Section III
Pneumatological Perspectives on Anthropology

The next section sets out Pneumatological perspectives on anthropology. A critical anthropology cannot allow for a confusion between the Spirit of God and the spirit of humankind.

Chapter 6, *Rizpah: The Church coram Deo*, develops the idea that place-taking for others and collective guilt can only be understood through the illumination of the Spirit. Humankind’s guilt is punished before the face of God by way of ransom. The seven sons of Saul pay the price for his transgressions as they do for that of the whole nation who supported Saul in his ventures. This substitutionary atonement is as unacceptable as that of exclusive place-taking for a positive anthropology. The cause of the acceptability, however, does not reside in the seeming injustice of God, but in the denial of one’s own culpability. Rizpah’s vigil demands grace from the just punishment of God and she receives it. She forms part of the remnant who survives the punishment. The truth that all are responsible for all is something that the Spirit reveals to humankind living before the face of God.

In *Betrayal*, Chapter 7, not collective guilt, but personal guilt as it is illustrated in the person of Judas comes into view. It is indicated that Judas is not the obvious villain as he is depicted throughout Christianity. It is proposed that Judas experienced Jesus’ strange pronouncements regarding the Chosen People, the Law and the Temple as betrayal. He would have appeared as a responsible church leaders who decided to betray Jesus only because Jesus wasted the money that was supposed to go to the poor. The destructive force of sin is revealed in the fact that Judas’ morality and religion drove him to a betrayal of his only salvation. Betrayal goes much deeper when the tradition of the gospels also witness to the fact that all the disciples effectively betrayed Jesus. The Spirit convince humankind that God’s betrayal of His Son provides grace for humankind’s betrayal.

The final chapter, *The psychology of the Spirit and Oepke Noordmans*, attempts to critically assess a general anthropology. A human person as spirit, soul and body is lost in sin. Some illustrations from the work of Dostoyevski and other literature
The Suffering Servant

point out the desperate plight of humankind unable to understand themselves and irresistibly drawn to self-destruction or murder. Humankind’s spirit is in such a state that one could not possibly hope to compare it with the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit, comforting humankind with the work of Christ, brings respite from the angst for the emptiness of our existence. The angst of humankind’s spirit is relieved in a sense when the law of God sets some boundaries to the nameless fears. Sin finds a historic expression and loses its mythical unforgiveable quality. The guilt before the law, however, also drives us into the pit of remorse and self-accusation. Humankind finds relief in the Comforter assuring us of salvation outside ourselves in Christ. The believer does not develop into a sinless person, but the ambiguity of our self-destructive souls is replaced by the double nature of the gospel in which humankind lives as justified and sinner at the same time. Noordmans point out that physical weakness sometimes takes the place of guilt and forgiveness, as in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich man. Belief as the spiritual sentiment of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee in the temple does not encompass the total being of the Tax Collector as the physical suffering of Lazarus does. In a sense his physical need is an expression of his faith. The Spirit extends comfort to our physical need through the parable of Lazarus and the wounds of Christ.

Humankind features in the third article of the confession, which confesses belief in the Holy Spirit and the holy, catholic church and the communion of the saints, whose sins are forgiven and who is promised the resurrection of the body, and the life eternal. The chapters loosely correspond to this confession where the Church feature in Chapter 6, the forgiveness of Judas in Chapter 7 and the resurrection of the body, (soul and spirit) of humankind form part of the work of the Spirit in Chapter 8.
Chapter 6
Rizpah: The Church coram Deo

Abstract

The theme of guilt and the role of the church in a violent society is the focus of this chapter. Grappling with sin and its consequences is one of the vocations of the church. More than being legally and ethically responsible to earthly law, the church has to come face to face with God’s eternal Law and the devastation of our guilt. The Russian author, Dostoyevski, and the Dutch theologian, Noordmans, contribute to the discussion. This theme is relevant to the whole church, but is specifically applied to the search for unity between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa today.

Introduction

The devastating effects of sin and guilt, God’s demand for expiation and the salvation of a remnant are themes that are present in the Biblical account of Rizpah in 2 Sm 21. Firstly, a closer scrutiny of the text is necessary to come to grips with a Biblical view of these themes, after which they are explored further in dialogue with Dostoyevski and Noordmans in an attempt to find a theologically coherent and ecclesiologically relevant view of expiation for the Dutch Reformed Church living coram Deo in South Africa today.

The blood guilt of Saul, the “chosen of the lord”

The story of Rizpah begins with a devastating famine in Israel for “three years, year after year.” The blood guilt of Saul and his house affects the land. This relationship between the shedding of blood and the suffering of the earth is implicitly present in the passage. “There where innocent blood is spilt and flows on or into the earth,

341 This chapter was published as an article in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif 48, no. 1, 2 (2007): 213-223.

342 Compare Nm 35:33.
the fruit of the land is jeopardized.” This is closely related to Gn 4:11, 12 where the blood of Abel calls forth from the earth, making the earth powerless and Cain a fugitive. In Hs (4:2, 3) where blood is spilled, the land also mourns and even the animals leave.

Goslinga explains that the Gibeonites, whom Saul tried to destroy, were remnants of earlier inhabitants of Canaan who were not exterminated and formed part of what was collectively called the Amorites. Jos 9:3, 15-27 describes the making of the covenant with the Gibeonites, which Saul broke. Exum notes that this treaty should not have been made, because the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites into making this covenant with them. This reminds strongly of Jacob tricking his way into receiving Isaac’s blessing. There is a fascinating word-play on the words “seven” and “oath” in this passage. It is because Saul did not keep the oath with the Gibeonites that the seven were hanged. In contrast to Saul, verse 7 states that David did keep his covenant with Jonathan (1 Sm 20:16) in showing mercy to Mephibosheth. The breaking of the covenant oath resulted in disaster with a sevenfold punishment (which culminated in wild animals eating

344 Hertzberg proposes that the Gibeonites could have been in service at the sanctuary of Gibeon and that they could have been the priests of Nob in 1 Sm 22, Hertzberg, H W. Das Alten Testament Deutsch, Die Bücher, Josua, Richter, Ruth (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 382.
348 However, David’s oath (בָּשָׁ) not to kill Saul’s descendants (1 Sm 24:21,22) gives a strange perspective on these events.
The Spirit on All Flesh

their children)\textsuperscript{349} (Lv 26:15-22). This curse was the inevitable result of the breaking of the covenant oath and it was exacted on the seven sons of Saul in this passage.

Two verbs are used in describing how Saul wanted to destroy the Gibeonites, the verb (כָּלָה) “annihilate” or “destroy,” which is also used in Ex 32:10 where God wishes to “destroy” the people for the idolatry of the golden calf and the verb (נָכָה) “smite,” which is used both in verses 2 for the zealous way in which Saul killed the Gibeonites and in verse 12 to describe how the Philistines killed Saul.\textsuperscript{350} Saul died in the same way as the Gibeonites, which indicates that there is some direct relation between the crime and the punishment.

The name of Saul’s son Armoni, means “citadel” or “palace” (אַרְמֹון). Saul’s legacy was a palace built on the blood of the Gibeonites.\textsuperscript{351} The Pulpit Commentary states that the people took the Gibeonites’ land and all received benefits from Saul’s breaking of the covenant and that his actions were popularly accepted. This national sin resulted in a national punishment.\textsuperscript{352} Smelik says that the “zeal” (קָנָא) with which Saul tried to exterminate the Gibeonites together with the phrase “for the children of Israel and Judah,”\textsuperscript{353} refer to rampant nationalism.\textsuperscript{354} There is therefore also an element of collective responsibility for the near extermination of the Gibeonites.

\textsuperscript{349} The breaking of the covenant relationship with the Gibeonites resulted in the ultimate breaking up of family relationships of Saul.

\textsuperscript{350} The firstborn of the Egyptians were also struck down in this way (Ex 12:12).

\textsuperscript{351} It is noteworthy that from the seven only Saul’s own sons are named.


\textsuperscript{353} רֹאָב הָיוֹתִים

This “zeal” of Saul has a striking parallel in that of Phinehas in Nm 25:8-13, who saved the people from the wrath of God by striking down and impaling the Israelite man and the Midianite woman whose relationship symbolised the idolatry of the people. That God is “jealous” (קַנָא) is also evident in regards to the Law, because He visits the sins of the fathers unto the children unto the third and the fourth generation (Dt 5:9). The reach of God’s Law extends beyond the individual and the collective responsibility.

The Biblical Illustrator refers to Rm 10:2, showing that the Jews’ zeal (ζήλος) without knowledge, made them seek their own righteousness and not submit themselves to God’s righteousness. There is a close connection with Saul of the New Testament who persecuted the church in his zeal (ζήλος) for God (Phlp 3:6). The Jews’ zeal for God was without knowledge like that of Saul of the Old Testament and Saul of the New Testament.

The Pulpit Commentary and Green contend that David’s actions were not politically motivated, because the bloodguilt of Saul’s house is evidently the cause of the retribution. Some others however, believe that it was quite a clever political act that did suit David just too well. Wacker points out the subtle difference in the way in which David and Saul acted on behalf of the people. David is sketched as the King who speaks with God for his nation,

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357 Green, A R W. The Role of Human Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 166.
while Saul as one who, in acting for his nation, trespasses against God.\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^9\)  

Saul and Jonathan were hanged (תָּלָה)\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^0\) and it could well be assumed that the birds also feasted on their bodies.\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^1\) In Dt 21:22 it is forbidden to let a body hang (תָּלָה) overnight, because the land will be defiled if you do. Noordmans proposes that this law came into being because of Rizpah’s resistance to the law exacted on the seven.\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^2\)

**Expiation by the seven**

In verse three, one finds the verb “to cover”\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^3\) “to make expiation” or “to make amends with” (כָּפַר). This concept focuses the attention on the central theme of expiation. Expiation in the Old Testament usually included an offering, be it of a bull or of money (Ex 21:30; 30:10). In Ex 32:30-35 God killed many of the people to make expiation for the idolatry of the golden calf. Throughout Leviticus, God demands an offering to be made for expiation.\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^4\) The noun has the meaning of “ransom” as in Is 43:3 where God says he gave Egypt as a ransom in place of Israel.\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^5\)

Where did this demand for expiation come from? As God once “sought” David (1 Sm 13:14), David “seeks” (בָּקַשׁ) God’s face in

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\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^0\) David hanged (תָּלָה) the murderers of Ishbosheth (2 Sm 4:12) and Absalom also hanged (תָּלָה) in this way (2 Sm 18:10). The ten sons of Hamman, who tried to exterminate the Jews, were also hung like this in Es 2:23.

\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^1\) Like they feasted on the body of the hanged baker in Gn 40:19, 22.

\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^2\) Noordmans, *Verzamelde Werken Deel 8* 1990b, 230.

\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^3\) This verb is used for the covering of the Ark in tar in Gn 6:14.

\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^4\) Lv 4:5;14;15.

\(^3\)\(^6\)\(^5\) Also in Ps 49:8; Pr 21:18.
verse 1 to find out the reason for the drought. The zealous force of this seeking becomes evident when we read that Saul “sought” to destroy the Gibeonites in verse 2. David *seeks* God’s face while Saul *seeks* to exterminate the Gibeonites.366

Goslinga points out that David was within his rights to ask the injured party for a means to make amends.367 The Gibeonites, not having the same social status as the Jews, did not have a right to demand justice from David and had to wait for him to ask them to propose some form of restitution.

The verb used for the execution of the seven means to “dislocate,” “expose,” “sprain” (יָקַע) and is used only in 5 places in the Old Testament and three times in this passage (verse 6, 9, 13). It has the sense of “sprain” when Jacob’s hip is dislocated in Gn. 32:26. In this passage it is used three times and refers to some sort of exposure with arms and legs broken368 and is probably best translated as “hanged,” with the Vulgate translating “crucifigere.”369 It is also used in Numbers 25:4 where the leaders are hanged because of Israel’s relationships with Moabite girls and the worship of Baal of Peor. In Jr 6:8 God says to Israel to allow themselves to be instructed so that He does not “dislocate” (יָקַע) his soul from them, with the English Standard Version translating “turn from in disgust.”

Wacker shows how “propitiate” (ἐξιλάσομαι) (v3) in the LXX, is a clever word-play with the “expose in the sun” (ἔξηλασμεν) (v6).370 Dus compares the use of the verb in 2

Sm 21 and Nm 25 where the leaders of the people are also hanged in the sun. Heller is convinced that it is a rite in honour of the sun god.\(^{371}\)

The punishment of the seven is exacted by the “birds,” “insects” (עוף) (Lev. 11:20) or “flying creatures,” which would probably include flies. One of the curses, in Dt 28:26 and Jr 7:33, for not obeying the commandments of the Lord and worshipping idols, is that one’s body will be food for the birds and no one will come to chase them away. The curse on the house of Jeroboam, Baasha and Ahab is that God will wipe away their houses and cause them to be eaten by the birds (עוף) in the field and the dogs in the city.\(^{372}\)

The place where this crucifixion takes place is in Gibeon according to the LXX, but Gibeah is often connected with the house of Saul,\(^{373}\) which makes the BHS reading of Gibeah more likely. The fact that his family is hanged in the very heart of the home of Saul makes the restitution for the injustice to the Gibeonites seem more appropriate. There are also two possible interpretations for the בְּחִיר יְהוָה, which could either be the “hill of God” or the “chosen of God.”\(^{374}\) In calling Saul the “chosen of God,” the ironic truth of the rejection of the chosen one is highlighted.

In searching for the reason for the drought, David found “the face (יפנ) of God (יוה).” This is the “face” that would cut off the memory of the evil-doers from the earth (Ps 34:16). It is quite disconcerting to think what this “face of God” looked like when its gaze resulted in the hanging of the sons and grandsons of Saul

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\(^{372}\) 1 Ki 14:11; 16:4; 21:24. The same fate awaits the people because of what Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem some years earlier (Jr 15:3).

\(^{373}\) 1 Sm 11:4; 15:34; Is 10:29.

\(^{374}\) Spence and Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary: II Samuel* 1913, 512.
“before” (לִפְנֵי) God in verse 9. God effectively stares them to death. This is also the “face” before which Sodom is destroyed (Gn. 19:13) and which Moses has to beg not to punish the stiff-necked people for worshiping the golden calf (Ex 32:11). This “face,” which Rizpah endured, is the face (πρόσωπον) in Rv 20:11 from which even heaven and earth fled.

Rizpah and the remnant

The Gibeonites are called a “remnant” of the Amorites. The greek λειμμα (remnant) occurs only twice in the Septuagint and once in the Greek New Testament. In 2 Ki 19:31 God, in his zeal, will save a remnant (λειμμα) from Jerusalem to escape the extermination by Assyria. This same remnant is found in Rm 11:5, where God has chosen a remnant from the Jews according to the election of grace.

Goslinga shows how there is a line of judgement from 1 Sm 31, where Saul and his sons die, to 2 Sm 3:27 and 2 Sm 4:6 where Abner and Ishbosheth are killed, ending in this passage. There is also a line of mercy for Mephibosheth from 2 Sm 4:4 to 2 Sm 9:7 to 21:7. He survives in the genealogy of Saul in 1 Chr 8:34 through his son Mica in 2 Sm 9:12.375

The name Mephibosheth (מְפִבֹשֶׁנת) probably comes from the words פָּאָה and בּשֶׁת meaning “dispel” and “shame.” Having fallen and become lame at the news of Saul and Jonathan’s death (2 Sm 4:4), it is as if he has already carried the shame of Saul’s house in his body and David has mercy on him. It is as if Mephibosheth (the son of Saul and Rizpah) dispels the shame through his death and Mephibosheth (the son of Jonathan) bears the shame in his name and body. It reminds of the substitution of Jesus Christ for Jesus Barabbas (Mt 27:16).

David’s compassion (חָמַל) stands in contrast to Saul’s compassion (חָמַל) for the Amalakite king, Agag, for which God rejected him. It seems that Saul is always at odds with God’s will. First not killing enough in 1 Sm 15 and then killing too much, by nearly exterminating the Gibeonites. Interestingly Saul’s motivation for compassion and for killing is to act in accord with the people of God and not with the God of the people.377

Rizpah’s vigil probably started in the beginning of the Barley harvest in April during the Feast of Massoth, when the first fruits were offered.378 The offering of the first fruits and of her sons coincides.

The barley (עָה שְֹעֹרֶ) was ripe in April at about the Passover time (Dt 16:9) and the autumn rains usually came at about the middle of October, which means that Rizpah’s vigil lasted about six months.379 Wacker comments on the reference to Rizpah: “The brevity of the reference, the textual conciseness of only one verse with which her deed is reported, stands in striking contrast to the long time that Rizpah waits.”380

The “rock” (צוּר) on which Rizpah places herself, stands in sharp contrast to (God) the “rock” (סֶלַע) where David finds his shelter in 2 Sm 22:2. In the LXX, both these words are translated with πέτρα, which is the “rock” on which Christ would built his church

376 1 Sm 15:3,9,15.
377 1 Sm 15:9,15,21 and 2 Sm 21:2.
378 Hertzberg has the impression that this sacrifice during the offering of the first fruits might be intended to have the same effect as the offering of the sons of Hiel (1 Ki 16:34) and the offering of the firstborn son of the Moabite King (2 Ki 3:27) (Hertzberg, The Old Testament Library: I & II Samuel 1964, 384).
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(Mt 16:18), but also the “rock of offence” (πέτραν σκάνδαλου) of Rm 9: 33.

Rizpah is a concubine (פִּלֶגֶשׁ), left behind alone to face the terrible consequences of her husband’s (the King’s) actions just like the concubine of Jdg 19 was left behind alone to face the frightening consequences of the Levite’s inactions.

The Gileadites stole (גָּנַב) the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from the Philistines like Rizpah effectively steals the bodies of the children from the birds and from the wrath of God.\(^{381}\) She watches over their remains in the hope that God will have mercy on a remnant of her people.

The name “Rizpah” (רִצְפָּה) means, “hot coal.” This is the same “hot coal” placed on Isaiah’s unclean lips in Is 6:6, 7 to purge them. The Greek equivalent \(\alpha^{\prime}\) ἀνθραξία is found in Rm 12:20 where God reserves vengeance for himself and tells us to serve our enemies and by doing so heap burning coals on their heads.\(^{382}\) That widow with her sackcloth\(^{383}\) probably did not only give a red face to her enemy David, but also to her righteous enemy – to the “face of God.”

**Collective guilt?**

The central problem in this passage is the problem of guilt and its consequences. For the modern mind it is difficult to grasp the

\(^{381}\) Wacker points out the interesting fact that the Gileadites also fasted for seven days (1 Sm 31:13), correlating with the seven sons being crucified (Wacker, *Rizpah oder: Durch Trauer-Arbeit zur Versöhnung* 2003, 562).

\(^{382}\) Van de Beek points out the connection to the \(\alpha^{\prime}\) ἄνθρωπος, when Peter (the rock!) denies Jesus and the fire of the meal Jesus provides for the disciples (Jn 18:18; 21:9) (personal correspondence).

\(^{383}\) The “sackcloth” (שַׂק), which Rizpah spread out, was used for grain, but also worn as a sign of mourning upon the naked body according to Koehler, L, and Baumgartner, W. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 929.
possibility that one person is punished for another person’s guilt. John Hick voices the opinion of many modern theologians and Christians on this point: “It is hardly necessary to criticise the penal-substitutionary conception (of the atonement), so totally implausible has it become for most of us. The idea that guilt can be removed from a wrong-doer by someone else being punished instead is morally grotesque.”

Recent theological works on atonement have also tried to emphasize the victorious nature of Christ’s work of atonement over against the violence of a penal substitutionary form of atonement like Aulèn and Weaver.

This problem is however not so obvious to resolve in the Old Testament. The commandments of God on this subject seem quite ambiguous. In Ezk 18 and Dt 24:16, God commands that the son must not pay for the sins of his father, while Dt 5:9 is quite clear that the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons to the third and fourth generation, because of the jealousy of God.

How is one to understand this ambiguity? Wisdom teaches that both of these commandments of God are true, it only needs to be applied wisely to a specific situation.

The fact that Saul was “smitten” (נָכָה) (v12) by the Philistines in the same way as he “smote” (נָכָה) the Gibeonites (v2), does indicate an acceptable sort of punishment, where a person is punished for his own sin. However, it would seem that God decided that the sons should also pay for the sins of their father. The hanging of the seven sons and grandsons of Saul in 2 Sm 21, appears to be a classic example of the penal-substitutionary model of atonement, which is so morally unacceptable to modern society. Not only are the seven punished for the sin of Saul, but many people had to face

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the devastation of the drought in our passage. It affected the whole nation and even the Gibeonites, who were the wronged party.

It seems that God’s punishment does not fit the crime. God’s punishment exceeds the crime even sevenfold (Lv 26:15-29). It is true that one can attempt to explain the sin of the near extermination of the Gibeonites as a form of collective guilt like The Biblical Illustrator: “The sin of Saul was regarded by God as a national sin, either because the people shared in the plunder, or because they sympathised with or connived at the deed. The matter was one of double guilt, for, besides the shedding of innocent blood, there was the violation of a solemn compact.”

The holders of unrighteous spoil were probably Saul’s descendants, even if they did not commit the deed themselves. The whole nation however also benefited from his murders.

The idea of collective guilt does not take away the problem of substitutionary punishment. Why would seven princes have to die for one king, years after the transgression when he already died as a result of his sins? It would seem that not only does the punishment exceed the crime - it exceeds the criminal.

It seems terribly unjust of God to demand this. One might be tempted, like most commentators, to explain this event by saying that the punishment of the seven sons was the Gibeonites’ idea or that it was just a clever political act by David. This is not convincing, because this execution took place before “the face of God” (coram Deo) (לִפְנֵיְהוָה).

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387 This passage is not primarily concerned with a historic critical problem whether this is the justice of the Gibeonites’ sun-god or an anthropological problem whether human sacrifices were done in the Ancient Near Eastern world or a political problem whether David had ulterior motives. In this passage the believer comes face to face with God and his eternal Law.

388 Even if one were to see the killing of the sons of Saul as a ruthless act by David to further his own political interest, like Brueggemann, W. First and Second Samuel (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 336, 337, this does not detract
The breaking of the covenant relationship, which lies at the root of all sin, has such far-reaching consequences, that it leaves one speechless like Rizpah before the wrath of God’s judgement. The immeasurable depth of the destructive force of sin becomes evident in this passage. Noordmans compares the effects of sin to that of ice breaking open before an ice-skater and spreading beyond his control.\(^{389}\)

**God’s judgement**

The truth of the collective nature of guilt leaves no room to see the seven sons as victims.\(^{390}\) They are sinners, being punished by God for their own, their father’s and a whole nation’s iniquity. Even an attempt to explain the consequences of sin ethically by showing the collective nature of their guilt would not justify the substitutionary execution of the seven children. This is also evident in Lk 13:4: “Or those eighteen who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than all the others in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will perish.”\(^{391}\)

God’s judgment confuses our moral judgements. In a certain sense God’s judgement is *jenseits von Gut und Böse* of which Nietzsche speaks. God’s Kingdom is however, not an un-ethical world “beyond good and evil” in the Nietzschean sense of the

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\(^{389}\) Noordmans, *Verzamelde Werken Deel 2* 1979, 253.

\(^{390}\) Compare Suchocki, M H. *The Fall to Violence* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 149.

\(^{391}\) Thanks to Prof. P. F. Theron for pointing this out.
word, but it is the supra-ethical world of the Predestination, as Noordmans calls it.\textsuperscript{392}

Dostoyevski understood this supra-ethical world much better than most. In his novel, the Brothers Karamazov, one finds the four sons of Fyodor Karamazov: Dmitry, Ivan, Alyosha and Smerdyakov (a half brother). The eldest son, Dmitry has a terrible relationship with his father, who is an unscrupulous sensulist. They end up falling in love with the same woman and become rivals. Dmitry is at a distinct disadvantage because he has no money, but he is convinced his father owes him money as part of his inheritance. On more than one occasion he flies into a passionate rage at his predicament and threatens to kill his father. His father is eventually murdered and everybody suspects him of being the murderer.

The police arrest him at a drunken party with the woman he loves and as he is taken away to the prison he passes by some peasants and hears a child crying. He asks why the child is crying. They tell him it is because the child’s house has been burnt down and his clothes are wet. Later, in conversation with his brother Alyosha, he is speaking about his punishment and that he would be sent to the Siberian mines to stay with hardened criminals.

He says: “And there are so many of them [criminals], hundreds of them, and we are all responsible for them! Why did I dream of that “babby” just then? “Why is the babby poor”? That was a sign to me at that moment! It’s for the “babby” that I am going. For we are all responsible for all. For all the “babbies,” for there are little children and big children. All of us are “babbies.” And I’ll go for all, for someone has to go for all. I did not kill my father, but I have got to go. I accept it”!\textsuperscript{393}

This is almost an echo of the words of Jesus in Mt 3:21 where John wants to stop him from being baptised with the other sinners.

\textsuperscript{392} Noordmans, \textit{Verzamelde Werken Deel 2} 1979, 126, 127.

\textsuperscript{393} Dostoyevski, \textit{The Brothers Karamazov} 1958b, 694.
“But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness’” (English Standard Version). These were also Dostoyevski’s last words.394

The price for the fulfilment of all righteousness is high. Sin and its consequences do not disappear, even after the knowledge of the salvation has come to us. It actually multiplies disproportionately - seven princes die for one king.395

An ethical judgement of expiation can only result in the words of one of the Brothers Karamazov, Ivan, showing how the suffering of children is too high a price to pay for truth. “…I renounce higher harmony altogether. It is not worth one little tear of that tortured little girl who beat herself on the breast and prayed to her “dear, kind Lord” in the stinking privy with her unexpiated tears! It is not worth it, because her tears remained unexpiated. They must be expiated, for otherwise there can be no harmony. But how, how are you to expiate them? Is it possible? Not, surely, by their being avenged? But what do I want them avenged for? What do I want a hell for torturers for? … And if the suffering of children go to make up the sum of sufferings which is necessary for the purchase of truth, then I say beforehand, that the entire truth is not worth such a price.”396

This could very well have crossed the mind of Rizpah guarding the dead bodies of her children. Saul murdered the Gibeonites and now her children are killed in the place of Saul to avenge their deaths. Expiation is demanded and given by God, but what does that have to do with her children? God did not give his own son, but Rizpah’s sons.397

394 Sajkovic, Dostoyevski: His Image of Man 1962, 91.
395 In 2 Sm 24, 70 000 people died for one bad decision by David.
396 Dostoyevski, The Brothers Karamazov 1958a, 286, 287.
397 Van de Beek points out that David did not give his sons either, though he inherited the kingship of Saul and with it responsibility for Saul’s legacy. He sees this perspective supported by the fact that the author purposefully made
Rizpah: The Church *coram Deo*

The fact that God did eventually give his own son did not change the fact that her sons had to die. What about the people who are still dying?

Our disgust at the “morally grotesque” (as Hick puts it) of the penal-substitutionary atonement hides a deeper truth. The truth is that we are implicated by this form of atonement. Other people’s suffering is the price for the expiation of our sins. The death of her children is the cost of Rizpah’s life. The remnant survives through the expiation done by others. Our life is made possible through an infinitely intricate network of substitutionary suffering culminating in the cross of Jesus Christ. In the church we live of the body of Christ in whom the expiatory bodies of innumerable people are connected.\(^{398}\) In continuing this line of thought, the cost of life in South Africa today would include the following:

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\(^{398}\) The accusation against the Eucharist in the early church that it was cannibalism takes on a poignant meaning in light of this view. Those bodies connected to the body of Christ would in a sense form part of the bread and the blood.
## Deaths in detention in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/age</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place:detained/died</th>
<th>Official / alleged cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dipale, Ernest Moabi, 21</td>
<td>1982/7/8</td>
<td>Johannesburg, John Vorster Square</td>
<td>Suicide by hanging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ngalo, Johannes, 26</td>
<td>1984/7/15</td>
<td>Parys</td>
<td>Found dead in cell due to serious internal injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moleleke, Jacob, 16</td>
<td>1984/9/29</td>
<td>Sebokeng</td>
<td>Shot in police van during alteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maseko, Samson, 19</td>
<td>1984/11/11</td>
<td>Kattlehong</td>
<td>Died of injuries after being in police custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mashoke, Benedict, 20</td>
<td>1987/3/26</td>
<td>Burgersfort Police Station</td>
<td>Suicide by hanging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## A death in Palestine

| Jesus Christ | ±33 AD | Golgotha | crucified |

## Deaths on farms in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/age</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place: farmed/died</th>
<th>Official / alleged cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Du Toit, W, 64</td>
<td>2002/7/26</td>
<td>Brits</td>
<td>Hung from bathroom ceiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Smith, Fanie, 42</td>
<td>2003/7/30</td>
<td>'Vadersdeel', Heilbron, FS</td>
<td>Torched to death on farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Snyman, Ian</td>
<td>2004/2/29</td>
<td>Cob Wildlife farm, rural Wild Coast</td>
<td>Tortured, executed by 5 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fourie, Henk, 29</td>
<td>2004/5/20</td>
<td>Varkenskraal, Groblersdown</td>
<td>Gunned down in cold blood, nothing robbed, 4 attackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Terreblanche, Christoffel, 83</td>
<td>2004/5/31</td>
<td>Hobhouse, FS farm</td>
<td>Bashed to death with knopkieries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Theron, Richard, 60</td>
<td>2004/7/7</td>
<td>Koesterfontein farm, Magaliesburg</td>
<td>Murdered nothing robbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Meyer, Edwin</td>
<td>2004/7/26</td>
<td>Olifantshoek</td>
<td>Commits suicide after squatter threat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rizpah: The Church *coram Deo*

Noordmans says: “...the great mystery of the substitution, [is] the culmination of everything in the Gospel. It is the righteousness of God; his last argument, with which he crushes the hardest of hearts and wins them for his Kingdom. Our mind and sense of justice rebel against this. But the cross of Golgotha has a power, of which only the hidden man knows in his heart of hearts. The reconciling death of Jesus is the final resting place for that heart.”

399

The church *coram Deo*

In South Africa today, the calling of the church is for all to be responsible for all. The Dutch Reformed Church knows Saul’s zeal for his nation and his God, which was like the Jews without knowledge and seeking our own righteousness (Rm 10:2, 3). We know about blood-guilt and a broken covenant. We are beginning to know the face of God like Rizpah and will come to know God’s rejection like her. Our hope beyond hope is the promise in Rm 11:15, “For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead”? This is the promise of the eternal covenant of God to which Rizpah clung for six months, day and night, while chasing away the flies from the corpses of her sons.

Noordmans says, “Who is God and how are his ways? Finally, the hill of Golgotha, with the cross and the mother under the cross, is more clearly depicted in the history of the house of Saul, the

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399 “...het grote mysterie der plaatsbekleding, waarop alles in het Evangelie uitloopt. Dat is het recht Gods; zijn laatste argument, waarmee Hij de hardste harten verbrijzelt en ze wint voor zijn koninkrijk. Ons verstand en ons rechtsgevoel komen er tegen in opstand. Maar het kruis van Golgotha heeft een macht, waarvan alleen de verborgen mens des harten weet. Het verzoenend sterven van Jezus is het laatste rustpunt van dat hart.” (Noordmans, *Verzamelde Werken Deel 8* 1990b, 308) (Translation by author).

400 There is a broken relationship (covenant) with the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church, the Reformed Church in Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, which the Dutch Reformed Church is trying to heal by way of church reunification.
rejected, than in the house of David, the chosen one. Nowhere in
the latter does one find a scene so far beyond our daily existence
and in which so much violence is done to God for another
kingdom, than here with Rizpah.”

It is the calling of the Dutch Reformed Church to chase away
the “flies” from the bodies of those who, before 1994 and since
1994, made expiation for our sins through Christ.

401 “Wie is God en hoe zijn zijn wegen? Tenslotte is de heuvel Golgotha, met het
kruis en de moeder onder dat kruis, in de geschiedenis van het huis van Saul, de
verworpene, nog duidelijker afgebeeld dan in die van het huis van David, de
uitverkorene. Nergens in die laatste komt een tafereel voor dat zo ver is
uitgeheven boven ons dagelijks bestaan en waarin God zoveel geweld wordt
aangedaan om een ander koninkrijk, als hier bij Rizpah”. (Noordmans,
Verzameldte Werken Deel 8 1990b, 230) (Translation by author).