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The Philosophical Presuppositions of *Ubuntu* and its Theological Implications for Reconciliation

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Abstract

This paper addresses the philosophical presuppositions of *Ubuntu* which are generally based on the notion of "force" among the Bantu and "life" in traditional Africa. Many authors have examined the sociological implications and application of *Ubuntu*, but very few have wrestled with the reasons behind the application. In addition to philosophical presuppositions, the paper presents a brief development of the theology of *Ubuntu* for the prevention of conflicts and violence and the promotion of reconciliation among people of different tribes, races, religions and social status. The paper proposes that the theology of *Ubuntu*, namely a person is a person through other persons if developed as the model of the unity and diversity of the Trinity, could offer a remedy for social, religious and economic challenges threatening the beauty of unity in diversity and could lead to more flourishing of individuals and their communities.

The Philosophical Presuppositions of *Ubuntu* and Its Theological Implications for Reconciliation

The mention of the word *ubuntu* often brings to mind Bishop Desmond Tutu, the man who experienced first-hand the apartheid system in South Africa where he was born, grew up, and ministered. He was an eyewitness of both the inauguration of apartheid in 1948 and its legal removal in 1990. When Nelson Mandela was released in 1990 after twenty-seven years of imprisonment, he spent his first night of freedom in Tutu's Bishop's court (Battle, 2009, p. 12). After President Nelson Mandela took power, the South African parliament established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) headed by Bishop Desmond Tutu, which completed its task in June 1998. Wilhelm Verwoerd (1999) has explained the role of the TRC in restorative justice:

> First, the process seeks to redefine crime. It shifts the primary focus of crime from the breaking of laws or offenses against a faceless state to a perception of crime as violations

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> against human beings, as injury or wrong to another person. Second, it is based on reparation. It aims at the healing and the restoration of all concerned—victims, offenders, their families and the larger community. Third, it encourages victims, offenders and the community to be directly involved in resolving conflict, with the state and legal professionals acting as facilitators. Finally, it supports a criminal justice system that aims to keep offenders accountable through the full participation of both victims and offenders in making good or putting right the wrong. (p. 117)

When Desmond Tutu was appointed to chair the TRC, he already shared the philosophy of reconciliation with both Nelson Mandela and Tabo Mbeki—respect for a person's dignity irrespective of what that person has done. Condemning apartheid, Tutu warned that "The oppressed could become tomorrow's oppressors because sin is an ever-present possibility" (Battle, 2009, p. 3). The philosophy that Tutu, Mandela, and Mbeki share is the philosophy of *ubuntu*. Generally speaking, *ubuntu* means "humanity" and is related to *umuntu*, which is the category of intelligent human being. Tutu has defined *ubuntu* as the person who is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, affirming of others, and who does not feel threatened that others are able and good; [this person] has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing they belong to a greater whole, are diminished when another is humiliated, diminished, tortured, oppressed, and threatened as if they were less than they are (Battle, 2009, p. 35). Tutu has also defined *ubuntu* as the quality of interaction in which one's own humanness depends on recognizing it in the other (Battle, 2009, p. 45).

The problem that I find in many writings about *ubuntu* is dual. First, not many writers deal with the philosophical presuppositions of *ubuntu*; rather, they mainly dwell on its sociological implications. They write about the application of *ubuntu*, but they rarely wrestle with the reasons behind this application. *Ubuntu* originates from an African worldview on which the sociological dimensions of life in community rest. It would be superficial to jump to the sociological implications of *ubuntu* without basing it on its philosophical root. Second, unless we understand the importance of vertical relationship between *umuntu* (human) and the Great *Umuntu* (God) — causing the horizontal relationships to emanate from the perfect relationships in the Triune God who created *umuntu*—*ubuntu* will not offer any lasting solution in reconciliation. Let us examine the etymological meaning of *ubuntu* before we discuss the philosophical meaning of *ubuntu* and its theological implications for the ministry of reconciliation.

Etymological meaning of *ubuntu*

In African languages, such as Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda, *ubuntu* is a quality rather than a noun. So, Tutu's second definition brought an important addition to the first when it highlighted the term "quality". For example, in Kiswahili, a person is *mtu*, and the quality of a person is *utu* which means humanness. One who kills another is said to have lost his or her *utu*. In Kinyarwanda, a person is *muntu* and the quality of humanness is *ubuntu.* A person who has *ubuntu* is someone who feels for others; someone who cares for others. Alex Kagame, the

Rwandan philosopher, has spoken about four categories in the African metaphysics, that is: *Muntu* (man and woman), *Kintu* (dog and stone), *Hantu* (east and yesterday), and *Kuntu* (beauty and laughter) (Kombo, 2007, p. 157). In many African languages, qualities begin with either *u* or *o*, so it is very common to hear either *utu* (Swahili), *obuntu* (Luhya), *ubuntu* (Kinyarwanda), etc. *Ubuntu* is the quality of *umuntu* which is only possible when the *umuntu* does what Tutu describes in his first definition: [is] warm and generous . . . knows that they are diminished when another is humiliated. So, *ubuntu* is what makes a person able to differentiate themselves from other *ntu* (beings). This quality of humanness—though essential to individuals—is perceived in relationship. Only in relationship can *ubuntu* manifest itself. And so, for example, a person who kills his or her neighbor would be said to "have become like an animal." Or if a person is not ashamed of doing evil, instead of saying that his or her conscience is dead as the West would say, Rwandans would say that the person has become like a stone, for a stone does not have *ubumuntu*—humanness—just is like a statue. Battle (2009) and Kombo (2007) attempt to define *ubuntu* from a sociological standpoint, but their studies give little room to explaining the origin of *ubuntu* from a philosophical perspective.

Philosophical assumptions underlying *ubuntu*

One of the problems of *ubuntu* is that its sociological understanding is far removed from its philosophical significance. One needs to understand the underlying philosophical assumptions of Africans that make them value *ubuntu* as a social phenomenon. This calls for an understanding of the African worldview. Moreau (2009) defines worldview as "a mental schema through which people look at the world and by means of which they make sense of it" (p. 224). Hiebert (2008) points out that worldview "is the most fundamental and encompassing view of reality shared by a people in a common culture; it is a mental picture of reality that makes sense of the world around people" (p. 84). Most Africans agree that a person is because the person belongs. This reflects a common worldview, and how Africans see reality. As Hiebert explains:

> Worldviews are invisible to external observers. At the surface level of a culture or society, we experience only visible evidence of the underlying worldview through that culture's products, including patterns of behavior and enacted cultural dramas found in symbols, myths, and rituals. (p. 224)

Hiebert explains further that "underneath the sensory layer are the explicit belief systems that under-gird the things we experience. However, even deeper and below those belief systems, lie a worldview and a means of maintaining the themes found in it" (p. 224). Applied to the African concept of *ubuntu*, we can illustrate Hiebert's organization of worldview as follows:

Ubuntu and its implications for worldview

Hiebert's Levels of Worldview	*Ubuntu* Concept	Implications
Patterns of behavior, signs and rituals (sensory)	Everyone who visits Africa sees communal life among people	Any outsider can notice this
Belief Systems	A *muntu* (human being) is characterized by love; otherwise the person becomes like "a thing".	This can be read in any writing about *Ubuntu*
Worldview themes, categories, logics, epistemology	Why communal life in Africa? Why love for the "other"? What underlying assumptions are there for communal life?	Not many studies have been done at this level.

Explaining the three levels of African worldview following Hiebert's model

Africans express their worldview through external/explicit signs and rituals that foreigners can easily see: eating together around fire in the evening, working together in a field, sharing their possessions, etc. These values can be easily interpreted by outsiders as a sign of unity among Africans. In addition, Africans share a common belief system. For instance, the African life is centered on religious life. Africans have a psychological intuition that outsiders may not understand easily. For example, while a European person may see a rat crossing the way and say, "I see a rat crossing the way," an African would say, "Why is it that a rat crosses the way from right to left?" Also, a European person may hear an owl making noise at night and say, "an owl is making some noise," but an African would ask why the same bird is making such a noise. If there is someone sick in the village, the African may interpret that to be a bad sign of the spiritual health of the sick person. Some of these beliefs can also be read about in books and heard from others. But there is a deeper level in which Africans unconsciously respond to life; few studies have explained this third level of worldview. Unless one discovers this, change cannot take place in the lives of people. On this level is the principle of force for an African: a principle rooted in African philosophical assumptions. Africans "are because they belong" because of force. An African is afraid of a bird crossing the way from right to left because of force. An African would like to love God and neighbor because of force. "Force" is the underlying motive of action for Africans and it is more philosophical than sociological.

Bantu philosophy

Ukwuije (2009) argues that the failure of the missionary method in Africa lay in its inability to penetrate the personality [soul] of the Africans. The reason for this failure comes from ignorance of Bantu philosophy. As he goes on to say, "If Blacks resist conversion, it is because they do not

want to depart from their ancestral practices - that is a system; by condemning that system as stupid and bad, the Bantu human being is killed" (p. 78). That is how Tempels went from the depth of the African soul to discover the African's system and philosophy (Ukwuije, 2009, p. 77). While speaking of Bantu philosophy, we will limit ourselves to two important concepts for the sake of our study: the meaning of force and the meaning of life in the African worldview, particularly among the Bantu, of which Rwandans are a part. Vincent Mulago (1969) and Alex Kagame (1956) conducted their studies among the Banyarwanda, after Tempels had conducted his among the Baluba-Kasai of Shaba in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The three scholars agree on the meaning of force and life among the Bantu people.

The concept of force for the Bantu

Bantu philosophy is built on the notion of force. On one hand, Western philosophy is influenced mainly by the classical Greek philosophy of the being, which is defined as a reality that exists, and force in this case becomes an accidental attribute. Here, the being supports force, so force is static. On the other hand, for the Bantu, the being is force, and force here is defined in a dynamic sense. Far from being static, force can decrease or increase and beings can mutually influence each other. The dynamics of force are also noticed in their hierarchy, where God is at the top as the Supreme Being (Force) who gives existence, substance, and growth to the rest of the forces. Then come the world of spirits, the first being of the clan, followed by the dead of the tribe. Third, there are the human beings living on earth. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the animals, plants, and minerals. It is worth noting that according to Tempel's research, Bantus strongly believe that life is more powerful than death, justice more powerful than injustice, and vital will more powerful that destructive powers. This leads us to an examination of life in the African traditional worldview.

The concept of life in traditional Africa

Bujo (2003) explains that Africans traditionally view God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life, which culminates in human life. He then notes that a crucial point concerning life is its hierarchical ordering, defined as follows: "Life is a participation in God, but it is always mediated by one standing above the recipient in the hierarchy of being" (p. 258). Mulago (1965) studied three Bantu peoples and established that participation in a common life is foundational to the familial, social, political, and religious customs. He spells out this concept in terms of "unity of life" or "vital union". He defines these terms as "a relationship of being and life between each individual and his descendants, his family, his brothers and sisters in the clan, his ancestors and also with God, the ultimate source of life." After specifying that this unity also extends to inanimate life resources, Mulago asks, "What is this life? It is a whole life, individual inasmuch as it is received by each being which exists, and communal or collective inasmuch as each being draws from a common source of life" (Mulago, 1965, p.118).

Bujo explains that "Africans conceive of life not by making distinctions but by seeing all life, whether social, psychological, or spiritual, as constituting an undivided entity" (p. 257). Likewise, Pobee affirms this fundamental perception of life in the philosophy of many traditional African societies that being and existence are seen very comprehensively, as physical as they are spiritual, as external as internal (1979), implying that Africans have a holistic view of life.

The significance of life as communal in Africa is noted by Mulago (1965) who says: "The Bantu believe firmly in a vital communion or life-bond which creates solidarity between members of the same family or clan of which each member is only a part" (p. 118). Mulago (1965) adds, "The same blood, the same life which is shared by all, which all receive from the first ancestor—the founder of the clan runs through the veins of all. Every effort must be directed to the preservation, maintenance, growth, and perpetuation of this common treasure" (p. 119

John Pobee (1979) contrasts Western philosophy and epistemology with that of the African people, especially the Akan, in the following terms,

> While Descartes philosophized Cogito ergo Sum [I think, therefore I am], the Akan society would rather argue Cognatus ergo sum—i.e., I belong by blood relationship, therefore I am. In other words, in Akan society a man fully realizes himself as a man by belonging to a society. There is meaning and purpose to his life only because he belongs to a family, a clan, and a tribe. (p. 88)

Therefore, for Pobee (1979), to be is to belong and live in a kinship group. That is, personal individuality is only affirmed and fulfilled in relationship with others. Therefore, the crucial events of one's life are experienced in relation to significant groups of people: primarily the kinship group, but also friends and neighbors.

Theological implications of *ubuntu* in the ministry of reconciliation

The theology of *ubuntu* serves both to prevent violence and to facilitate the reconciliation process. Because all people are created in God's image, *ubuntu* theology values both individuals and their relationships. Therefore *ubuntu* leads to harmonious communities, in which each ascribes to the other human dignity.

The Bible supports *ubuntu* theology. An example of this is 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31, in which Paul writes about unity in diversity. First, Paul explains that the Body of Christ is a new community of diverse people united by the Holy Spirit (vv. 12-13). This community, according to Paul, can heal insecurities caused by diversity (vv. 14-18). This healing comes from recognizing that every part of the Body matters, because God has desired and arranged its ordering. Therefore, there is no reason for comparison between members, and no reason for feeling inferior. The Body exists to heal the ethnocentrism caused by pride and in this new community no-one may say, "I am self-sufficient; I do not need others; my race is superior to others"(vv.19-24). Ironically, Paul stated that the seemingly weaker parts of the Body are

indispensable, and that the less honorable parts receive special honor (vv.22-23). God also uses the new community to heal broken emotions (vv. 25-26). Unity binds the members of the Body together in love; enabling members to care for one another. This union, which takes place when people trust, accept, and care for each other, creates a space for emotional healing. Finally, in such an environment members of the Body can use their gifts to serve and not for selfish ambition. 1 Corinthians 13 is a direct continuation of the twelfth chapter: those who exercise their spiritual gifts should do so because of love (1 Cor. 13: 1-3). Paul encourages a desire for gifts that equip others, such as apostleship, prophecy, or teaching—above gifts of signs, such as miracles or tongues.

In 1 Corinthians we see four characteristics of *ubuntu* in the biblical context: unity in diversity through the power of the Holy Spirit, acknowledgement that one's position in the Body of Christ depends on God's sovereign will, interdependence rather than self-sufficiency, and as a mark of love, the desire to put others first. Edgar (2004), who has written about the same passage, indicates three themes that could be lessons from *ubuntu* theology. First, no one should think of their spiritual gift as a private possession. Edgar quotes David Prior (2001) who says, "Any tendency nowadays to talk of 'my church . . . my gifts . . . my ministry' can have Corinthian overtones" (p. 267). In this sense, individuals should not think of their gifts as primarily personal. Second, Edgar argues that "in seeking gifts, the focus should be upon the whole Body rather than the individual." In other words, believers should prioritize the Body before individuals. Is this not a contrast between the "I think therefore I am" vs. "I belong therefore I am"? Finally, Edgar says that "the corporate nature of the gifts does not mean that they cannot be of great benefit to individuals, for as individuals are strengthened so too is the Body" (p. 268). Just as the Bible values both the Body and its members, *ubuntu* theology honors both the community and the individual.

When I took biblical anthropology as an undergraduate and graduate student, my professors asked us to describe our expectations for the course. We expressed the desire to understand humanity in relation to itself, to God and to others. The course covered issues regarding a person's constituents (soul, spirit, heart), and people in relation to God (humanity in God's image), but not about people in relation to others. The issues covered in defining *the imago dei* were about cognition, affection, and volition, which do not concern the relational part of a person. The explanation is simple: our professors were trained by mentors who viewed humanity through the lens of platonic philosophy. We need a biblical anthropology that also wrestles with the question of who people are in relation to God and to fellow human beings, and which integrates knowledge of humanity and its existence in relation to God and community.

As Bonhoeffer uts it, "to disjoint theology from practice and focus on one aspect over the other is not theology at all!" (Vanden, 2010, p. 339). Individualistic theology has emphasized philosophical reflection more than Christian formation, for the latter primarily takes place in the context of relationships. When Jesus began his ministry, his first call to his disciples was not, "understand what I say," but "follow me." Therefore, if we agree that the task of theology is, as

Charry (1997) explains, "to assist people to come to God" (p. 5) as it was prior to the seventeenth century (before the influence of modernism), then any theological reflection on humanity should consider people in the context of their relationships.

Ubuntu theology is superior to more individualistic theologies for three reasons. First, because it concerns both individuals and their communities, *ubuntu* sustains harmonious relationships. Second, *ubuntu* theology promotes holistic ministry which addresses the spiritual, social, and economic needs of people who are suffering from personal sin and social injustice. *Ubuntu* promotes holistic ministry because it creates community between the local church (including Christian institutions) and the neighborhood—a community bound by mutual commitment and understanding. Transformation will not take place unless the vision of the Church becomes the vision of the community.

Third, the theology of *ubuntu* values both parties involved in conflict in accordance with integrated conflict management systems. Rahim, Buntzman and White (1999) have defined integrated conflict management as the system that "involves high concern for self as well as the other party involved in the conflict" (p. 158). Integrated conflict management is concerned with collaboration between parties (openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences) to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. *Ubuntu* theology is related to integrated conflict management because it counts victim and offender—both having been created in God's image—as valuable. Only a system that recognizes the dignity of both parties can lead to true healing and reconciliation. This is how the theology of *ubuntu* enables the restoration of force; leading to the uniting, liberating power of forgiveness. But offering forgiveness to the offender does not mean that *ubuntu* theology condones evil. Instead of offering temporal solutions through external punishments, *ubuntu* allows for transformation in the lives of victims and offenders. When victim and offender are able to meet and share from their hearts, peace is restored to the entire community. But transformation will not take place unless a person sees the "other" as self and self as made in God's image. *Ubuntu* must therefore include both horizontal and vertical dimensions. In order to be transformative, *ubuntu* must reflect the community of the Trinity.

Ubuntu as the model of Trinitarian community

The horizontal dimension of *ubuntu* is insufficient for many reasons. First, a corrupt person can only love imperfectly. Such a love cannot endure. Luther points out that "Free will after the fall has the power to do good only in passive capacity, but it can always do evil in an active capacity." Therefore, if love must be perfect and enduring, it must come from God who alone is perfect and eternal. Indeed, God is love (1 John 4:16).

In addition, social love is often contractual. For example, because politics is concerned with giving and receiving, politicians cannot lead people to true reconciliation: they are rarely sacrificial. Based on the Trinity, love from God sees beyond benefit and gives sacrificially. God

sent his son Jesus to redeem us because his sacrifice would create his bride, the Church: not because he had something to receive from us. If we truly love those we differ from, we should not require contracts stipulating what they will give when we forgive them. We should forgive sacrificially. Love and forgiveness gives us the power to pray for our enemies, and to claim them for the Lord. As a result, they may come to know God's love and join us as members of Christ's Body. Third, a social perspective of *ubuntu* is utilitarian. It is based on the question, "What shall I gain from this relationship?" A vertical perspective reminds us that Christ loved us when we were still sinners and that his love was an end in itself. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Fourth, a horizontal perspective of *ubuntu* is merely convenient. For instance, people may live with others because they don't want to offend them, as in the case of reconciliation after apartheid, or because they don't want to be called tribal. But this does not exclude the possibility for them to hate one another. The gospel is needed here because a vertical perspective of *ubuntu* enables us to love even when it is impossible to love. Unless the offender and the victim meet at the cross, acceptance—especially the victim accepting the offender—would be difficult. Without the cross, *ubuntu* would be for the sake of convenience. Reconciliation would be expressed in cynical language: "We're condemned to live together, anyway!" But true love, which makes acceptance possible, is only found in the Trinity.

The Bible teaches about one God who eternally exists as three distinct centers of consciousness (Horrell, 2007). Horrell uses the term "three distinct centers of consciousness" to mean "three persons," and defines person as "a center of self-consciousness existing in relationship to others" (p. 52).

Referring to John 1, Horrell explains that each divine person consists of (1) the essential nature of Deity ("the Word was God")—that is, the attributes *ousia* that distinguishes God from creation; (2) full self-consciousness ("I am"), the actual reality of self, distinct from other persons, which presupposes mental properties and internal relations; (3) unique relatedness ("the Word was with God"), distinguishing each member of the Godhead from the others in I-Thou relationships; and(4) *perichoresis* (I am in the Father and the Father in me"), the mutual indwelling of each in the other without confusion of self-consciousness. John 1: 1 and 14 indicate that Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, is evidence of diversity within the Godhead. He is himself God, while at the same time being with God. The sentence, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" indicates that unity and diversity exist simultaneously in the Godhead (v. 1).

In John chapters 13-17, Jesus said, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does his works" (John 14:10). Jesus taught the disciples that they could not bear fruit on their own; *perichoresis* must also exist between him and his followers (John 15:1-5). The fruit the disciples were to bear is love for one another, and in this the disciples also demonstrated their

love for Christ. By loving God and man, the disciples fulfilled the two greatest commandments. (Mark 12:28-31).

In John 17:20, Jesus took perichoretic language and applied it to the entire Church. Jesus prayed for the Church to be one as he and the Father are one (John 17:11, 21, 22-23). He defined this unity in perichoretic terms, praying "that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you" (John17:21). Jesus continued, praying "That they may be one, just as we are one; I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity"(John 17:22-23).We therefore see unified diversity among the Trinity, the disciples and the Church. The Church receives its power to love from the love that exists among the Trinity.

Integrating the vertical and horizontal dimensions of *ubuntu*

The problem with the idea of community and *ubuntu* in traditional Africa is that it sometimes leads to a social institutional unity that misunderstands the basis of true unity. Let us note the following two points:

First, the community of the Trinity does not ignore the personal distinctiveness of its members. In this way, a unified community should embrace its diversity. Beyond seeing others as White, Hispanic, Black, rich, or poor, believers should see others as an extension of self. Second, because the Trinity has accomplished the work of salvation at the cross, people from different racial and ethnic groups should embrace at the cross for the sake of unity and the building of their community. If problems occur among believers, or if memories of pain and hatred remain, victim and oppressor can meet to seek unity at the cross. This is because at the cross the victim would meet God and recognize God's participation in his suffering. Martin Luther King (1963) notes that God does not leave us in our agonies and struggles; rather he seeks us in dark places and suffers with us and for us in our tragic prodigality (p. 16; quoted in Dau, 2002, p. 221).

What encouragement it is for the victim to know that God was with them that day when they were oppressed, and that even today the same God is with them binding their wounds from the inside out. When the poor and oppressed identify with Christ who suffered for and forgave his oppressors, they gain power to forgive. As a result, the cross becomes a place of healing and increased force. The cross is not a sign of weakness, as some may believe; it is the power of God. In the same way, the victim who forgives the offender at the cross does not lose force, but regains force.

On the other hand, at the cross the oppressor meets the victim to ask for forgiveness, just as the criminal received mercy and forgiveness at the cross (Luke 23:40-43). Here, they do not see each other in terms of ethnicity, social class, or economic ranking, but as children of God who are united after the model of Trinitarian love. At the cross, victim and oppressor embrace one another.

Finally, at the cross people from different racial and ethnic groups can present their nations for purification. The innocent blood that has continually been shed through genocides, wars, and rebellions is cursed; for bloodshed pollutes the land (Numbers 35:33). The solution to this curse is not perpetual violence. The solution is the atonement which Christ accomplished once for all by shedding his own blood. Therefore, people should live in unity: not compelled by social norms, but by Christ's love within their hearts. This unity would result in increased force for the human race and the strengthening of their nations. Furthermore, Christ would be present in their nations and would bless those nations. Those who do not know Christ's love would be drawn to salvation by this blessing, and they would join the fellowship of other believers after the manner of *ubuntu*.

Conclusion

Understanding the philosophical meaning of *ubuntu* allows us to see why *ubuntu* calls for restorative justice based on forgiveness. In the Bantu philosophy, someone considers another as sub-human only because they themselves are sub-human. The philosophical understanding of *ubuntu* promotes humility as a restorative element in the process of reconciliation. Instead of using punishment as the moral response to injustice, *ubuntu* seeks to restore broken relationships: seeking "force" for the whole community.

Ubuntu will only be transformative if we reach from the horizontal dimension to include the vertical; incorporating into our communities the communal love of the Trinity. The cross is the only place to experience transformed relationships: here, victim and offender are reconciled. At the cross, they begin to live for one another's restoration and for the restoration of their communities. Here, the blood that has been shed in Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, and elsewhere can be cleansed because God, the Great *Umuntu*, has reconciled the world with himself through Christ. Africa needs to implement these values, and then share them with a world suffering from ethnic disputes, pluralistic divisions, and economic gaps between the rich and the poor.

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