

Interview for BBC Radio
13 April 1995

Fr Michael Lapsley, SSM

In April 1990 the Apartheid regime sent me a letter bomb to my home of exile in Zimbabwe. I survived with the loss of both hands and an eye.

Today I'm the chaplain to a Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture in the South African city of Cape Town. We work with a range of people who have suffered as a result of political and organized violence. Together with all of South Africa's people, we're seeking to come to terms with the past. How do we free ourselves from what we have done and what has been done to us as well as what we have failed to do? Our ability to create a just and humane society today and tomorrow is profoundly related to our response to the apartheid years.

People in South Africa are beginning to come forward to tell their stories. Tonight I would like to tell you my story. Its a story that is intertwined with the story of the South African Nation.

I was born and brought up in New Zealand. During adolescence I read Father Trevor Huddleston's, "Naught for your Comfort". He shocked the world with his chilling description of apartheid including heart-rending accounts of the forced removals of whole communities under the Group Areas Act. It made an indelible impression on me. I knew apartheid was evil and the opposite of the Christian Gospel. Little did I know that South Africa would eventually become home and change my life for ever.

I became a member of a religious order called the Society of the Sacred Mission in Australia. I was ordained to the priesthood in 1973. In the same year, I was transferred to South Africa to become a university student and subsequently a university chaplain. In my naïvety, I had thought that South Africa would be composed of oppressed people and oppressors but that I would belong to a third category called the human community. The all-embracing system of apartheid decreed that my colour would make me a member of the oppressor group.

As a Christian I believed that we are called to love God and our neighbour. But I was unable to fulfil that calling because apartheid prevented me from being a neighbour to any person of colour.

I felt that apartheid had changed me from a human being into a white man. My value and every aspect of my life was defined by my pigmentation not because I was a child of God made in God's image and likeness. It had robbed me of my humanity.

I joined the struggle to liberate South Africa, not as a favour to people of colour. I needed to recover my own humanity. I needed to fulfil the command of God. I sought to act in solidarity with the majority of South Africa's people as they sought to free themselves from the yoke of apartheid.

MUSIC

It was less than 4 years after arriving in South Africa that I was expelled from the country. When I left there were no marks on my body. At the same time, South Africa tore me apart as a human being. Was I crazy or was the society crazy. The Bible tells us not to worry about those who kill the body but rather those who kill the soul.

When I first left South Africa, I went to live in Lesotho. I continued my studies at the National

University of Lesotho. They told me that I was the first white student to transfer from a South African university. There was one other white student. I found myself accepted and related to as an individual human being and not as a category. The raw wounds to my soul began to heal.

I came to the conclusion that apartheid is an option for death carried out in the name of the Gospel of life. Therefore it was an issue of faith to oppose apartheid and support the struggle for liberation. The problem was a faith problem, a theological problem. The bad faith took a political form in the denial of the vote to the majority. The solution had also to take a political form.

It took 16 years before I returned to South Africa.

1 From 1983 to 1992, I lived in Zimbabwe. For about three years I lived with armed police guards because the Zimbabwean authorities had information that I was on a South African Government hit list. As my work was pastoral and theological and not military, why was I considered to be a threat? Perhaps it was my theology and my words which were a problem. I tried in my own small way to be a voice of hope within the exiled community.

Of course we were not the first people to live in exile. I was often reminded of the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:4-8

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: {5} "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. {6} Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. {7} Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

At the same time I remembered the words of the Psalmist.

Psalms 137.

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. {2} There on the poplars we hung our harps, ... {4} How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land? {5} If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget <its skill>. {6} May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.

Finally the day of salvation began to dawn. The pressure became too great. On February 2, 1990 the announcement came. Nelson Mandela was to be released and negotiations would begin. We were the survivors. Soon we would return home.

2 On April 28, 1990, I opened a letter bomb hidden inside the pages of two religious magazines. It was sent from South Africa.

I did not lose consciousness and I did not go into shock and the doctors did not understand why that was so.

Personally, I am grateful that I can remember and that its not a memory that haunts me either. It is a memory that I can live with. I felt the presence of God with me in that bombing, sharing in my crucifixion. In the midst of indescribable pain, I also felt that Mary the mother of Jesus who had watched her son being crucified somehow understood what it was that I was going through.

I had no role model. I did not know a human beings who had lost both hands. I had no basis of comparison to say that's how that person is living his life. For a little bit of the time I thought it would have been better to have died because would life be life in any meaningful sense.

MUSIC

Isaiah 52:13-15.

See, my servant will act wisely ; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. {14} Just as there were many who were appalled at him -- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness-- {15} so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Whilst I was in hospital in Harare I remembered this particular passage from Isaiah. What I also remembered was an image from Orthodoxy, the image of the Saviour on the cross with one leg shorter than the other.

It is the opposite of western Christian imagery, which always shows Jesus as the perfect white male figure.

On reflection, I began to discover that disability is the norm of the human community.

It is not the exception . Disability and incompleteness are the norms.

In my view, to receive a letter bomb is to become a specific focus of evil in the world. But as people from all over the world, not all of whom were religious, responded with a flood of messages assuring me of their prayers and love and support, I actually became a focus of all that is beautiful in the human community - the ability to be kind, generous, loving and compassionate.

I realized that if I became filled with hatred, bitterness, self-pity and desire for revenge, I would remain a victim for ever. It would consume me. It would eat me alive. God and people of faith and hope enabled me to make my bombing redemptive - to bring the life out of the death, the good out of the evil. I was enabled to grow in faith, in commitment to justice, in compassion.

Yes, I do grieve, and will always grieve, especially for my hands. At times I experience great frustration. It is not easy to cope with being stared at wherever you go.

But, I am no longer a victim, nor even simply a survivor, I am a victor over evil, hatred and death.

I suppose it was by being radically, physically wounded that I discovered just how important healing is. When I was in hospital, I said to myself: For me now the struggle against apartheid

is the struggle to get well, to return, to live my life as fully, as joyfully, as completely as possible. That is my victory.

Today my commitment to the struggle for liberation is played out in a commitment to the process of healing the land and healing the people.

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All of us have memories of the past - memories of what we have done and what has been done to us. Joyous memories and painful memories. Memories that give us strength and memories that may still be destroying us. Memories that we tried to bury and memories which we failed to bury. We have individual memories and collective memories. In South Africa we have very divided memories.

Within the country there was psychological and physical torture on a massive scale. The apartheid regime and all who supported it, carries responsibility for the loss of millions of lives throughout the whole region of Southern Africa. Significant sections of the population were deaf and blind to what was happening and to their root causes, even when the whole world tried to tell them..

But should we not simply forgive and forget the past. For Christians, we need to remind ourselves that we belong to a remembering religion. Remember when you were slaves in Egypt is a constant refrain of the Old Testament.

The words of Jesus: Do this in memory of me are said at every Eucharist.

The question is not one of forgetting but rather it is the problem of how do we heal our memories. How do we stop our memories from destroying us.

Forgiveness yes - that is always the Christian calling - but no-one should suggest that forgiveness is glib, cheap, or easy. What does it mean to forgive those who have not confessed, those who have not changed their lives, those who have no interest in making it up to the relatives of victims and the survivors of their crimes. If you forgive a murderer, does that mean their should be no justice.

How do we achieve reconciliation as a nation. Can we forgive each other for what we have done.

There are many examples in history of nations who tried to bury rather than face the past. No nation has ever succeeded. If we try to ignore or bury the past it will haunt us and may even destroy us.

The issues at stake are spiritual issues, concerned with the spiritual health of the nation. If we are filled with anger, hatred, bitterness and a desire for revenge, we will never create a just and compassionate society. If we have those feelings they need to be worked through lest they continue to consume us.

Forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation never happens anywhere in an instant. Some say that in South Africa the process will be worked out over the next hundred years. But we can assist ourselves in the process if we have the will.

Through the power of God at work in our lives we can begin to make what has happened to us - redemptive - to bring the good out of the evil, the life out of the death.

We cannot be healed until we acknowledge our sickness.

As we recognize our woundedness and brokenness and seek healing, the South African nation begins to move from being the polecat of the world to become a light to the nations.

Why did I survive a bomb that was supposed to kill. Perhaps to be a small sign of South Africa's brokenness yes but much more importantly to be a sign that love and faith and gentleness are stronger than hatred and evil and death.

Transcript of the evidence given by

Fr Michael Lapsley, S.S.M.

together with

Michael Worsnip

to the

Commission for Truth and Reconciliation

at the hearings of the

Human Rights Violations Committee

at Kimberley on Monday 10 June 1996

Thank you. The hearing resumes.

Dr Alec Boraine -

"Chairperson: The following witness is Father Michael Lapsley, and I will ask him to please come forward. Father Lapsley, I am very grateful to you for coming to share with us your own experience. In particular, you will be telling us about the parcel bomb explosion of 28th April, 1990 in Harare which brought about extremely serious injuries. Before I ask Denzel Potgieter to take over from me, would you please stand for the taking of the oath.

Father Lapsley, do you swear that the evidence that you will give before the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Thank you, you may be seated. I understand that there is a second witness, Father Michael Worsnip, I am sorry that I did not welcome you, as your name was not before me. We are very glad to see you as well, and if you would please raise your right hand, and do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God? Thank you very much, please be seated."

Denzil Potgieter, I will now hand over to you.

Thank you, Dr. Boraine. Father Lapsley and Father Worsnip, again, welcome. Father we are happy that you are in this area and that you are able to participate in the Hearings today. Perhaps just by way of introduction, you are an ordained priest of the Anglican Church and are presently the Chaplain to The Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture in Cape Town, is that correct:

"That is correct".

Before we deal with the incident that you are testifying about, perhaps you can give us a brief personal background of yourself.

"Thank you very much, I will say at the beginning that I have had the privilege of telling my story many times in South Africa and around the world, but I think for me that this has a particular poignancy and significance to be able to tell it to a Commission which represents the Nation.

I want to express my own respect to the Commissioners for the way they are hearing the pain of the Nation and for the opportunity to share my own story.

I am originally from New Zealand. I was born and brought up there. I went to Australia to train to become a Priest and I joined an Anglican Religious Community, the Society of the Sacred Mission in Australia. It was my Community, the Society of the Sacred Mission, which transferred me to South Africa in 1973. I became a University student at the University of Natal in Durban and subsequently Chaplain to the three Campuses, then in Durban.

I might also observe that throughout the time I was in South Africa, I was a convinced Pacifist, which I am sure the Arch Bishop will agree is not typical of Anglicans. It was for me, I suppose, the turning point in 1976, the Soweto Uprising, and the killing of schoolchildren that changed me very radically. I was at that stage National Chaplain for Anglican Students and I was speaking out against the killing and torturing of school children during that year.

I was expelled from South Africa in September 1976 and then I went to Lesotho where I continued my studies in Lesotho. I became Chaplain of the University, I trained Priests in the Diocese of Lesotho, but I also joined the African National Congress of South Africa. Not having been born in South Africa, that was the way that I was taking Citizenship in the South Africa which we were still fighting for. It was in Lesotho that the first indications came that I might be on a South African Government Hit List, particularly through the Citizen Newspaper and the Aida Parker Newsletter. There were articles written demonizing me, in the period around 1979-1980. At the end of 1982 the South African Defence Force attacked Lesotho and 42 people were shot dead. I was away from Lesotho at the time but it was believed, particularly by the Church Authorities, that I was one of the targets for that massacre. I was forced by the Church to leave Lesotho.

I went to Zimbabwe where I lived from 1983 to 1992 and throughout the period I was a Chaplain of the ANC, I headed an ANC Unit at the National University of Lesotho. In the ANC I was involved in Educational, Pastoral and Theological work, the work of a Chaplain of the ANC. In Zimbabwe I was head of the ANC Education Committee for some years. But I was not an employee of the ANC. I did various Church work, working for the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, and also for the Lutheran World Federation. I did a Masters Degree in Zimbabwe as well and I was part of the exiled community of Lesotho and subsequently in Zimbabwe.

I cannot remember the exact date, but in about 1988 I think it was, the Zimbabwe Authorities came to me and said "We have information that you are on a South African Government Hit List." They said, We believe that there may be some attempt by Commandos to kill you." That is one of the moments that I remember, when I was called into this office and told that the South African Government wishes to kill me. I remember the loneliness of the moment, because it was very personal, it wasn't simply that they wanted to kill members of the ANC, but it was me in particular. And it made me ask what it was that I was living for, if in fact they wished to kill me for it. I came to the conclusion that the only way that I could be a threat to the Apartheid System was because of my theology, because I believed that Apartheid was a choice and an option for death carried out in the name of the Gospel of Life, and my work was the work of mobilizing the Religious Community in South Africa and Internationally, to oppose apartheid as an issue of faith.

1990 came, Nelson Mandela was released. The political organisations of the people were unbanned. But I forgot to say that when the Zimbabwean Government said that they had information that the South African Government would wish to kill me, they asked me to accept 24 hour armed police guards.

I had those armed police guards, I suppose it was for about 2 years, and then at the end of '89, beginning of 1990, there were assurances from Magnus Malan that there would be no further attacks on Front line states and my armed guards were removed. After February 2nd, although we kept saying we shouldn't be naive, we relaxed. February/March into April I visited Canada, invited by the Canadian Churches to speak about what the significance was of the release of Nelson Mandela. At the end of April 1990 I returned from this visit and I was about to start a new job as a Parish Priest in Bulawayo, having been working for the Lutheran World Federation for the previous couple of years. When you have been away for about six weeks, especially as a Priest, more than some other people you get lots of mail of all sorts of shapes and sizes and all this mail had accumulated whilst I was away and perhaps naturally when I first got hold of it, I read all the personal letters and left all those manila envelopes to be opened a bit later. But there had been a letter which had come from South Africa written on ANC letterhead from somebody who called himself Vusi. It was a typewritten letter, saying that he had some religious literature or some kind of struggle literature that I might be interested in, and he would soon be sending it. I didn't attach that much significance to the letter in that I had this vast amount of mail that I was ploughing through. There was also a slip from the Post Office to go and collect a registered article. So I had gone to collect that but hadn't in fact opened it - I just piled the envelope with the others envelopes. So about a week after my return from Canada I had a farewell party on the Saturday. On the Monday I was starting a new job in Bulawayo. I came back from the party in the early evening, and I continued to open mail and I sat opposite a colleague I stayed with, Andrew Mutizwa, a young Zimbabwean teacher (I stayed with two young Zimbabweans) and we were chatting about the party and I said I was about to phone Tito Mboweni who was an old friend of mine. I was about to pick up the phone and at the same time I was opening the accumulated mail. So I came upon this Manilla envelope that had been amongst the accumulated mail. I opened it. It was addressed to me and inside were two religious magazines. The magazines were wrapped in plastic, sealed in plastic, so I ripped open the plastic and took out the magazines, both religious - one in Afrikaans, one in English and put aside the Afrikaans one as my Afrikaans was not very good.

I opened the English Magazine and the act of opening the magazine was the detonating device for a bomb. One of the extraordinary things was that I, and the Doctors don't know why, I didn't become unconscious. I didn't go into shock. The ceiling of three rooms blew out and there was a hole in the floor. I can still remember what happened, the actual explosion is still with me. I remember pain on a scale that I didn't think a human being could ever experience. I remember going into darkness, being thrown backwards by the force of the bomb, the exact angle saved my life that I opened it, I opened it on a small coffee table. If I had opened it on a table like this, it would have killed me, because it would have knocked out the heart or knocked off the head, but because I was opening it down at a lower angle. It blew off my hands. I lost an eye, my ear drums were shattered. I think perhaps the most extraordinary thing of all was that I felt the presence of God with me. I felt also that Mary who had watched her son being crucified also understood what it was that I was going through. I remember calling out for an ambulance, calling for the police.

I suppose in a way my years as a Chaplain of the ANC, the people I had to bury over the years also helped prepare me. I think I had long realised that it was only through sacrifice that freedom would come. I suppose I had faced the possibility of my own death, but I had never faced the possibility of major permanent disability. So I was taken to the Hospital For a variety of complex reasons I didn't receive treatment for about six hours and remained in pain for that period and in darkness. I guess for a little bit of the time after I came round after the operations I thought maybe it would have been better to have died when I realised I had no hands. I had never met another human being with no hands. I didn't know whether life would be life, in any meaningful sense. They didn't know whether I would ever see properly again. I'd lost one eye, I couldn't see properly out of the other, I couldn't hear properly because my eardrums were shattered. I was burned extensively, I had a broken arm and a vast number of other injuries.

But, I had also travelled the world for years in the cause of the struggle against apartheid and one of the effects of that was that (when I was bombed I became a focus of evil, because there is something very personal about a letter bomb which was supposed to kill me) however in the response of people all over the world I became a focus of all that is beautiful in the human community, our ability to be tender, loving and compassionate. I think that is what enabled me to take that situation and make it redemptive, to bring the life out of the death, the good out of the evil. I spent a month in hospital in Harare and then I was flown to Australia where I spent three months in an acute hospital in Sydney and then another three months at a rehabilitation hospital. Then I returned to Zimbabwe to joblessness. The Bishop who was supposed to employ me said, "Well, you are disabled now, what can you do?" I remember saying to him, I think I can be more of a priest with no hands than I ever was with two hands. So that is more or less the account of the bombing and the experience. I should say also that I was as helpless as a newborn baby for three months. There was literally nothing that I could do for myself but I also said to myself that my struggle now is a struggle to get well, a struggle to return, a struggle to live my life as fully, as joyfully, as completely as possible, and that would be my victory. I also realised that if I was filled with hatred, bitterness, self pity, desire for revenge, that they would have failed to kill the body but they would have killed the soul, and I would be a permanent victim. And today I would say that I see myself not simply as a survivor, but I am a victor over the evil and hatred and death that apartheid represented, a sign of the triumph of good.

I want to conclude with two other points.

I want to talk about responsibility, and also what I would ask of the Commission. In my mind, there was somebody who obviously typed my name on an envelope, a woman or a man who typed my name on that bomb, also somebody who made it, who created it. I have often asked the question about the person who made it, the person who typed my name. What did they tell their children that night that they did that day? How did they describe it, when they said, "How was your day today?" What did they say that they actually did on that day. So of course, that person has a particular responsibility, but I believe responsibility increases the higher you go up the chain of command.

To my mind I have always been clear that the person I hold responsible ultimately for my bombing is F.W. de Klerk. The reason I say that is that remembering I was bombed on April 28th 1990, on the eve of the first talks between the ANC and the Government, F.W. de Klerk was Head of State. The Death Squads remained part of the machinery of the State. They were there within the machinery of the State. He knew about them. I know that for a fact. At a Conference some time ago, I spoke to Van Zyl Slabbert and he said "I, (Van Zyl Slabbert), went to de Klerk and told him about the Death Squads." So he cannot say he didn't know, and so I hold him politically and morally responsible for the attack on me. I am not saying he gave the command, I'm not saying he even necessarily knew about my particular bombing. He may have, but I am saying that because he knew the Death Squads were there, and they were part of the machinery of state, he did nothing to dismantle them. I hold him responsible.

I would also say that there is a sense in which I know the Archbishop often speaks about the question of forgiveness - in a funny sort of way for me forgiveness is not yet on the agenda and the reason I say that - I have said that I am not filled with hatred, bitterness or self pity, or that I want revenge, I think that what I believe in is not retribution, I believe in restorative justice ~~not retributive justice~~. For example, if F.W. was to come to me or the person who made the bomb was to come to me and said: 'I am sorry for what I did and I want your forgiveness and this is what I am now doing in the way of reparation, not to me personally, but to our country and our people, these are the kinds of things I am doing to heal our land', then of course one would say: of course, yes, forgiveness, there would be no problem about that. But I have not heard from de Klerk one word of remorse. I have heard not one word of acknowledgement of evil at all and I have heard very few voices coming from that community of perpetrators showing any signs of remorse or sorrow or willingness to make reparation. Perhaps what makes many survivors cynical is that we see rather Golden Handshakes, we see immense benefit coming from what in fact they have been party to, and I think that is particularly galling to many people.

To conclude my last part is: What do I ask from the Commission? I should say to you that the Government of Zimbabwe has an open attempted murder docket in my case, which is not complete because they have not found who was responsible. Obviously there was a whole complex range of people involved. I think one must also be clear that one is not talking about the act of an individual. That bomb was so sophisticated that it could come through the post, registered mail from South Africa to Zimbabwe and not explode until I opened it. It also came to my private post office box, in fact not even mine, one I shared with a friend. There was a great deal of intelligence and sophistication - a sophistication that only lay within a unit such as the CCB and it certainly bore the hallmarks of the CCB, whether it was them in particular or not.

So I would like to say to the Commission: I would like to know who was responsible. I would like to know the chain of command and I am in some ways more interested in the top of the chain of command than at the bottom because I think there lies the greatest moral responsibility although it may extend beyond the chain of command, as I have said, to the de Klerks of the world, and the Members of the State Security Council and Cabinet, so that is what I am asking.

One of the things I have been thinking, even this morning is, do I want to meet the person who made the bomb? The answer is, it depends. I don't know if I could cope with somebody who doesn't care, I don't know if I could cope with somebody for whom there is no issue, who is so dehumanised that it doesn't matter that you make letter bombs. But if there is somebody who is trapped by what they have done, by what they have been party to, perhaps to me and perhaps to many others, then I would love to meet them. I think we could have a very interesting conversation, where we could begin to discover each other's common humanity. Of course if somebody said: 'I was sorry', I would want to ask them what they do for a living now. Do they still make letter bombs?. I am not sure what that would mean. But again if that person has sorrow, and is living their life in a new way, I would love to be able to say to them, of course, of course, I forgive you in that context.

Thank you very much."

Desmond Tutu - I should rebuke you for clapping but I think it is a response that is probably appropriate.

Advocate Denzil Potgieter Thank you, Father Lapsley, there is nothing that one can meaningfully add to that testimony, I think we will go on to the second Michael (Worsnip), and just say that you have been in Zimbabwe at the time when the incident happened and that you in fact, saw Father Lapsley after the incident. Is that correct?

Father Worsnip - "I was not in Zimbabwe at the actual moment of the bomb but I have had a very long relationship with Michael, and I would like if I may to put my perspective in terms of the context for this Bomb.

I met Michael in 1979 when I left South Africa to go to Lesotho as a war resister because I came to the conclusion that I could not serve in the SADF in any capacity whatsoever. Michael was at the time the Warden of Le Lapela Jesu Seminary in Roma. Michael's house was a meeting point for South African refugees and all of us discovered each other there. It was a most remarkable place to be in. For people like me who had lived in a fairly closed white society, it was the first time on a person to person level to be able to meet and to debate with and to converse with and to disagree with, on an eyeball-to-eyeball level, fellow black South Africans. And for me it was a conversion experience, once I had gone through that there was no turning back and I was not the only person for whom that was an important place to be. It was a house of peace. I want to emphasize that I never saw weapons there, ever. It was a house of protest, it was a house of debate where people met in real terms and could discuss and disagree and that sort of thing, but it was a house essentially of peace. It was sometimes a house of prayer. That is the context in which I met Michael.

The only violence that I personally encountered while living in Lesotho was the two raids that happened from South Africa into Lesotho in 1982 and 1985.

The level of terror which those raids caused, killing and maiming civilians inside Lesotho, is beyond description. The way in which the country and all of us living in the country felt raped by the kind of aggression and senseless killing that was taking place across the border. Michael's name was probably on a list for one of those raids, he just happened to have been out of the country at the time. There were times in Lesotho when everybody was scared, particularly South Africans living in that society, and Michael was quite clearly a particular target of the Apartheid State. Because unlike many others in the Church, Michael would make no compromise. He was a target because he was white, and because he, as a very committed and a very public Christian, supported the armed struggle against Apartheid. This was not something which the Apartheid State could easily overlook because his being challenged many of the myths which apartheid had put up, as it were, constructed.

The first myth that the apartheid state wanted people to believe was that the struggle was a struggle for the racial survival of the whites against the blacks. On the one hand the ANC was portrayed as an all black organisation, on the other no white in their right mind would want to join it because it was out to destroy them. That was the first myth.

The second myth was that the ANC was portrayed as a Marxist/Atheist Organisation. To have a priest of the Anglican Church publically being a member of it and functioning as its chaplain could not be condoned. And that despite the fact that in terms of the history of the ANC many priests, many religious people of many faiths, have belonged to the ANC. The ANC was also identified almost entirely with Umkhonto we Siswe. In other words the only picture which was given to the South African public was of an organisation with only one goal - violence, terror and destruction. Michael, while not a member of MK but wholeheartedly supporting the armed struggle, exposed some of the contradictions with this kind of presentation.

But the other thing that I think must have been an enormous threat to the state was Michael's effectiveness in communicating his message and that itself must have made him a target. Now you have already heard what Michael's experience of the bomb was and the kind of devastating effect that it had on him personally.

I saw Michael three days after the bomb in the hospital in Harare. It was an awful sight. His face was charred and blackened. His beard had melted into his skin. His face was swollen to twice its normal size. In fact the only way that I could recognise him was by a single gold filling which he has in his teeth. Both of his hands were taken off. He needed to hold his stumps up all the time because anything touching them caused him the most extraordinary pain. His lips were swollen and bleeding. His one eye was damaged completely by the explosion, and he could see nothing at all out of the other one. We had to shout to make him hear, but it seems as though he could hear just a little. He was in a terrible state. His sister Helen who was with him told us about how he would wake up at night screaming, re-living the bomb. I wanted to touch him but everywhere you looked over his body was red and swollen and sore and painful. There was nowhere to touch him.

We were grateful that he was alive, but we were very aware that his life would be changed irrevocably from that moment on. There was very little any of us could do except be there. It was an agonizing time for everyone, but none of us could even remotely imagine the kind of agony that he was going through.

For myself, I want the perpetrators of deeds like this to be exposed and to be named, or for them of their own accord to come forward and own the deeds that they have done. I would like to hear what they have to say for themselves. I would like to see them so that I can put a face to this kind of terror. The person who made this bomb that was sent to Michael is unlikely to be mad. There was a clear skill and professionalism in the way in which this whole deed was executed. To me, it is quite inconceivable that they should be allowed to remain hidden within the society without any sense of ownership or remorse or regret. It is inconceivable that anyone should be allowed to do this to another human being and to remain hidden. In any case, for their own sake, I would want them to come forward and say what they have done and what they thought they were doing, and then at least we can begin perhaps to deal with it and take it somewhere.

Behind all of these hidden players I also want to see the Government of the Day express remorse and sorrow for what they did to us all, how they damaged the entire nation both physically and psychologically."

Thank you very much, Father Worsnip and Father Lapsley. If you have nothing further to add, I will hand back to the Chairperson.

Desmond Tutu - "Thank you very much, Dr. Boraine."

Dr. Boraine - Father Lapsley, I would like to take a little further your comments about forgiveness and restorative justice. You will know better than most that the whole question of amnesty is very controversial. You will also know that the Amnesty provisions in South Africa are unique and very different and much more demanding than any other than I certainly know of in the World. But nevertheless there is provision made for amnesty under certain circumstances. Just to clarify my own mind and make sure that I understand what you're saying. If so far we do not know who did this despicable thing to you, we can guess or we can have some very good idea about the organisation, the groupings, the authorities. But personally who typed the letter, who sealed it, who mailed it and so on, if any of those people, and it is unlikely that we are ever going to find out. That is the hard thing to accept, but if any of those came and applied for amnesty and made full disclosure, they would receive amnesty in terms of the act. How do you see this, how do you feel about this, because the feeling level is probably the strongest. Does that meet with your restorative justice or is it something beyond that?

Father Lapsley - "My view has always been that it would have been much more desirable for there to be trials, than amnesty. I was present when the Bishop of the Church of England in South Africa spoke about the St. James Massacre.

I was fascinated when he spoke about how his son went to the prison to say on behalf of the congregation to one of the people who had been found guilty, "We forgive you". He was very quick to say, but I didn't say that he should be released. That fascinated me, that was a concept of forgiveness linked to justice. But my view has been and I have been from the beginning in support of the Truth Commission, I believe that we are sacrificing a degree of justice which I think is extremely painful to the Nation for the sake of the greater good and the greater good as I saw it was that if we had not had amnesty, we were going to have a civil war that was going to consume us all. And that is the context in which I think I support my leaders in the insistence of amnesty but it remains very painful.

But the Archbishop has been a good teacher and I believe in very old fashioned concepts of forgiveness and it seems to me that in the Christian context, forgiveness is a package deal, and we often, in South Africa, make it something glib, cheap and easy. It seems to me that the Christian understanding of forgiveness is about confession, it is about amendment of life, it is about remorse, it is about reparation, it is a whole package. Yes, I would support amnesty but that doesn't deal with the package. Amnesty's a legal thing. One of the first things that the Archbishop said at the beginning of this Commission which he conceded was a very hard pill to swallow was that someone could come before this Commission and have no remorse and yet get amnesty. So the legal provisions have been dealt with but the moral issues remain unaddressed. They remain unaddressed for the person who seeks amnesty unless they address those wider issues and I think we need to have a moral climate in the country where we are able to say beyond the narrowness, in one sense, of the Commission, to be able to say to the country that there has to be sorrow, confession, amendment to life and reparation if the people who did it are going to be free. There is an irony in a sense in which with no hands and one eye, I am much freer as a person than the ones who did it to me. So I say to them and to all those South Africans in the end, who supported apartheid, your freedom awaits you, but there is a whole process to go through which can never be reduced simply to the legalities of amnesty.

Dr Boraine:

You will appreciate that we have a number of other witnesses who we want to see today, otherwise I would be very tempted to enter into a very long discussion because it deserves that.

Fr Michael Lapsley

Once a theologian always a theologian.

Dr Boraine

I will restrain myself with one final comment. And I really will try to be brief. One of the things that we have heard from many people who have sat where you are sitting today, all over the country, is, and they don't know how to explain it, many of them don't even attempt to, and that is a desire to know who killed their child, who hurt them, for what reason and so on, they all know that unless the person comes forward, the likelihood of them knowing that, which would unlock something very deep withinside of themselves, will not happen.

For myself, and I just ask how you see it, and I am perfectly happy if you disagree, one of the advantages of incorporating Human Rights Violations, Hearings, Amnesty and Reparation, even without that personal remorse, is that some people are going to know for the very first time who did it, and for me this is a very big part of the work of the Commission. I just wonder how you see it?

... (end of side one of tape)

Side 2 of tape:

Michael But that there is unfinished business is true of me, so I think it is helpful for it to be linked.

If I could just make one other point that I had forgotten to make, but I wanted to make, that really relates to reparation. Because I am a member of a religious order and a priest of the church, in twenty, thirty, forty years time, if I have problems of a medical, psychological or psychiatric character, there is a fair chance that I'll get help, but I am not sure that this may be true of some of my fellow South Africans. I am very concerned that in the recommendations that are made that it takes account of very long term needs. I have had a whole series of operations and in some ways, although with major disabilities, I am in very good health but I can imagine that in twenty, thirty years time, some of the effects of the bomb will actually come to a head in new ways and I would be very concerned if people who don't have anything to say because you say to the people here "Do you want anything?" and they say, "No, well, we need this or that?" But in twenty, thirty, forty years time, there is going to be an acute need, and we as a society need to take care just as there are people who are having acute psychiatric problems around the world because of the Second World War, now, who have never had them before and I think we need to learn that, and I hope the Reparations Committee recommendations will institute those kinds of structures for those of us who said: "No, we are fine", but we may not be fine further down the track and I am more concerned about those who will not have the kind of access that perhaps as a professional person or as a priest or a religious, that I may."

Ms Glenda Wildschut:

Father Mike - I was very moved when you talked about your understanding at the time of your bombing, about what it must have meant for the Mother of Christ to witness the crucifixion and in a sense I was realising that you were also making reference to your own family. You talked about what that has meant for you. Can you give us an idea of what the impact of the bombing has been on your sisters and on your mother?

Michael: "No I can't, I mean it is a valid question. Can I put it this way, I see myself as belonging to a number of families, my natural family, my parents, my father is late, my brothers and sisters, the family of a religious order The Society of the Sacred Mission, the family of the church, for very many years the family of the ANC. Having lived also in Zimbabwe and Lesotho, the family of both of those nations.

When I was bombed, all those families loved me, in a very extraordinary way, and that was what enabled me, I mean the doctors said it would take 18 months to 2 years before I was well again, seven months later I returned, and I was fine, and I think that is because of all those families, and the roles through their prayers, their love and support, religious people, people not religious at all, played. Two of my sisters came to see me in hospital. The point I am making when I say that I can't is that it is difficult to know, and I think sometimes in a strange kind of way and I think I have seen this, watching this process, that for the families, the mothers, the spouses, friends, in some ways it is harder than for the survivors, and I think that when we talk about the concepts of forgiveness, I think it is much easier for the survivor than for the relative of the one who has died, and I think even if I lived, the pain that others go through in their helplessness, that pain is often much greater and so yes, I was supported very profoundly and very deeply by all those families."

Desmond Tutu - Michael was a Priest in the Diocese of Lesotho when I was the Bishop of Lesotho. He has heard me say this before, he was one of the most obstreperous, most difficult Priests I have ever had. Listening to Michael Worsnip, I think there were probably other sides that I did not always know about. It may be why he was always making you face up to things, but it was also how he did it, he was horrible. I am going to say something which I have said to Michael, which people may find difficult. I in a way give thanks to God for what happened to Michael, it is a very difficult thing to say, but he knows that I am saying it, and I am saying it as one who loves him very dearly, because the Michael after the Bomb Outrage has been an incredible person. He has been an Icon, he speaks about forgiveness in a way that he probably knows his Archbishop who is about to leave, doesn't always agree, but he is an Icon, a living example of the kind of thing that we are trying to help be incarnated, be enfleshed in our country. I am very deeply humbled, but also very proud that Michael is now a Priest in my Diocese in Cape Town and a Priest of whom I am very deeply proud. I give thanks to God for you, Michael, and I also give thanks for the experience through which you went, because you can talk about crucifixion and resurrection because it is real, it is in your body. You should see when he celebrates the Eucharist, I have sometimes stood next to him and I got a little worried whether he was not going to overturn the Chalice or something, and there is an incredible kind of hush in almost every service that I have been with you, because people somehow feel that they are in touch with goodness, in an awful situation somehow they are aware that they are in touch with light in darkness, that they are in touch with life in death, and somehow they know goodness is going to triumph over evil.

SPEECH BY
MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF SOUTH AFRICA, DULLAH OMAR, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF THE
REPORT OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION :
LONDON - 12 APRIL 1999

HIGH COMMISSIONER
YOUR LORDSHIPS, YOUR LADYSHIPS
DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT
DISTINGUISHED DIGNITARIES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF MACMILLANS
FRIENDS OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

ALLOW ME TO MAKE A FEW PRELIMINARY REMARKS:

- i. I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO OUR HIGH COMMISSIONER AND HER OFFICE FOR THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE TRC REPORT.
- ii. AMONGST YOU ARE PERSONS WHO FOR DECADES FOUGHT IN THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUCTURES IN THE UK. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ROLE. THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.
- iii. I THANK CHIEF EMEKA ANYAOKU, HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT FOR CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND BEING HERE TODAY.
- iv. I THANK THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR ITS WORK AND AM HAPPY TO SHARE THIS OCCASION WITH COMMISSIONER DUMISA NTSEBEZA.
- v. I THANK MACMILLANS, THE PUBLISHING FIRM FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION.
- vi. LASTLY, I SAY THANK YOU TO EACH ONE OF YOU FOR GIVING UP SOME OF YOUR VALUABLE TIME TO BE HERE THIS EVENING.

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

THIS LAUNCH OF THE TRC REPORT IN THE UK TAKES PLACE MERELY TWO MONTHS BEFORE SOUTH AFRICA'S SECOND DEMOCRATIC ELECTION.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE TRC PROCESS HAS BEEN A HUGE SUCCESS. IT HAS NOT BEEN A PERFECT PROCESS. A NUMBER OF MAJOR PARTIES MOUNTED LEGAL CHALLENGES AGAINST THE TRC IN RESPECT OF ONE OR OTHER MATTER. SOME CRITICS CLAIMED THAT THE TRC PROCESS WAS A FAILURE. NOTHING CAN BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. WHAT THESE

CRITICS FAILED TO SEE IS THAT WE CREATED A PROCESS WHICH WAS NOT ABOVE THE LAW BUT SUBJECT TO LAW AND THE LEGAL CHALLENGES THEMSELVES NOT ONLY ENHANCED THE PROCESS BUT CONTRIBUTED TO ESTABLISHING THE RULE OF LAW.

THE HANDING OVER OF THE TRC REPORT TO PRESIDENT MANDELA IN TERMS OF THE LAW ALSO DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS IS BEHIND US. IT IS NOT. IT WAS NOT THE TASK OF THE TRC TO EFFECT RECONCILIATION IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. RECONCILIATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IS A NATIONAL TASK INVOLVING THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL SOUTH AFRICA'S PEOPLE. IT IS ONE OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS AN ASPECT OF NATION BUILDING AND SYSTEMATICALLY ADDRESSING THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID. APARTHEID CREATED ENORMOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMBALANCES AND INEQUALITIES. IT LEFT US WITH A POPULATION DEEPLY DIVIDED, POLARISED, TRAUMATISED AND BRUTALISED – AND IN SOME INSTANCES, DEHUMANISED. WE INHERITED A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE AND A CULTURE OF CORRUPTION.

A MAJOR DIMENSION OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION. THIS INCLUDES ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMBALANCES AND INEQUALITIES TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED BUT ALSO DEVELOPING CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES, FIGHTING CORRUPTION, WHITE COLLAR CRIME AND ORGANISED CRIME IN PARTICULAR, ADDRESSING THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN.

THE SECOND MAJOR PILLAR OF TRANSFORMATION RELATES TO THE SHAPING OF SOUTH AFRICA'S NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER. OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS WE HAVE PUT INTO PLACE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTIONAL STATE. SOME OF THE ELEMENTS ARE

- (i) COMPLETING SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS
- (ii) CONDUCTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AT NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT LOCAL LEVEL, AND DEEPENING THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION
- (iii) ESTABLISHING THE RULE OF LAW
- (iv) BUILDING AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY
- (v) IMPLEMENTING PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
- (vi) BUILDING A HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE

THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER REPRESENTS A TOTAL BREAK FROM THE PAST. IT HAS ENDED THE STRUCTURAL AND LEGAL FRAGMENTATION

OF SOUTH AFRICA ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC LINES. SOUTH AFRICA IS NOW A SINGLE NATIONAL STATE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY EQUAL CITIZENSHIP HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO ALL SOUTH AFRICANS. THE SLOGAN OF THE CONSTITUTION "ONE LAW FOR ONE NATION" REFLECTS THE ETHOS OF THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER. DIVERSITY IN TERMS OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IS FULLY PROVIDED FOR. ARBITRARY RULE AND ARBITRARY DECISION MAKING ARE THINGS OF THE PAST. EVERYONE IS SUBJECT TO LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION, INCLUDING PARLIAMENT AND EVEN THE PRESIDENT. IT IS THE CONSTITUTION WHICH IS SUPREME, NOT PARLIAMENT. OUR CONSTITUTION INCLUDES A BILL OF RIGHTS AND MAKES PROVISION FOR AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY.

THERE IS A SPECIAL CHAPTER ENTITLED "STATE INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY". PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- A. PUBLIC PROTECTOR
- B. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
- C. COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES
- D. COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY
- E. AUDITOR GENERAL
- F. ELECTORAL COMMISSION
- G. INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY TO REGULATE BROADCASTING

THE INDEPENDENCE OF THESE BODIES IS CONSTITUTIONALLY ENTRENCHED AND THAT INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN FULLY RESPECTED.

ANOTHER CHAPTER MAKES PROVISION FOR COURTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT AND THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION. WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED A MAGISTRATES COMMISSION.

THE THIRD PILLAR OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IS THE TRC PROCESS. WITHIN THE CONTEXT DESCRIBED, THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION WAS TASKED WITH THE DUTY TO HELP SOUTH AFRICA TO DEAL WITH ITS PAST AND TO LAY THE BASIS FOR RECONCILIATION AND HEALING THE WOUNDS ARISING FROM THE CONFLICTS OF THE PAST.

I BELIEVE THAT THE PUBLICATION OF THE TRC REPORT IS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN OUR TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES.

IN 1994 WE EMERGED FROM A PROTRACTED WAR AND CONFLICT IN WHICH MANY LOST THEIR LIVES AND SUBJECTED TO INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT. OUR INTERIM CONSTITUTION WHICH CAME INTO FORCE IN 1994 WAS A KIND OF A PEACE TREATY. THROUGH THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES WERE CREATED TO PROVIDE A TOTAL SETTLEMENT WHICH IN ADDITION WOULD

ENGENDER NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. PART OF THAT TOTAL SETTLEMENT WAS PROVISION FOR AMNESTY SET OUT IN THE POST AMBLE TO THE INTERIM CONSTITUTION.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE TRC

I WOULD SUM UP THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TRC AS FOLLOWS:

- i. TO PROMOTE NATIONAL CONSENSUS AND RECONCILIATION TO COLLECTIVE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECOGNITION OF PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.
- ii. TO RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN OUR COUNTRY BY MAKING PROVISION FOR FULL DISCLOSURE OF PAST VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY PERPETRATORS, MAKING PROVISION FOR AMNESTY ONLY ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS, ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION, MAKING FULL DISCLOSURE AND COMPLYING WITH THE CRITERIA SET OUT IN THE LAW. THERE IS NO GENERAL AMNESTY IN OUR COUNTRY. MAKING PROVISION FOR AMNESTY HAS NOT EXCLUDED PROSECUTIONS IN APPROPRIATE CASES.
- iii. TO RESTORE THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF VICTIMS AS WELL AS THEIR RELATIVES:
 - a. BY PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR VICTIMS TO TELL THEIR STORIES IN PUBLIC THEREBY PROMOTING A COLLECTIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 - b. BY PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS AS WELL AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH VICTIMS DISAPPEARED OR WERE TORTURED
- iv. TO PROVIDE FOR REPARATIONS AND REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS BY:
 - a. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WHERE APPROPRIATE THROUGH URGENT INTERIM REPARATIONS AS WELL AS FINAL REPARATIONS. THESE WOULD FOCUS ON THE VICTIMS HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
 - b. PROVIDING A COLLECTIVE MEMORY THROUGH DEDICATION OF NATIONAL MEMORIALS SO THAT THE NATIONAL AND FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL NOT FORGET WHAT HAPPENED
 - c. ESTABLISHING A RECORD OF WHAT HAPPENED AS PART OF A NATIONAL COLLECTIVE MEMORY
 - d. PROVIDING A NATIONAL/COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT SUCH HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WILL NOT OCCUR AGAIN THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF:

- DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
 - ENGENDERING A HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE IN THE BROADER SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY
- e. TO GIVE LEGITIMACY TO THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND REAFFIRM THAT APARTHEID WAS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY.

IV. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TRC PROCESS

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TRC PROCESS HAVE TO BE SEEN BOTH IN THE SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM CONTEXTS. IN THE SHORT TERM CONTEXT THE PROCESS:

- HAS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NATIONAL CATHARSIS
- HAS PROVIDED A PLATFORM TO VICTIMS TO TELL THEIR STORIES AND PROVIDED INFORMATION ON VICTIMS
- HAS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WRONGS IN THE FORM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION PERPETRATED AGAINST VICTIMS
- INITIATED A PROCESS OF REPARATIONS (ALBEIT LIMITED) FOR VICTIMS AS WELL AS A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF VICTIMS THROUGH APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
- RESTORED ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH THE EMPHASIS ON DISCLOSURE AS A BASIS OF AMNESTY AND NOT EXCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROSECUTIONS OF THOSE WHOSE APPLICATION HAVE BEEN DENIED BY TRC AND OTHERS WHO DID NOT APPLY.
- REINFORCED DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES BY THE APPLICATION OF IMPARTIAL AND FAIR PROCEDURES TO ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT
- HIGHLIGHTED THE ROLE OF VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY – PUBLIC, PRIVATE SECTORS AS WELL AS CIVIL SOCIETY, IN THE PERPETUATION OR CONDONATION OF PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, EG. THE ARMY, PROFESSIONS, THE MEDIA, CHURCHES AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS ETC.

- PROVIDED A BASIS FOR BUILDING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE THROUGH A REAFFIRMATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VALUES AND NEGATION OF IMPUNITY
- PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO PREVENT SUCH FUTURE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH WILL CERTAINLY INFLUENCE POLICY IN VARIOUS SECTORS AND SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY

HOWEVER, WHILE THESE IMMEDIATE GAINS ARE BEING WELCOMED, THE LONG TERM IMPACT OF THE TRC PROCESS WILL REMAIN TO BE SEEN. THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION IS A SLOW AND GRADUAL ONE. IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR VICTIMS IN PARTICULAR, TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCESS. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROCESS IS THAT A BASIS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. THIS, HOWEVER, WILL REQUIRE POLICIES WHICH ADDRESS THE TOTAL LEGACY OF APARTHEID. FULL RECONCILIATION AND NATIONAL CONSENSUS CAN ONLY BE ASSURED IF, AS SOUTH AFRICANS WE ADDRESS:

(i) THE WIDE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMBALANCES THAT STILL CHARACTERISE OUR SOCIETY WITH MOST OF THE WEALTH STILL IN THE HANDS OF THE FEW PRIVILEGED WHITES. GOVERNMENT MUST, AND HAS BEGUN, TO ADDRESS THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF:

- HOUSING
- WATER, ELECTRICITY
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- SOCIAL SECURITY, AND
- GENERAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES

(ii) ADDRESS AND RESTORE THE MORAL FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY WHICH THROUGH DECADES OF BRUTALISATION HAS BEEN DESTROYED. THIS HAS ENGENDERED:

- LACK OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY
- CORRUPTION BOTH IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
- BREAKDOWN OF WORK ETHIC AND RESPONSIBILITY
- CYNICISM TOWARDS GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITY

THESE MUST AND ARE BEING ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO REINFORCE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

(iii) MOUNTING PROGRAMMES WHICH ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF VICTIMS OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE THIS CANNOT BE DONE THROUGH FULL COMPENSATION, THE CONCERNS OF VICTIMS WILL HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN ADDITION TO INDIVIDUAL REPARATION, LIMITED THOUGH IT MAY BE, THROUGH APPROPRIATE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FROM WHICH VICTIMS WILL BE MAJOR BENEFICIARIES. THESE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES
- PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES IN HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES
- ADOPTION OF POLICIES WHICH AFFIRM AND EMPOWER MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES EG. TRAINING AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES.

CONCLUSION

THE TRC PROCESS MUST THEREFORE BE SEEN AS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT THAT IS TO TRANSFORM OUR COUNTRY POLITICALLY, SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND TO DELIVER IN EVERY RESPECT THE PROMISE CONTAINED IN OUR CONSTITUTION. THE AMNESTY COMMITTEE OF THE TRC HAS NOT YET COMPLETED ITS WORK. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE AMNESTY PROCESS WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR AFTER WHICH A CODICIL TO THE TRC REPORT WILL BE FINALISED AND HANDED TO THE PRESIDENT.

GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING THE VARIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT WITH A VIEW TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE TRC HAS MADE A BIG CONTRIBUTION TO RECONCILIATION, ESTABLISHING INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND RULE OF LAW AND DEVELOPING A HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE IN THE COUNTRY. FOR THAT WE ARE INDEBTED TO THE TRC.

I THANK YOU.

Without a condign response
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