case of I'm better, than Blacks, although I know intellectually that I'm not. I feel intellectually that I shouldn't feel that way. I still somehow.. I sit in my class and there's a lot of Blacks doing the same course that I'm doing, and I just feel they're idiots, probably because some of them are.. a lot of them don't work and they don't try. Like for business finance it is quite a tough course, and they didn't try, and that irritated me. It kind of leaves me feeling superior. On the other hand it's not with all of them. Sometimes I don't, it just depends who I'm with. Sometimes I feel a little bit like I want to justify myself, like if I'm talking to a Black person, I feel I want to justify myself.

IH: Can you give me some examples of that?

MICHAEL: When I worked at [hotel] I got to know a lot of the Black staff very well and I actually started to like them more than a lot of the White staff. And I used to talk to them about various things.. I remember one guy who was quite intelligent. I used to talk to him about politics and what he thought and what I thought, and I found it very Interesting. But I used to often bend what I thought to almost justify myself, make it better.. just bend if more to his way of thinking, couch it in terms that were more acceptable to him.

IH: Was this because of guilt about being White? Does guilt bother you much, or is it not something that you think about much?

MICHAEL: Ya.. speaking to this guy up at [hotel] about being in the army - that made me feel guilty. I do, because at the same time while I was in the army I felt imprisoned and I felt used, although I kind of grew up to accept the norm - to think, "Well if this is what is required of me, it must be okay. I will just go along with it." I only really started thinking about it after, but I felt when I was in the army like I was trapped there. I didn't want to be there, and I was being used. And at the same time I had problems with, ya, we do need some kind of stabilizing force. But I don't think the army was used as a stabilizing force. And I think.. I remember talking to Jackson about being in the army. Although I kind of went willingly, I kind of made out as if it was a totally forced thing.. meanwhile I didn't kind of question it at the time. I didn't like it, I was a bit unhappy about it, but at the time I never really questioned the whole thing. I never really stood up against it. And I did a camp since I've been at 'varsity, and it was at the end of second year - I did it in my vac. I was called up for this thing, and I had a lot of difficulty, because at the time they were collecting people and basically you were punished for not going to your camps, and I didn't know what to do. I kind of, some people were getting away with it

Appendix

because things were changing fast, some people were getting away with it.. not going, and it was left, other people were being fetched from their house by military police, taken to where they were doing their camp, and two weeks was added onto their camp. And punitive action was being taken against some people, and legislation was such that it was legal. My parents spoke to me, and it was just a case of, "You've got to do it, because we don't want trouble, and you don't want trouble, and it's just the way things are, and it's best for you to do it." And so I did it. But that was quite difficult, I think, because at the same time I wanted to say no.. cause when I got there it was a staff sergeant who picked my name out to go on the camp.. so I felt like I had shot myself in the foot - maybe I should have been a slob.. in any case, this so-and-so pulls my name out and decides I should come for a camp. And when I got there I did her work for her. You know, she like lays around and slob around and I made her tea and coffee and cleaned her bin, and.. I just felt this person has so much power over me, she pulls my name out and decides to rip me out of my life, and I have no choice in it. And she can do it next year and she can do it the year after, and she can do it the year after.. she was like, she was stupid, she was thick, she had an attitude problem, a conservative attitude problem. She was a "kerkmens," which made everything cool, and she just hacked me off the wrong way, and she had so much power over my life. It just got me down, it wasn't right. I kind of felt I wanted to stand up to it, but I didn't, I just went along with it. Because what can I do? Do I have the guts to stand up to this? What am I supposed to do here? I just went with it.. I kind of resent it..

IH: Tell me some more about your relationship with Jackson. Why did you feel like you had to bend the truth about what you did?

MICHAEL: Ya, cause I felt used on the one hand, almost like I didn't have a choice. Maybe I would have if I had stood up to things - so I feel guilty on that side of things. But at the same time I feel guilty being part of something that was used as a tool that Jackson resents, because I like him as a person.

IH: Are there other examples, other than you having gone to the army, which stand out for you?

MICHAEL: It comes up now and again, I suppose when I think about it. It's not like I walk around with this huge thing on my back, like I'm burdened by it or anything. It usually comes up when I'm talking to a Black person and I'm talking about something like that. I usually end up in that situation where I want to justify what I've done with my life. And I found him very understanding of the whole thing, although I think I also felt at the same time like I'm talking to him and I'm telling him this, but I'm actually exaggerating a bit, I'm actually like bending the truth.. to justify myself. I was being really heavy on the, "I didn't want to go, and I was forced, and, you know, it was terrible.." It was true, I did feel used and all that, but at the same time, I wasn't really thinking about Jackson, I wasn't thinking about all that.. I was thinking about me. I was explaining it to him in a context of this is oppressive, and I dislike it, but when I was there

Appendix

it was a case of: this is oppressive to me. I thought about the other side of the coin, I thought about the racism side of it, but more important to me at the time was, this is oppressive to me.

IH: How do you feel about racism generally? What do you think about racism?

MICHAEL: ..Well.. I kind of have this idea that I'd like not to be racist. I was watching a programme on TV last week - it was a group of afro-Americans talking about their culture, their society. And they were talking about what's gone wrong with them as a nation, or as a group of people. In America, why are things falling apart? Why are their kids ending up in jail? Why are they all taking to the streets to become muggers and druggies and that sort of thing? Why is it so predominant in their culture? And they were saying things - like one guy was making a point.. he'd been to jail and he'd come out and he was saying, "It is because we've integrated with the White groups. It's because our rich people have integrated and our poorer people have stuck together and we're separate and we don't have anything to judge ourselves by. So we need to get together and live together." And I was just thinking, "If I was there, if I was in that studio, I would say to him - But that's just what we're trying to change in South Africa - we've now separated, because of an ideology - that was the whole apartheid thing - and now we're trying to get rid of that because it doesn't work. And now what he's saying is that *this* doesn't work. We're integrating and he's saying that this doesn't work because we've lost our identity. So I, I've just started to feel that maybe I shouldn't feel so guilty about being racist, because.. no, I'm far less racist than most and I try to be as understanding as I can, but I realise that I can't. I just realise that I have all these feelings and inbuilt things which I have to work on, but which are still there, and I don't really feel so guilty about that anymore. 'Cause just listening to that guy, I was just thinking, "What's happening here?" I mean obviously, I would assume that him being American.. would say, "Apartheid! And that's terrible and that's got to change." And then he's saying that on TV - he's like advocating it in a way, which made me think like, maybe old Verwoerd wasn't so bad, maybe he saw something there that was right. I don't like racism.. especially not Klu Klux Klan, AWB-type racism, but.. I think it has to be worked on.

IH: Have you ever had the experience of being called a racist - either by a White person, or by a Black person? And how did that feel?

MICHAEL: Oh yes.. by a Black person. I've been called a racist by a Black person and a White person, but when I've been called a racist by a White people usually its not that serious, sometimes joking, sometimes serious, but..

IH: By people you would perceive to be more racist or less racist than yourself?

MICHAEL: By people that I would perceive to be liberal.. pseudo-liberalist.. Let's go to White people first. I've often passed a few comments, especially when I was at school, I was pretty

Appendix

much.. supported the thing of the day. I think my parents have kind of built into me - go with what's there.. be safe. So I did, and that's something I can't cope with now. I keep going with what's there. Like this whole thing with my parents. I kind of go with them, and it's irritating because at the same time I want to do something else. If I had to do things my way it would be totally different. But, I remember at school kind of passing a couple of racist remarks and things, and I had friends at the time who were liberals, "rah rah rah.." who have incidentally gone to varsity, gone to UCT and Wits, and experienced some of the SASCO demonstrations and all that.. and now they're anti-Black, which I find quite ironic, because I've become more to their way of thinking then. But anyway, they kind of got on the bandwagon then and said "You're a racist, you're a this," which I didn't take very seriously. I thought they were off their rocker anyway - at the time.

Ya, I was working at the Porterhouse at the end of matric, and I can just remember the Blacks that worked in the kitchen and the White waiters, and the relationships that were going on there. I remember, some of the White waiters were very good to the Black people. I, on the other hand, just carried on and didn't pay them much mind. And I remember, if I'd ordered drinks from the bar, and the person who was doing them wasn't there, I'd like moan and crack and carry on. And I remember one of them one day told me I was like a CP, I was like a AWB person.. and that kind of made me feel terrible, because I'd kind of never really thought about it. And at the same time I noticed that the people who weren't called that, and weren't seen as that were the people who used to, like, tip the kitchen staff well. So I don't know if they treated them any better..

IH: And so did that hit you quite hard?

MICHAEL: Ya, it worried me at the time.

IH: And has it happened again?

MICHAEL: I don't know, I can't remember being called a racist by a Black person, I don't really mix with them that much.

IH: Have you every been involved in any sort of political activism or anything like that? What do you think of people who do that?

MICHAEL: I remember a friend, Gertjan, got involved very badly, and I remember saying to him, "Gertjan, just drop it, for crying out loud." I think he was quite harassed at the time, by a lot of the Whites in [residence], because he was involved in that whole WOB riot thing.. I kind of felt he should leave it.. How does it make me feel? It usually makes me angry, I don't mind protesting and the whole toyi-toying thing or whatever - that's fine. But I remember them running through ERH and breaking windows because of a WOB issue - that really grated me.

Appendix

It made me very angry, it was just beyond anything, it just hacked me off..

IH: Was that White and Black students?

MICHAEL: No it was just Black students.. well it was Black students and Gertjan, as far as I remember, I don't think there were any other White students..

IH: And how have you felt towards White students involved, using Gertjan as an example? Have you got quite angry with them or what?

MICHAEL: I wouldn't say angry, I think when Gertjan got involved I thought he was being stupid. I could never ever have got involved in that, I just found that repulsive.

IH: How do you feel towards White society generally? Do you feel accepted by White people and comfortable with them?

MICHAEL: I think I feel pretty comfortable with it, I just battle to identify. So.. I have a friend that I am playing squash with sometime this week, and we have been friends for two years now. And I like him very much, and I think he likes me, but we have nothing in common. There's nothing we can talk about. We can't talk about rugby, we can't talk about cricket, we can't talk about any of his interests and he can't talk about any of mine. All we can do is play squash and laugh and joke.. that's all. So I found that very offputting, because I like the person, I like spending time with the person, but it's alienating from that point of view.. we like each other, we're friends, but we can't spend time together. I can't really talk to him, because we have so little in common. We were in res together, and that was fine, because we were together, we could, like, talk to each other. But now he stays in a digs somewhere, and I stay in a digs somewhere, and we can't get together, because there is nothing to get together about. I do feel sometimes alienated by the whole White male thing, and I noticed that at [hotel] I formed far better relationships with the Black people. I found that just merely taking an interest in some of the things that they did, they were quite impressed. They invited me to join their stokvel, they invited me to go on a party to Durban with them.. I thought it was wonderful, because I was the only White member of staff that they invited, and I felt really chuffed about that - it made me feel good. Also I found that just to take an interest in something that they are doing and to realise that they really are good at their jobs.. that made me realise a lot. Because I had been speaking to the White management people and I kind of got friendly with them. And they would say, "These Blacks do this, and these Blacks do that.." But when I actually got to know the Blacks I got to realise that they know very much what they are doing. Some of them have been there for eight years whereas management's been there for two.. there's conflict, but they are really good at what they are doing.

Appendix

IH: Was that your first experience of acceptance by Black people?

MICHAEL: Ya. So, from then on I used to go and talk to them about things that they do, and they really opened up.. And then another thing.. whereas all the White staff, when they used to have meals at [hotel], they used to go and sit in the restaurant; whereas there was a canteen room for Blacks, and the Black staff used to go and eat in there. And I actually went and ate in there with them a few times. I didn't want to sit on my own, so I went and joined them. And that was quite a breakthrough - suddenly they also started opening up to me, Talking about their ideals and their view and politics and things, and that was nice. And I kind of felt that they really accepted me.. and I found them so much more approachable than any of the White people I had made friends with in [hotel]. Especially White management, I found them guarded, I could only talk to them about business. I couldn't have a laugh with them or approach them. The Blacks opened up so much more. They were ready to have me join them. It was a very positive experience, a breakthrough, it really taught me a lot about people. I remember one woman coming in, she was a Christian woman, and she kind of realised that I was on really good terms with the Black staff. She came into the kitchen one day, and I think she was trying to show off to me. And she said to the one chef, "Raymond," but I just knew it was specifically so I would hear. She said, "Raymond, those old clothes I gave you, did they fit?" You know, and Raymond "Yes, yes, yes." "Oh, that's wonderful, I hope you enjoy them, Raymond," and she was looking over to me. And when she left.. he didn't take to that.. and I just sat there, and I thought, "That was so patronising.. 'aren't I wonderful'.. instead of asking.. I remember asking him to show me how he made his samosas one day, and that was far better. He really enjoyed showing me how to make samosas, he really enjoyed the fact that I was interested. I'd been at the time trying to work out why they hated White management so much, because they weren't bad to them, but that just showed me. She'd been good to him, but the way she approached it was just so patronising to him. Another problem was that they knew what they were doing and they weren't allowed to do it their own way.. And the whole approach was, "Do it my way, or don't do it! And this is the way to do it. You're dumb, I'm clever. This is the way you've got to do it.."

IH: Have you ever been able to establish friendships with any other Black people, before or since the experience of working at the hotel?

MICHAEL: It's something that I've thought about.. in first year at one stage I went through the stage of, "I should make more effort." Not necessarily that I should run out and make one Black friend - like "Rah, rah, rah," but just like that I should make more effort. But since then it's been - "It doesn't really matter." I've kind of got a little bit agitated because some of my friends have, like, token darkies.. that's the way I see it. I remember I went somewhere, and this one Black guy came along, and this one girl was like, "I'm so glad that he can join us.. it's such a blessing.. for building relationships and everything." And I just realised like 3 days into this little trip that she, and everyone else, was ignoring him flat, carrying on with their daily lives,

Appendix

ignoring him flat, but saying how wonderful it was to have him there. And I just thought to myself, "Wo, that's not what it's all about." I'd rather.. I couldn't care less whether he was there or not, and I'd rather he wasn't. I was having fun and he wasn't.. and I remember this woman saying she'd evangelised him. And I was sitting at the table, and I really didn't know how to handle it, because it was a case of: "If I gave you R10 it would be a gift, and God's giving you that kind of gift." And it was all the cliched lines. I was sitting at the table not knowing what to do with myself, and so she tried to bring me into the whole thing, and I didn't know what to do. And she told him after that, "No, she wants to come up to his room and pray with him and all that." And she never went, so what must he think? The whole approach was so textbook, I just found it.. And then she tried to bring me into it, and I didn't want to be part of that. It was horrendous, just the whole way he was being treated, it was so patronising, it was the same as that woman who walked in and said the clothes.. And I think, ya, that's probably my best learning experience, because I actually had some contact. And I find it ironic, because my Dad said to me, "The day you start working with them is the day you'll start to hate them." And the day I started working with them, and getting to know them properly, was kind of life-changing, and I like them more.

IH: Tell me about your Christian experience, and how you became a Christian.

MICHAEL: Well, I said I never really thought about anything. I kind of went with the status quo until I got the army, and..

IH: Did you come from a Christian background?

MICHAEL: It was kind of ya.. very important. We went to church about twice in my whole life. I became a Christian in the army.. At school I had a lot of people coming around and saying, "This is what it's all about, and I kind of wondered about it a lot." And I had a teacher at school who was a Christian who kind of made an impression on me. When I got to the army, I felt very alone, I felt very much as if they shaved your head and gave you a number and that was it.. it was very dehumanising.. We had to, it was the rules, at 9 o'clock sit on your bed, half past nine, lights out, you're not allowed to talk during that half hour. It was a quiet time. You're supposed to read your bible, but if you don't want to you can just sit there.. So I kind of thought, "Well, I had my bible with me," so I just started to read it. And I was kind of battling, because I was feeling kind of small, insignificant.. what's it all about if I'm nothing, if I am just a number. There are so many millions of people on the earth and I'm just [sighs].. I don't have an impact on anything, I just like run round all day - it's like stupid. I'd been reading and the bible was making a little bit of an impression on me, and one day I went off to the chaplain service, and he started speaking about what God had done for him. And it had an impact on me and that morning I became a Christian. And that was great, and that was the only time I started to question things.. especially when I got to Potch and our sergeant major was quite racist and I

Appendix

found a scripture in James which said we may not show favouritism to anyone, rich man, poor man, and I took that to mean you may not show favouritism to anyone. From there on its been quite.. I went through my charismatic stage in first year.. I really felt like when I was in the army I knew God, really personally, and when I got to 'varsity it was the first time I came into contact with "other Christian" Christian groups, and I went there and they were talking about all this power, and unleashing the power, and evangelising, and I really got hooked on that, and did all the right things and said all the right things. It worked for six months and then I decided something's missing, something that I had, something where I knew God is just missing. I'm doing the right things but this is very depressing, it's not working. I tried to be this super-spiritual "right" person, but I think I was more super-spiritual before. So I started searching around churches and things, and I arrived at [church] eventually.. I think God's kind of become more and more real to me, and I think I've become pretty sensitive to him, at times. It's kind of allowed me to be myself more because I've found a lot of acceptance in him, and a lot of acceptance with a lot of his people.. strangely enough even some of the people who make me feel depressed.. and there has been a lot of acceptance there that has been quite meaningful.

IH: The time when you read in James about not showing favouritism - have other things like that happened? Has it been a pattern? Have you felt like your relationship with Jesus has really changed the way you think about those types of issues?

MICHAEL: I went through a stage of this charismania, and when I suddenly hit a brick wall, there I was claiming and naming and speaking life into, but I was actually being quite destructive. My parents, while I had been in the army, had come to know God. They had started to, "Wow," read their bibles. when I got to varsity and got involved in the charismania thing, I went home and told them what to do in Jesus' name, and that was so destructive.. it broke down everything that they were impressed that God had done in me. It really had - they couldn't believe the changes I'd gone through.. it was kind of, "Wow, let's find out about the changes that have happened in Michael," and after this it was just, "oh, Michael's quite a freak." I started to change, and I started to think, really *think* about things.. and think about what I really thought and what God was really doing. Because there was no way that it could take away my belief in God, it just wasn't working, it had to be something that I was doing.. So that has changed my whole perspective on life, everything changed, and it's still changing. But I found it very difficult, because every time I came up with a new thing it was, like, squashed by my Christian friends who thought I was being weird. Finding [church] was wonderful, because I could just say it.. I remember [minister] saying to me one day - because I went along and I said something, and I was expecting, cause it was quite a cynical thing to say, I was expecting - climb on the bandwagon and say, "This and this and the power of God, and you just this and you just that." And he didn't, he said, "Wow, well I don't quite see it that way, but that's quite interesting, let's discuss it from there." And I just thought, "Huh?.. huh?.. I'm allowed?".. and that's been like, I've changed the way I think about everything.. I picked up.. I was trying to think of how God

Appendix

would like me to do things.. picking it up from [minister], he talks about the third way - there's the Christian way of doing things, and there's the worldly way of doing things. *The* Christian way of doing things is almost like this thing of the whole truth, and the worldly way of doing things is like this total humanism - there's kind of something in-between that's a third way, a mixture of both, that's kind of good, that really speaks to people where they are, not throwing everything out because it's kind of, that's where people are. But just speaking the truth is very unhelpful because it's condemning, but there's something else in the middle that works, that says, that's fine.. so that's, like, changed my whole way of thinking.. So now I've discovered that's the truth, they're equal. So now let me go and make some kind of contact. And then you get the further development which is the story I was telling you about the trip - you're making contact because it's the right thing, not because you want to, not because you want to speak to the person. So that's wrong as well.. so that was kind of a starting point.. now if somebody comes along, if I like them, if I trust them, like any other person, if I make some contact with them then that's great. I've never hugged a Black person before, but when I go back [to the hotel] Anna runs and hugs me. My parents stayed at [hotel].. and when I went there with my parents and Anna ran out and gave me a hug, it was like, my Mom.. it was okay for her to hug me, because it has happened before.. Joyce has made me a member of her family. She has decided she's my aunt, she'll look after me - if ever I have trouble I must come to her. So they're quite affectionate to me, and that's fine. It's not like I want everyone to be affectionate to me, but with them it's fine. But when my family was there, it was also.. I suddenly became aware of it.. because the first time it happened, it was like, "I'm hugging a Black." The second time and third time, it became okay and it was just something that happened, it was like.. Sharon giving me a hug. I don't want everyone to hug me, but it was okay. I don't want to run around hugging Blacks for a living, but they were okay. I'd really made friends with them, they were like people to me, but when my Mom was there I suddenly became aware of it.

IH: How do you feel about the Christian community? Do you feel like they give you support? Has it been a good place to be?

MICHAEL: Ya, I sometimes find that people overdo it. It sometimes becomes a tokenistic thing, a right thing. I kind of sometimes find it artificial.. I am very sensitive to it being false, maybe sometimes I read into things too deeply. But I find that very often people are like that, and I find that quite a worrying thing, but on the other hand sometimes I find people pretty genuine, so it's kind of a mixture.. It's difficult, because I don't always know where to stand with my Christian friends, because they are on the one hand very sincere in these things, and on the other hand I just feel like they are doing the right thing, but they are still sincere.. It's a difficult thing, I find it quite difficult to handle.. I think that if I had to acquire a Black friend it would be fully supported, because at the moment it's the right thing.. the Christian PC thing to support, so I know I would be supported.

Appendix

IH: Looking to your future, do you feel there are any issues related to our discussion that you really need to work on? Are there any problems which you have that you feel need to be resolved?

MICHAEL: Part of what's been resolved is the ability to accept them as people.. that's from the whole [hotel] experience. That taught me to accept them as people more, I can do that.. and I think I will probably be able to do that in the future. The thing that I think I battle with is the ability to accept people in positions where I don't think they are competent. That's pretty difficult. I think I will have difficulty accepting a relationship where I was a subordinate - that would be a whole new thing. I have never been subordinate to a Black person.. I don't know how I will handle that. I have a lecturer at the moment who is Black and I have been very negative towards that, especially to start with I was very negative towards that. He is very verbose.. and in first year I had a Black lecturer who was very negative towards me.. that was a very negative experience. He wrote in one of my biblical studies papers that I didn't understand and I had a warped perception of the Kingdom of God.. I didn't like him at all, especially since I was very fundamentalist at the time, and he wasn't. And then there is this current guy, and after a while I have started to realise that he is pretty good, he is okay. There were a lot of negative attitudes towards him, and some of them should not have been.. and others were a bit legitimate.. I think I can relate to being equal to.. I find it easier to relate to Black women than to Black men.. far easier. I can talk to them. I find that there is a cultural arrogance in Black men, they always have to do the right thing, say the right thing. Their culture dictates that they should be right, and know how to do things, and I find that off-putting. I find that Black women have a lot more openness, Black men are far more dictatorial.. It doesn't do well for when they talk to me about democracy. It's usually a case of, "You will do democracy my way," which I battle with. It's like a similar thing to White men, it's like you have to be.. in control, in this, in that.. I've made friends with various Black people.. not like I run there all the time and visit them, but it's not such an issue for me.. I tend to feel okay about it now.

Appendix

Evan

IH: Perhaps we could just start with you telling me, in as much detail as possible, your story.

EVAN: I'm of mixed parentage... my father came from the Freestate to Natal, not understanding a word of English, and met a girl who did not understand a word of Afrikaans, and they got married. And ya, in a sense on both sides we would classify ourselves as 3rd generation South African. Both on my mom's side, and on my dad's. In fact my maternal grandfather was a boy of fifteen at the battle of Isandhlwana, and was one of the few who managed to escape. But I grew up in Natal, mainly around the Durban area.. but because of my Dad's job, he was a stationmaster, I virtually left home at age 12 to go to boarding school.. but I think I had a reasonably stable home-life. That experience has given me a bit of independence. I think from, from my family background, just in relating to the South African scene, it was a typical White South African upbringing. Whites were Whites and Blacks were Blacks and that was how it was.. and never the twain shall meet.. but there wasn't an anti feeling, just an acceptance of the status quo..

IH: Pretty similar from both of your parents?

EVAN: From both of my parents, really. My mom grew up in Northern Natal, and was, and still is, fluent in Zulu. Although at this stage politically she's quite conservative.
..and I think this probably sums up a lot of White South Africa, in terms of, not a hatred, but this sort of in-built feeling "they're not quite developed yet". In terms of my own awareness of racism, 1948 was my first year in highschool, and even at that stage I was interested in what was going on. I didn't realise the significance of it, but at Glenwood I was exposed to another form of racism which has left a lasting impression. 1948 Was also the year the nation Israel was being established, so there was a lot of Arab-Israeli conflict at that time and at Glenwood.. in those days Glenwood was a technical/science school, and DHS was a commercial school. So all the Jewish boys went to DHS and all the gentiles went to Glenwood, more or less. In my 4 years at Glenwood, there were 3 Jews, one of whom was in the same year as me, and we ultimately became quite friendly. But his first year in 1948 was absolutely terrible, because we had some guys who kind of instigated an "Arab-Israeli war", and I think in a sense that was my first experience of blatant racism. I didn't participate, but I certainly didn't intervene. It was just part of school life.. I remember being puzzled by the anomalies.. I went to my Grandad's farm in the Freestate, and the different way Blacks were treated.. how they treated their own staff on the farm, and my grandfather was a very religious man - they had family prayers every night, and the house staff came in for family prayers - they would sit on the floor.. but they had that kind of concern for their souls.. but take the old boy into town and his attitude to Blacks in town.. whereas on the farm it was paternalistic, hard, but paternalistic - concern for them and their family.. but in town a total disregard.. get off the pavement. So I think then as I left school, I

Appendix

was, not involved, but much more interested..

IH: Do you know what prompted that?

EVAN: I don't know.. I think somewhere there's this kind of innate sense of justice, but I used to spend ages arguing.. at that time there were increasing numbers of Afrikaners.. in fact if you talk in terms of racism, and this has always puzzled me about the Afrikaner, who has suffered so much himself, but he was unable to see what he was doing to other people. The engineering profession was a closed shop.. when I joined the railways in 1951 an Afrikaans speaking civil engineer was an absolute rarity, and I think in many other professions as well, the English speaking monopoly was very tight. But there were guys and we used to talk politics a lot, and from its inception, I always voted for the progs, and when that started the DP, but in fact my own attitude towards Black people was one which focussed on justice, and not on relationships. I could see what was wrong. I could see the injustice of what was happening, but I still, had an inability to form a relationship with a Black person.. I could feel sorry for them and really argue their case, but not have much contact with them.

IH: When did that start?

EVAN: ..I would say.. also being involved in the church at that time I was very conscious, and Alec Borrain was our minister here in the Victoria Rd methodist church, and then he moved.. and we maintained friendship, and used to play squash.. and we used to talk about South African issues. He was considered extremely liberal within the church, and I think an illustration of how my mind was at that time was the year that he was president (of the methodist church).. so they had a big function at central methodist, which was a mixed gathering. Now consider my friendship with Alec.. now at one point I saw him go to a Black woman, greet her and give her a big hug, and I looked at that, and I thought, "No! It's not real, it's for show," because he was beginning to get a high political profile at that time as well. Now if one looks back and sees the kinds things he was saying at that time it was absolutely ridiculous, but still, and many people in the church thought he was one step away from becoming a communist.. he was rocking the boat in this methodist church, one and undivided, which was absolute nonsense. So I can't remember when that was - probably the early 70's and so that was my.. response - you can feel sorry for them, but you can't get close.. it's what I've now come to term the "tin-mug barrier" which is that many White people have to cross that barrier that you can actually share the same crockery and cutlery.. I think the first change actually.. I really only became a Christian in 1976 although I had been involved quite heavily in the church for 25 years..

IH: But you always considered yourself a Christian at that stage?

EVAN: Ya, I dodged it. I wouldn't have openly.. I went to church, but my testimony was one

Appendix

of dodging actually saying..

IH: So you were aware that there was something more?

EVAN: Ya.. and in terms of the actual Christian experience, the early 70's were the time of the charismatic renewal, people were beginning to talk more and more openly of a relationship with Jesus Christ.. and I used to just think they were just kind of bluffing themselves.. it was not possible. So for me I think Christianity at that time was a moral code, and so possibly I was drawn to it by a sense of justness and rightness. So in the mid 70's, from about '73.. I think the Methodist church had a year of evangelism in '74 and we did a study course and one of the things was learning how to witness.. And one of the things I realised was that it's impossible to introduce someone to someone you don't know. And that kind of hit me.. but it was a process. So in '76 I made a commitment, and I found in that sense my attitude towards other people changed quite considerably - but not dramatically.. 1979 Africa Enterprise organised a SACLA conference and a group of us from Westville Methodist went up, and I think that was a real turn-around. I came back from that with a much greater determination to get to know people. At that time I wasn't quite ready to jump the gap from White to Black so I organised with a coloured congregation.. because we were living in Westville, I phoned the minister who controlled the community at Sparks' estate in Sydenham, and the community on the Bluff, and he said "No, I would like to be involved." And so we would meet once in Westville and once there.. and that was a good experience. Then in 1982 I had been approached to join [Christian organisation] and in 1983 I did that, and I went there with 2 specific goals in mind - one was to be involved in a process which I saw happening there, of equipping lay leadership for ministry; the other was to be involved in reconciliation. So 1984 I started with the first cross-cultural work and study camp.. experience living together, working together on the site, and having some input.. but in terms of that attitude to the inability to relate to people as people I think there is a tremendous amount of stuff that goes into our lives - our upbringing, our education system. Don Jacobs, who is an anthropologist, did a teaching series on the gospel and culture, and he made one observation which has stuck in my mind because I think it's so true. He said, "If you take any textbook on the history of man and you look at the evolutionary tree, you will find at the top of the tree.. is a White, caucasian male. And," he says, "then you examine the text and you get the terms primitive, uncivilised, heathen in describing groups other than.. and so this kind of impression that other groups are not quite human - this is implanted from the earliest study.. and I think that's what creates the tin-mug barrier. I can love my dog, I can feel pity for my dog, I can care for my dog, but I can't have a relationship with my dog, and you can translate that into my Black, for many White racists - I don't even say White South Africans. I think it's a world-wide phenomenon. I think we've fine-tuned it with apartheid.. I think it's still a process. One of the easiest things to do is classify people into boxes..

IH: Your whole pilgrimage in the area of thinking of yourself as White, can you tell me about

Appendix

that at all? Has that been an issue for you at all? Your identity as a White person? Has that been a focus for you?

EVAN: ..My pilgrimage hasn't been related to my Whiteness, but to my "why am I". I don't think I have ever strongly identified myself as White, and in a sense sought my identity in my Whiteness. In fact I, even in church terms, I've resisted being identified with a group. I remember in my days with the Lay Witness ministry when I was in the Methodist church. Most of the time I would introduce myself as a Methodist by accident of birth and a Christian by the grace of God. To me my Christianity happened in the Methodist church, but had little to do with Methodism. Methodism isn't a religion which I chose, my family happened to go to that church, so I did, and so I have never sought to identify myself strongly with a group. I can remember getting absolutely frustrated when the Methodists were celebrating one hundred years as an independent church.. and I was on one of the committees that was planning events. I eventually pulled out because the focus was so heavily on Methodism and not on Jesus.. and so in a sense I think, I never had a strong sense of White identity..

IH: ..Guilt as a White person, is that ever something that has been a problem for you?

EVAN: I don't think guilt. I think, ya, it hasn't been a strong force.. one has minor twinges, but I haven't felt it as a strong emotion. A stronger emotion for me has been anger at what we have done in the name of trying to preserve White civilised.. I suppose in a sense I could be attacked but I've never felt it. I've tried always to be as fair as I could, and recognise that in those times, depending on the circumstances and the position of your pilgrimage, you've done some horrific things, and at some point.. But having grown out of that I don't have a strong sense of guilt.. I suppose my guilt could be.. the times I've seen things and.. there are some incidents of blatant racism that I've seen where I've chosen not to intervene..

IH: From the things that you've said it seemed like your political pilgrimage - your feelings about justice and the way that you've seen the world - started very early.. and it didn't seem to be greatly affected by your conversion. Is that true?

EVAN: What the conversion did was to transform that theoretical justice issue into a relational issue, that's the way I see it. What the conversion did for me, was to move me beyond the confines of concepts, and issues of justice etc.. to, "These are real people, and that's where the issue is." Because I think often with a high sense of justice or morality, you can still be alienated from people. You still look more at the issue and the concept rather than looking at what's happened to people.

IH: Was there anything that stood out in that conversion process that prompted that change, or was it just the whole experience of..

Appendix

EVAN: I think the conversion experience for me transformed the way I perceived people generally. Because I was a very critical person, and I suppose for me our attitude towards other people is wrapped up in our attitude towards our own identity. Because I was very insecure in my identity, and it was broader than just a Whiteness or.. my identity was wrapped up in my job, my Christian experience, my family experience. Before the experience of Christ, I was very insecure about my identity. The experience of knowing Christ was an assurance about my own identity, which enabled me then to recognise the identity of other people. I think the question of identity is key, because I think probably a lot of racism comes out of the perception that my identity is wrapped up in my race, and if my race is not secure, then I am not secure.

IH: This whole change in your own identity, becoming secure in your own identity at the point of conversion, do you know what it was that was able to do that for you? Do you remember specific changes or ways in which you were able to see yourself evolving?

EVAN: The realisation at conversion that Christ accepted me just as I was, was the key for me, and I suppose for many other people. Our struggle for identity is to become accepted by other people, and so I have to be recognised as a good White, or a good worker, or a good father. So so much of our identity is wrapped up in our function - the way we live, the things we do, how other people perceive us, and how they affirm that.. and for me, what transformed my life was the recognition that what actually mattered was what Jesus thought - if he said I was okay.. it was that understanding.. I talked earlier of resisting publically proclaiming my Christian status. That was wrapped up in this whole thing, my resistance to making a commitment to Christ was that I knew myself well enough to know that I wouldn't be able to keep up the standard. And the standard wasn't Christ's standard, it was my standard. It said a Christian must be this kind of person, and I know that I'm not going to meet that standard, and so it's safer to avoid saying I'm a Christian, because if I do, one week, two weeks down the line I'm going to fall flat on my face and people will say, "Ah! He said he was a Christian." And the freeing thing for me is to be able to face that and say "So what?" I think the Romans 8 passage, "For there is now no condemnation," became real for me, and that gave me identity, a secure identity.

IH: You talked about your political pilgrimage as a theoretical thing. Did it ever transcribe into action - any type of political or social action?

EVAN: I would go to political meetings, but there again, this whole thing of.. and I don't know why some people are like this and others are not - it may be to do with that independence of leaving home at that young age.. I don't know what forms these things, but once again this resistance to be actually classified in a box, to join a group.. I've never taken political membership, because probably deep down I want to retain my independence. I think also as a Christian, and this is where, in a sense, I've felt that Alec, when he gave up the church to join a political party, in a sense that was the right thing to do, but I've always felt that a Christian

Appendix

actually needs to stand aloof. A Christian needs to vote, and I will persuade every Christian I can that they have to exercise their vote, but the idea of a Christian saying I'm a Christian and a DP, and the 2 are synonymous, grates for me. I feel that politics is something where compromises are made on ethical issues, and that's not a place for Christians.. Now it doesn't mean that no Christians must join political parties, but what concerns me is the tendency to then link the two. And I really had strong reservations - not reservations, I just totally disagreed with the formation of the ACDP. I felt it was doomed to failure, and I don't think that kind of thing does the Christian church any good. For me a Christian always needs to exercise an independent judgement on critical issues, and I think the difficulty with Alec Borrain, was that he was such a high-profile Christian, that joining the Democratic Party.. you know, a lot of people would have read that Christians must vote for the DP. And that's the difficulty.

IH: Have you ever had the experience in your life of being called a racist? Either by a White person or by a Black person?

EVAN: I can't think of an incident particularly, but I'm aware that there might have been times when I've been rejected, by Black folk.

IH: How did you feel about that?

EVAN: I think I've felt more a sense of, "Okay, I can understand where the guy's coming from." I think that the rejection wouldn't be much of a problem - I could deal with that. I would focus more on trying to understand what was making the chap say what he did.

IH: Affirmative action? What do you think about it?

EVAN: My sense of justice says it has to happen, we cannot avoid it. My sense reality says it carries the potential of division, and in fact entrenching racist attitudes, and I don't know how to marry those two. But one hears so much resentment from young Whites, school-leavers, that it really has the potential to cause problems. They are the guys who are not getting the bursaries anymore, and the jobs. But the status quo can't just continue - we need to make some kinds of adjustments. But to do them wisely, and justly, is going to take a lot of.. Funnily enough, it's an issue that I've debated in [Christian organisation] years before it came to the fore, because I don't think that many Christians practised the kind of affirmative action that they should have. But you see then there is the argument.. and I consider it a false argument, it's the argument that goes like this: "We are colour-blind. We appoint only on merit." And that's the argument they always use, you see, "We've got no problem with affirmative action as long as it is on merit." So, what happens in reality, is that no Black people have had the opportunity to go and make merit. And so you can't actually, you can't operate that way. How do you evaluate merit? And how do you evaluate the merit of a White person who has had every advantage, and a Black

Appendix

person who has had every disadvantage? And so, ya, I suppose I would hope that Sipho¹ could be seen as an example of my commitment to affirmative action. But I don't think there is that kind of commitment in business, or in the church. And I was very impressed when I went Glenwood to run an in-house programme, and chatting to the vice-principal about their attitude to admittance of Black students. They have an entrance exam, but he said, "That's not fair on Black students." With Black students they look at how that person has performed, given the disadvantages, has he been a top student in the school that he has come from. If he has, then he has the potential to be a top student at their school - in spite of the fact that he might have failed the entrance exam. And that is how I feel affirmative action needs to be addressed. And it's a very difficult factor to put in, but potential.. and then you actually have to put in some time, and commitment and money. And what I think a lot of guys are doing, is just head-hunting for Black guys who've got some qualifications. And the majority of Black people with potential are not benefitting from affirmative action.

IH: I think there is only one other thing I want to ask you - and that is the whole thing of, "Have I actually come to terms with this issue? Are there directions that I need to grow in?" What is your feeling about this - just looking into your own future?

EVAN: Undoubtedly there is a lot that I still need to learn. I think there is a lot just in terms of cross-cultural understanding that I don't know yet, a real understanding of different cultures, and so I don't see it as if.. I've got there.. I often put it down to the fact that I'm too busy, or I'm getting old.. is the whole language thing. That is, I think, an area for me that I really need to work on, because I think that is a way of getting to understand a culture much more effectively than reading about it in books. I think in a sense that is why I am probably a lot less anti-Afrikaner than many other English-speaking South Africans. I spent four years in Pretoria learning the language, living the language, and when I came back to my home town, Durban, for the first time I was able to see, feel the racism of English-speaking South Africans to Afrikaners..

IH: Are there any areas related to racism which you feel you must address other than the level of cultural exploration and understanding?

EVAN: I don't think there is anything that I'm particularly conscious of, but I am conscious that there may be things that I am not conscious of. You know, I am still being a bit of a racist without knowing it.. I don't know. I think what I find the greatest struggle, is when I am in

¹Sipho has taken over the cross-cultural programme that Evan started at the Christian organisation where he used to work.

Appendix

company where racist attitudes are being bandied about and I don't know how to handle it, I tend to just keep quiet, because I've learnt sometimes from experience that you're not going to achieve anything from confrontation.. but it really hurts me.

IH: Does it happen most of the time that you have to keep quiet?

EVAN: Sometimes I confront, but I am not sure that that is effective anyway, but most of the times I just sit there getting angry. You know just recently I was with someone in the family, beautiful Christians, but I think they have swallowed all the propaganda, and they were talking, saying, "Isn't it amazing, the reception Mandela got in America!" And I said "Well, you know, he's really quite an amazing man." And the guy said "Oh, well he had 27 years free board and lodging." And you just.. and analysing it afterwards you just realise that what he is saying is just, he cannot understand, how the rest of the world can value this person - I mean that's really at the heart of it. What really is amazing for them is not the reception, but that that "kaffir" can get this reception. Or a "coon" - that's the term that this particular person uses. It's those kinds of things that you hear them say and you just want to.. and I would like to know how you can constructively engage and transform.. but it's that education process.. Tony Balcomb brought it to us at [mission organisation], and I use it often, when I'm talking to Christians.. is the idea that the world is full of born-again, spirit-filled racists. But then the point that Tony made was that the first one was in the Bible - Peter. When the vision came to him to go to the Gentiles he said, "No way." He was born again, walked with Christ, spirit-filled.. impeccable Christian credentials, but still a racist.. and so the Lord has to do something in terms of our attitudes. And sadly, I think that much of our Christian experience gets tied up, and wrapped up with our cultural experience.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, Williams L. 1986. *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.

Arnold, R. 1991. *Educating for a Change*. Toronto: Marshall Institute for Education and Action.

Balcomb, Anthony. 1993. *Third Way Theology: Reconciliation, Revolution and Reform in the South African Church During the 1980's*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

-----, 1994a. "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Gods of Modernity: Sekunjalo Nge Narrative Theology." Unpublished Essay. Pietermaritzburg.

-----, 1994b. "South Africa - Terrifying Stories of Faith from the Political Boiling Pot

Bibliography

of the World." *Transformation* 11(2):1-5.

Baldwin, James. 1966. "Unnameable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes." In *The White Problem in America*, Eds Ebony, 173-81. Chicago: Johnson.

Banton, Michael. 1987. *Racial Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-----, 1988. *Racial Consciousness*. London: Longmann.

Barndt, Joseph. 1991. *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Bell, Derrick A. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York: BasicBooks.

Bennet, Lerone. 1966. "The White Problem in America." In *The White Problem in America*, Eds Ebony, 1-10. Chicago: Johnson.

Breytenbach, Breyten. 1972. "Vulture Culture: The Alienation of White South Africa." In *Apartheid: A Collection of Writings on South African Racism by South Africans*, ed. Alex La Guma, 137-48. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Brown, Robert McAfee. 1975. "My Story and 'The Story'" *Theology Today* 32(2):167-73.

Bibliography

- Clark, Kenneth B. 1966. "What Motivates American Whites?" In *The White Problem in America*, Eds Ebony, 47-56. Chicago: Johnson.
- Cochrane, James R. 1987. *Servants of Power: The Role of English-speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903-1930*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Coetzee, J. M. 1974. *Dusklands*. Braamfontein, South Africa: Ravan Press.
- Corsini, Raymond J., ed. 1984. *Encyclopaedia of Psychology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Crites, Stephen. 1968. "Myth, Story, History." In *Parable, Myth and Language*, ed. Tony Stoneburner. Cambridge: Church Society for College Work.
- , 1989. "The Narrative Quality of Experience." In *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, Eds Stanley Hauerwas and Gregory L. Jones, 65-88. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.
- Curle, Adam. 1972. *Mystics and Militants: A Study of Awareness, Identity and Social Action*. Great Britain: Tavistock.
- de Gruchy, John W. 1979. *The Church Struggle in South Africa*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

Bibliography

Dennis, Rutledge M. 1981. "Socialisation and Racism: The White Experience." In *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*, ed. Benjamin P. Bowser and Raymond G. Hunt, 71-86. California: SAGE.

Earl, Riggins R. 1993. *Dark Symbols, Obscure Signs: God, Self, and Community in the Slave Mind*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Erikson, Erik H. 1968. *Childhood and Society*. Harmondsworth, Middx.: Penguin.

-----, 1976. *Adulthood*. New York: Norton.

Essed, Philomena. 1988. "Understanding Verbal Accounts of Racism: Politics and Heuristics of Reality Constructions." *Text* 8(1-2):5-40.

-----, 1990. "Against All Odds: Teaching Against Racism at a University in South Africa." *The European Journal of Intercultural Studies* 1(1):41-56.

-----, 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Foster, Don H. 1991. "On Racism: Virulent Mythologies and Fragile Threads." *Pretexts* 3. Cape Town: Arts Faculty, University of Cape Town.

Gibran, Kahlil. 1983. *The Prophet*. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker.

Bibliography

Goba, Bonganjalo. 1988. "Toward a Quest for Christian Identity: A Third World Perspective." *Journal of Black Theology* 2(2):31-36.

Hale, Frederick. 1993. "Coming to Terms with Evangelicals and Apartheid." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 84:41-56.

Hauerwas, Stanley. 1977. *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame.

Hooks, Bell. 1992. *Black Looks, Race and Representation*. Boston, Mass: South End Press.

Hope, Marjorie, and James Young. 1981. *The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

Jackins, Harvey. 1973. *The Human Situation*. Seattle: Rational Island.

-----, 1975. *Fundamentals of Co-counselling Manual: For Beginning Classes in Re-evaluation Counselling*. Seattle, USA: Rational Island Publishers.

-----, 1977. *The Upward Trend*. Seattle: Rational Island.

-----, 1978. *The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counselling*. Seattle, USA: Rational Island Publishers.

Bibliography

- , 1981. *The Benign Reality*. Seattle, USA: Rational Island Publishers.
- Jones, James M. 1981. "The Concept of Racism and Its Changing Reality." In *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*, ed. Benjamin P. Bowser and Raymond G. Hunt, 27-50. California: SAGE.
- Karp, Joan B. 1981. "The Emotional Impact and a Model for Changing Racist Attitudes." In *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*, ed. Benjamin P. Bowser and Raymond G. Hunt, 87-96. California: SAGE.
- Katz, Judy H. 1978. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-racism Training*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma.
- King, Martin Luther. 1966. "The Un-christian Christian." In *The White Problem in America*, Eds Ebony, 57-63. Chicago: Johnson.
- la Guma, Alex, ed. 1972. *Apartheid: A Collection of Writings on South African Racism by South Africans*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Lipsky, M. 1968. "Protest as a Political Weapon." *American Political Science Review* 62:1144-59.
- Louw-Potgieter, Joha. 1988. *Afrikaner Dissidents: A Social Psychological Study of Identity and Dissent*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Bibliography

- , 1989. "Covert Racism: An Application of Essed's Analysis in a South African Context." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 8(5):307-19.
- McClendon, James W. 1974. *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon.
- Maimela, Simon. 1993. "Black Theological Response to Racism as a Theological Problem." *Journal of Black Theology* 7(2):100-13.
- Malan, Rian. 1990. *My Traitor's Heart: A South African Returns to Face His Country, His Tribe and His Conscience*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam. 1992. "A Comprehensive Analysis: Response to Seleane." *Journal of Black Theology* 6(2):29-46.
- Marcia, James E. 1966. "Development and Validation of Ego Identity Status." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 3:551-58.
- , 1980. "Identity in Adolescence." In *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, Ed J. Adelson. New York: Wiley.
- Marcia, James E., and M. L. Friedman. 1970. "Ego Identity Status in College Women." *Journal of Personality* 38:249-63.

Bibliography

Miles, Robert. 1989. *Racism*. London: Routledge.

Mishler, Elliot G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Motlhabi, Mokgethi. 1984. *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social-ethical Analysis*. Johannesburg: Skotaville.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. 1941. *The Meaning of Revelation*. New York: Macmillan.

Nolan, Albert. 1988. *God in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Rex, J., and D. Mason. 1986. *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rich, Paul B. 1984. *White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921-60*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Saunders, Christopher, ed. 1992. *Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*. Cape Town: Readers' Digest.

Seleoane, Mandla. 1992. "South Africa: A Socio-political Analysis." *Journal of Black Theology* 6(2):1-28.

Bibliography

- Sherover, Ricky. 1979a. "Guilt, Internalised Oppression and Oppressor Patterns."
Unpublished Manuscript.
- . 1979b. "What Does It Mean to Combat Racism?" *Present Time* 44:14-38.
- Simons, M. 1977. "A National Survey of Medium Range Effects of Training in Re-
evaluation Counselling." Ph. D. Diss. Mass.: University of Massachusetts.
- Terry, Robert W. 1975. *For Whites Only*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.
- TeSelle, Sallie McFague. 1975. "The Experience of Coming to Belief." *Theology Today*
32(2):159-65.
- Tilley, Terence W. 1985. *Story Theology*. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier.
- Van der Merwe, Rory. 1993. "An Exploration of Selected Correlates of Career Maturity
in Black High School Students." Master's Thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University
of Natal, PMB.
- Walker, David S. 1989. "Evangelicals and Apartheid: An Inquiry Into Some
Predispositions." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 67:46-61.
- . 1992. "Preferential Option for the Poor in Evangelical Theology: Assessments
and Proposals." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 79:53-62.

Bibliography

Wellman, David T. 1977. *Portraits of White Racism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, Loretta J. 1993. "Racism and Sexism: Redrawing the Conceptual and Strategic Maps." *Journal of Black Theology* 7(2):73-99.

Zanda, Antoinette. 1993. *A Guide to Workshops on Challenging Racism*. Cape Town: Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, University of the Western Cape.

