

UkuBuyisana.

Redress, Restitution and Reconciliation
in Southern Africa Today:
Convictions, Rituals and Methods.
An inter-confessional venture.

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Background:

People - in the aftermath of turbulences and wars - seek for inlets to one another, words and gestures to name the wrongs they had committed and the atrocities they had suffered in order that, if that would succeed, they could once more join hands and probably forgive one another and reconcile: *UkuBuyisana* - that system of convictions, attitudes, attempts, rituals and customs, which the people of southern Africa evolved already in the pre-Christian era of recent history (prior to 1652) to facilitate ethically acceptable forms of retribution, vindication and reconciliation - is regaining significance in our times¹. This set of convictions and methods develops wider religious dimensions and grows further into ecumenical horizons.

The term “**ukuBuyisana**” - rooted in the isiZulu and isiXhosa worlds of thought - literally means: “**meeting halfway to return home together**”. The laborious and lengthy attempt is meant, which - because of unhealed injuries and traumatic memories - relies on the support and the cooperation of others. People try repeatedly and patiently - a life long.

Project:

Taking as point of departure the waves of turmoil that repeatedly stirred the province of KwaZulu-Natal between 1948 and 2010 - more especially between 1980 and 1996 ⁻², I shall examine the psychological and religious factors that (seem to)

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¹ ["UKUBUYISANA" Versöhnung in KwaZulu-Natal heute](#)

² documented in the publication: Jeffery, Anthea J. 1997. *The Natal Story: Sixteen Years of Conflict*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations. ISBN 0-86982-453-8 (pp. 900)

underlie the quest for reconciled co-existence in some initiatives being taken today. I trace their possible affiliations to Jewish-Christian models of post-missionary religiousness prevalent in that part of the world and the modes and effectiveness of their influence in contexts of the liberation struggle and liberation theology under apartheid up to date (1948-2010). As paradigm for an *ecumenical theology of reconciliation* adaptable to processes in related fields of conflict in Africa, the Middle East and worldwide, *ukubuyisana* stands to reaffirm its ground and restructure its patterns of discourse more especially in KwaZulu-Natal today.

My contribution takes into account relevant publications and sources of oral literature and strives to promote networks of informed and committed scholarship.

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