When the election results came in, far from these negotiators being repudiated for not reflecting the views and attitudes of their constituencies by being thumped at the polls, the contrary happened. They were massively endorsed in a landslide election victory that brought the ANC to the helm of a Government of National Unity. It was these selfsame, now elected representatives who gave us our new Constitution and who in accordance with its provisions passed the act that brought the TRC into being. It was not the work of some idealistic upstarts but the product of hard-nosed politicians who usually have an eye on the next election and would not normally be caught doing anything that was likely to alienate the voters who put them into office and who had the power to throw them out. These politicians, the parliamentarians, have operated under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and his successor, Thabo Mbeki. Had what they did in the act been at variance with the feelings of their constituency, that would have been reflected in their ratings in opinion polls. After three years of the TRC process, and many controversial amnesty decisions, Nelson Mandela scored nearly eight of a possible ten, and Mr. Mbeki nearly seven, in the popularity stakes as political leaders. (Their closest rival trailed at a disturbing three.) It seemed to indicate that, despite an electorate's usual disillusionment with the first post-oppression government, and unfulfilled promises and deficits in fulfilling expectations, the ANC was still being endorsed. In a memorable turn of phrase used by one of my teachers at King's College, London—demonstrating the wonderful allergy of the academic to dogmatism—it would not be unreasonable to assert that those who had negotiated and who produced the TRC law did in fact have the credentials to speak on behalf of the victims and have been heartily endorsed in so doing.

They could claim they were speaking as victims, for the victims, when they accepted that part of the price for getting us to this point would be to expunge the right of the victims not only to press criminal charges but to claim civil damages in compensation for their loss. This is a position that was not arrived at lightly. It was something that caused a great deal of anguish but it is clear even in the case of civil damages that, had those applying for amnesty known that it might remove their criminal liability but not their civil liability, it is highly unlikely that they would have come forward at all.
The carrot that drew them to the TRC would have been significantly diminished. We can conclude that many more would have taken the risk—as many in the former South African Defense Force did after the acquittal of General Malan and his co-accused—of possible prosecution in the knowledge that their complicity in awful atrocities had remained hidden because they were conspirators sworn to silence or had covenanted with their colleagues to perjure themselves. The solution arrived at was not perfect but it was the best that could be had in the circumstances—the truth in exchange for the freedom of the perpetrators.

The denial of the right of victims to claim compensation in the civil courts raises the whole matter of reparations, an aspect of the commission's work that often receives too little attention but is quite crucial to the process of establishing reconciliation. As we said in our report, "Without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no healing and reconciliation, either at an individual or a community level. . . . In addition . . . reparation is essential to counterbalance amnesty. The granting of amnesty denies victims the right to institute civil claims against perpetrators. The Government should thus accept responsibility for reparation."

In his Constitutional Court judgment, Judge Mahomed has lucidly and eloquently pointed out that "nuanced and individualised reparations" could offer a more imaginative way of addressing the massive problems created by the legacy of apartheid than allowing the limited number of victims who might successfully sue the state to pursue their civil claims:

The families of those whose fundamental human rights were invaded by torture and abuse are not the only victims who have endured "untold suffering and injustice" in consequence of the crass inhumanity of apartheid which so many have had to endure for so long. Generations of children born and yet to be born will suffer the consequences of poverty, of malnutrition, of homelessness, of illiteracy and disempowerment gener-

ated and sustained by the institutions of apartheid and its manifest effects on life and living for so many. The country has neither the resources nor the skills to reverse fully these massive wrongs. It will take many years of strong commitment, sensitivity and labour to "reconstruct our society" so as to fulfil the legitimate dreams of new generations exposed to real opportunities for advancement denied to preceding generations initially by the execution of apartheid itself and for a long time after its formal demise, by its relentless consequences. The resources of the state have to be deployed imaginatively, wisely, efficiently and equitably, to facilitate the reconstruction process in a manner which best brings relief and hope to the widest sections of the community, developing for the benefit of the entire nation the latent human potential and re-sources of every person who has directly or indirectly been burdened with the heritage of the shame and the pain of our racist past.

Those negotiators of the Constitution and leaders of the nation who were required to address themselves to these agonising problems must have been compelled to make hard choices. They could have chosen to direct that the limited resources of the state be spent by giving preference to the formidable delictual claims of those who had suffered from acts of murder, torture or assault perpetrated by servants of the state, diverting to that extent, desperately needed funds in the crucial areas of education, housing and primary health care. They were entitled to permit a different choice to be made between competing demands inherent in the problem. They could have chosen to direct that the potential liability of the state be limited in respect of any civil claims by differentiating between those against whom prescription could have been pleaded as a defence and those whose claims were of such recent origin that a defence of prescription would have failed. They were entitled to reject such a choice on the grounds that
it was irrational. They could have chosen to saddle the state with liability for claims made by insurance companies which had compensated institutions for delictual acts performed by the servants of the state and to that extent again divert funds otherwise desperately needed to provide food for the hungry, roofs for the homeless and black boards and desks for those struggling to obtain admission to desperately overcrowded schools. They were entitled to permit the claims of such school children and the poor and the homeless to be preferred.

The election made by the makers of the Constitution was to permit Parliament to favour "the reconstruction of society" involving in the process a wider concept of "reparation," which would allow the state to take into account the competing claims on its resources but, at the same time, to have regard to the "untold suffering" of individuals and families whose fundamental human rights had been invaded during the conflict of the past. In some cases such a family may best be assisted by a reparation which allows the young in this family to maximise their potential through bursaries and scholarships; in other cases the most effective reparation might take the form of occupational training and rehabilitation; in still other cases complex surgical interventions and medical help may be facilitated; still others might need subsidies to prevent eviction from homes they can no longer maintain and in suitable cases the deep grief of the traumatised may most effectively be assuaged by facilitating the erection of a tombstone on the grave of a departed one with a public acknowledgement of his or her valour and nobility. There might have to be differentiation between the form and quality of the reparations made to two persons who have suffered exactly the same damage in consequence of the same unlawful act but where one person now enjoys lucrative employment from the state and the other lives in penury.

The law, and our recommendations to President Mandela, made provision for those who were designated victims under the act to be eligible for reparation. The commissioners deliberately tried to avoid using the word "compensation." We agreed that there was no way in which anyone could claim to compensate, for instance, a family for the brutal murder of their beloved husband, father, and breadwinner. There is no way really of computing the devastation of such a loss. Moreover, if we were to try to compensate them, would victims be eligible for the same compensation for the same kind of loss despite all kinds of difference in circumstances? Thus our recommendations to the President and Parliament provided that a sum of money reasonably significant in amount would be paid to those designated as victims, but that it would be acknowledged that it was really meant to be symbolic rather than substantial. It was a way the nation sought to say, in effect, to victims: We acknowledge that you suffered a gross violation of your rights. Nothing can ever replace your loved one. But as a nation we are saying, we are sorry, we have opened the wounds of your suffering and sought to cleanse them; this reparation is as balm, an ointment, being poured over the wounds to assist in their healing.

The TRC Act commendably exhorted the commission to be "victim friendly" in seeking to rehabilitate the human and civil dignity of victims. But one of its major weaknesses is that perpetrators have been granted amnesty as soon as their applications have been successful, whereas in the case of the victims the TRC could only make recommendations to the President some years into the process, when our report was handed to him. In his turn, the President would take those recommendations he had accepted to Parliament, which in its turn would function through a special committee. The process provided for this committee's recommendations to be approved finally by Parliament, at which point reparations would hopefully be granted to the victims. It is unfortunately a convoluted process and as a consequence no final reparation had been approved.
three years after the TRC process got under way, while all this time perpetrators had been granted amnesty. One can very well under-stand the frustration and anger of disgruntled victims who came before the commission, as well as the cynicism of harsh critics who pooh-poohed the vaunted victim-friendliness of the TRC and claimed that the process was really perpetrator-friendly.

We at the TRC have expressed our own dissatisfaction with this aspect of the law. As a consequence, what was termed urgent interim relief had begun to be paid to the 20,000 or so victims whom the TRC had designated at the stage when the report was handed to the President on October 29, 1998. This urgent relief consisted of a uniform amount, usually no more than R2000 (U.S. $330) per victim.

In addition to the urgent relief, we recommended in our report that the state should pay individual reparation grants. Our hope is that nearly all the victims will qualify for final reparation grants of up to R23000 (U.S. $3830) a year, payable for six years. We estimated the cost to the country at R2.9 billion (about 4T7 million U.S. dollars). At the time of writing, the government had budgeted a total of one fifth of this, payable over three years.

Our recommendations for individual grants of money raise a number of questions. Can a monetary value be given to suffering? Can the country afford to pay even this amount, taking into account the various competing demands being placed on an exchequer strapped for cash? If apartheid was indeed a crime against humanity and was itself a gross violation of human rights as condemned by five senior judges, then in a very real sense all who had suffered under this evil system should surely be designated victims? Where was the fairness in all this? What about those who had been forcibly moved, or those whose lives had been more or less permanently blighted because of the inferior education they had received, or who would have been affected by the preventable deficiency diseases they contracted because of an inequitable allocation of resources along racial lines? The list could indeed be almost endless.

None of us on the commission doubted that there was a measure of arbitrariness in limiting the meaning of human rights violations in the manner in which the law has done. But it was clear that the legislature was guided by the need to deal with something manageable in scope. There is clearly a sense in which reparations could have been extended backward a great deal further than 1960—perhaps to 1948 when the National Party first came to power and embarked on an orgy of passing racist legislation designed to make the majority of South Africans second-class citizens in the land of their birth with a systematic abrogation of their fundamental human rights. Parliament's decision was eminently sensible, giving us a reasonable chance of accomplishing our task. It also ensured that the nation would not be bogged down in dealing with a past for so long that we were held to ransom by it, effectively sabotaging the peaceful transition.

We used the same rationale in recommending to the government that only those victims who had approached the commission should qualify for reparations, imposing what we called a "closed list" of victims. We argued that people had been given the opportunity to testify through an extensive publicity campaign and only those who had taken the trouble to testify or to make a statement should benefit from reparation. It would have been unmanageable for the government to commit itself to paying reparations to numbers of victims we had no way of estimating.

Nobody was ever under any illusions about the significance of the reparation. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Dullah Omar, under whose auspices the TRC operated, quite rightly said in the debate that followed the presentation of our report that we were a nation of victims and, perhaps more importantly, of survivors. He also suggested that communal rather than only individual reparation would have to be considered, since often it had been communities that had been devastated more than individuals. Most sensible people would concur with that though I would still want to maintain that everything should be done to ensure that those entitled to individual reparations were not cheated out of them. After all, they
had given up their right to sue for damages, and they ought not to be made to sacrifice too excessively.

We on the commission were often deeply humbled that those who came before us were so frequently so modest in their expectations and requests. "Can I have a tombstone erected for my child?" "Could the TRC help to find the remains of my loved one, even just a bone so that we could give him a decent burial?" "Could I get assistance to educate my children?" It would be a very sad day if we were to disappoint those with such often pathetic requests. We are aware of the enormous pressures on government resources, and distressingly hard choices will have to be made.

The commission recommended, too, that streets and schools could be named after fallen heroes and communal facilities erected in their memory—such as clinics, community centers, recreational facilities—and this has already begun to happen. We also thought there should be monuments and memorials to honor those to whom we owe so much for our freedom. They should not be sectional but as inclusive as possible, not chauvinistic but such as would help us to remember in a positive rather than a vindictive way; memorials that would not alienate some but would have the capacity to contribute to the process of healing and reconciliation; that would give us memories that would bind us together after so long enduring things that were designed to tear us apart and instill hostility and disharmony. I hope we would learn to celebrate occasions and events which have brought us together, such as our historic election, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President, or our victories in the rugby World Cup or the African Nations Cup in soccer, when we discovered that we were indeed the rainbow nation.

We all wish our country had been blessed with limitless resources so that every victim would have been able to receive adequate compensation for the abuses they suffered. Unfortunately, the harsh realities of our day are that our resources are limited and the demands and pressures on these limited resources are various and urgent. Choices and judgments have to be made about the most equitable way of sharing those resources.

The way of amnesty and reparations is the path that our nation elected to walk, crossing from a blighted past to the promise of a better future using the "historic bridge" referred to in the Constitution, one of whose pillars was to be the TRC. Other paths might well have been chosen. That may be so. The fact is that South Africa chose this path, we have walked it already and believe that a significant contribution has been made to the promotion of national unity and reconciliation.
wrestling with God knowing that God wanted us to march. I announced to my somewhat startled staff that we were going to march for peace, to demonstrate the sense of outrage that possessed most Capetonians who had to find a way of expressing their revulsion.

It was also at Bishopscourt that Nelson and Winnie Mandela spent his first night of freedom on February 11, 1990. After an evening of taking calls from presidents and kings, including one from the White House, it was here that on the following day he strategized with his closest colleagues upon emerging from twenty-seven years in jail. I went into that meeting and started a hymn which is almost another national anthem, "Lizalis' idinga lakho (Let your will be fulfilled, be done, 0 Lord God of truth)" and that group belted it out as if their very lives depended on it. Then I prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for the wonders of God's ways, praying for His mercy for all gathered there and for our country. Then I left them to their deliberations. Later it was in the gardens at Bishopscourt that Mandela conducted his first news conference after his release. It was also at Bishopscourt that church leaders later convened an important summit of black political leaders, when some of the most radical agreed for the first time to sit at the same table with homeland leaders whom they had been castigating as untouchables for collaborating with the apartheid government.

The commissioners meeting at Bishopscourt were as diverse a group of South Africans of that size as you could ever hope to assemble. There were sixteen of us, as one commissioner was unable to attend. There were ten blacks and six whites, including two Afrikaners. We were Colored, Indian, African, and white, the entire racial spectrum in our race-obsessed society. Politically we had everything from the left to the conservative white right wing. There were a number of Christians, a Muslim, a Hindu, some lapsed believers, and possibly an agnostic or two.

Dr. Boraine had once served as an opposition Member of Parliament, where his views led to strong attacks on him by pro-apartheid MPs, but he had left in frustration in the 1980s to found and work in extra-parliamentary organizations working for democracy. Ms. Mary Burton was known as one of the stalwarts of the Black Sash, a women's movement which worked for the rights of black South Africans. Chris de Jager, senior counsel, had been a member of far-right-wing parties and an acting judge. The Right Reverend Bongani Finca was a high-profile Eastern Cape church leader who had fought apartheid. Ms. Sisi Khampepe was an attorney who had been deeply involved in the struggle for labor rights. Mr. Richard Lyster was a human rights lawyer who had worked in the strife-torn province of Natal. Mr. Wynand Malan was a lawyer who had been a member of Parliament for the ruling National Party, then broke away to help form a new white opposition party. Dr. Khoza Mgojo was a former president of the Methodist Church, and also president of the South African Council of Churches, who was a prominent member of a group of Natal church leaders working for peace in that province. Ms. Hlengiwe Mkhize was a psychologist who had worked as a mental health specialist in the civil service.

Mr. Dumisa Ntsebeza, who was often to act in Alex Boraine's or my place, was a former political prisoner and leading human rights lawyer in the Eastern Cape. Dr. Wendy Orr had gained renown when she secured a court interdict against police in the Eastern Cape after finding evidence of torture among detainees while working as a state doctor. Advocate Denzil Potgieter, senior counsel, was a Cape Town lawyer who had appeared for the defense in political trials. Dr. Mapule Ramashala was a clinical psychologist and former exile who had a top position in the Medical Research Council. Dr. Fazel Randera was a medical doctor who had long been active in the struggle against apartheid. Ms. Yasmin Sooka was also a lawyer and was the South African leader of the multi-faith World Conference on Religion and Peace. Ms. Glenda Wildschut was a psychiatric nurse and leader of the Trauma Center for the Victims of Violence in Cape Town, with considerable experience of dealing with victims of torture and conflict.

At our Bishopscourt meeting—we later moved into our own
offices—we allocated commissioners to the three constituent committees of the commission. Fifteen of the seventeen commissioners were split between the Committee on Human Rights Violations, which I also chaired, and the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation. The commission had the power to appoint additional committee members, who were not full members of the commission, to these two committees, bringing the total number to seventeen. In choosing these extra members, we took very seriously into account regional, gender, political, and religious representivity, making good any hiatus in the TRC's composition. For instance we ensured that there was at least one Jew on the TRC, as well as a leader of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).

Two commissioners who were lawyers were appointed to the Committee on Amnesty. Soon afterward the President appointed three judges to make up the initial complement of five—which was increased subsequently to nineteen in an effort to speed up the process of handling over 7000 amnesty applications. (The Amnesty Committee had a peculiar position in the commission: it was headed by judges who were not commissioners but were appointed directly by the President, and it was autonomous in its decision-making powers. Neither I nor any commissioner outside the committee had any influence over its decisions to grant or refuse amnesty; the commission was statutorily prohibited from reviewing its decisions.)

The commission also decided at one of its early meetings to regionalize its operations. As a result we opened offices in Durban, East London, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, the latter being also the TRC headquarters. Very soon we had a staff of nearly 350 in place and we hit the ground running. A great deal of credit goes to Dr. Boraine, who worked marvels in finding office accommodation and appointing staff.

I would not wish on my worst enemy the unenviable task of starting up from scratch a huge operation such as ours turned out to be. But we managed and ended up with an efficient outfit with a most outstanding, conscientious, and dedicated team of commission-

ers, committee members, and staff persons. It was a great privilege to be captain of such a superb team. It is always easy to be captain of a winning side, which is what we became, and I want to pay a very warm tribute to them. Two of our fellow commissioners resigned before we handed in our report. Dr. Ramashala was appointed principal and vice-chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville, while Advocate de Jager, formerly a member of the Conservative Party, felt he could not continue with a commission with which he was at odds. He has remained as an Amnesty Committee member. Thus we ended up with only one Afrikaner commissioner.

I suggested at another early meeting that it might be a worth-while gesture for us all to resign any membership of political parties or organizations we might have. Quite rightly, it was pointed out that people had almost certainly been nominated for TRC membership at least in part because of their political affiliations. It was expected that we were bringing all we were, all our personal and corporate baggage, our political biases and perceptions as well as our insights and blind spots to bear on the crucial work of this important commission. Most commissioners argued that we would be engaging in a misleading charade for those who were members of political parties to resign. They said it was being somewhat disingenuous and less than totally transparent to pretend that we would be apolitical. We would be evenhanded but that did not mean that the jury was still out on issues such as whether apartheid was evil or only a good policy that had gone awry in its application. Most of us were on record as asserting quite categorically that apartheid was intrinsically in and of itself evil without remainder. It had in part been this condemnatory stance that had given us the credibility which had led to our appointment to the commission.

So we were broadly representative, though we were criticized from day one by some of the Afrikaans media and political leadership as a flawed commission, packed with those who were dismissively described as "struggle" types (referring to the anti-apartheid struggle) and so biased in favor of the ANC. They called for a commission
in which those who had supported apartheid would equal in number those who had been on the other side. They hardly noticed the arrogance of their demand, so typical of how they had organized things when the vast majority in the land had had absolutely no say at all in how they were to be ruled. The supporters of the old and discredited apartheid dispensation still wanted things to be organized in the old skewed way. They declared, without benefit of any evidence whatsoever since we had not even begun working, that the TRC was intended to be a witch hunt against the old order and specifically against the Afrikaners.

We sought to disabuse them of this notion by declaring that some of us had been committed passionately to reconciliation a very long time ago, long before there had been any thought of a TRC, and that we were too fervently dedicated to the healing of a traumatized and wounded people to want to jeopardize that enterprise by being anything but scrupulously fair. I told a group of white DRC leaders who expressed similar concerns that they would have to depend on my own personal integrity and to check my track record. I told them that many of them had believed that I was opposed to apartheid only for political reasons, despite my protestations to the contrary, and that they had taken it for granted that I would be muted in my criticism of an ANC-led government—if I was likely to voice any. They had been certain I would enter the public political arena by accepting a political post. I reminded them that I had not sought or been offered any political office and that very soon after the ANC took office I criticized them for accepting unduly high salaries. I said they should wait and see what sort of report we would produce and judge us on that basis. I suppose they are hardly likely to be too vocal about the fact that we were never able to persuade some of the more vocal and indeed strident in the Afrikaner community who held on to their jaundiced views, whatever evidence we might put forward to demonstrate our commitment to being evenhanded. They were so like the little boy in the story who rushed to tell his mother, "Mummy, look at those geese!" "No, darling," said Mummy, "we don't call them geese, they are geese." Nothing daunted, the little darling retorted, "They still look like geese to me!" We tried everything short of dereliction of our duty to give as complete a picture as possible of the gross violations of human rights that occurred in our country as a result of the political conflict of the past. We apportioned blame in such a manner that we could assist in cultivating a culture of accountability and respect for human rights. We were determined we would carry out this crucial function without fear or favor and it seems the world and most reasonable South Africans believe we did not do too bad a job. We were, as I said, broadly representative of our South African society. That representativeness was a very important attribute to have but it caused us a major headache. We came from diverse backgrounds and we were to discover that apartheid had affected us all in different ways. We learned to our chagrin that we were a microcosm of South African society, more deeply wounded than we had at first imagined. We found that we were often very suspicious of one another and that it was not easy to develop real trust among us. We realized only later that we were all victims of a potent conditioning, with ready-made judgments of those who belonged to other groupings. We would, most of us, have protested vehemently that we were not using stereotypes.

Our meetings for the first year or so were hell. It was not easy to arrive at a common mind as each of us tried to stake our claims on the turf and to establish our particular space. You wondered as a black whether your white colleague would have reacted in that way to a fellow white and vice versa. Some of us were castigated for being liberal whites—"liberal" being a swear word in South Africa—intent on manipulating things so that they would be top dogs but, oh, so
subtly. I had not been prepared for this because I had been spoiled by our church meetings, especially by our Synod of Bishops meetings, to which we all looked forward eagerly. They were so congenial, so affirming, so positive without all the barbs and innuendoes and the slights, real and imagined, that characterized those first TRC meetings. We were certainly authentic in reflecting the alienations and chasms and suspicions that were part and parcel of our apartheid society. We could be a useful paradigm for our nation, for if we could eventually be welded into a reasonably coherent and united and reconciled group, then there was hope for South Africa. As it happened, the first staff we appointed were all white and all kinds of alarm bells started ringing with some apprehensive that there would be a white takeover pushing a white agenda.

It is interesting that the President appointed an Archbishop as chairperson of the commission and not, for instance, a judge, since we were to some extent a quasi-judicial body. As it happened, seven of the commissioners were lawyers, the legal profession thus possessing the largest representation. But there were three active ordained ministers, all of whom had been the national heads of their denominations. Dr. Boraine had been ordained and at one time was the youngest president of the Methodist Conference. He had resigned as a minister and gone into politics, then headed up nongovernmental organizations which had played a significant role in promoting democracy and in shaping the legislation that eventually spawned the TRC. So you could say that there were four ordained persons and that was bound to have a marked influence on our deliberations and on how we carried out our work.

The President must have believed that our work would be profoundly spiritual. After all, forgiveness, reconciliation, reparation were not the normal currency in political discourse. There it was more normal to demand satisfaction, to pay back in the same coin, to give as good as you got, for it was more common to have the ethos of "dog eat dog" in the jungle world of politics. You looked to rub your opponent's nose in the dust, to be ruthless and cutthroat and to put the dagger in and turn it in the wound into which salt was rubbed. You paid scant attention to the call to heal, to redress imbalances, and to reduce differences. You were elected because you were different and you existed to accentuate differences. Forgiveness, confession, and reconciliation were far more at home in the religious sphere.

Despite our diversity, the commissioners agreed to my proposal at the first meeting that we should go on a retreat, where we sought to enhance our spiritual resources and to sharpen our sensitivities. We sat at the feet of a spiritual guru, who happened to be my own spiritual counselor, while we kept silence for a day, seeking to open ourselves to the movement and guidance of the transcendent Spirit, however conceived or named. Near the end of our term as a commission we had another retreat, a deeply moving experience on Robben Island. Before it we went on a tour of the island and were steeped in all its history and anguish as we processed from one cell to another and realized the price that had been paid to bring us to the point we had reached in our country. By then we had grown a great deal closer to one another.

The commission accepted it, too, when I called for prayer at the beginning and end of our meetings, and when I punctuated them at midday by asking for a pause for recollection and prayer. In the Human Rights Violations Committee, we agreed that, when victims and survivors came to our victim-oriented hearings to testify about their often heartrending experiences, we would have a solemn atmosphere with prayers, hymns, and ritual candle lighting to commemorate those who had died in the struggle. When I asked before our first hearings in the Eastern Cape whether I should preside over the proceedings in my purple Archbishop's cassock, part of my public persona, the commission said I should, with my Hindu colleague insisting.

As soon as I was appointed to the TRC, I asked the secretariat of the worldwide Anglican communion to alert the nuns and monks of the religious communities of our Church to our desperate need for regular intercession during the life of the commission. Thus we knew
that we were surrounded on a regular basis by the fervent prayers of at least this group of Christians. We know from other contacts that we were being sustained by the love and prayers of many around the world and we want to say a very big thank you to them for this wonderful work. Whatever we may have achieved is due in large measure to this cloud of witnesses surrounding us and upholding us. For most of us, what we were being asked to undertake was profoundly religious and spiritual, and consequently spiritual resources were appropriately brought to bear on our task.

Very few people objected to the heavy spiritual and indeed Christian religious emphasis of the commission. When I was challenged on it by journalists, I told them I was a religious leader and had been chosen as who I was. I could not pretend I was someone else. I operated as who I was and that was accepted by the commission. It meant that theological and religious insights and perspectives would inform much of what we did and how we did it. We were only too happy to be guided where it was appropriate by the health care providers on the commission—the psychologists, medical doctors, and a nurse, who made very significant contributions to the evolution of the policies on reparation and rehabilitation that we eventually presented as our recommendations to the President. Equally we made good use of the theological verities which were applicable to our work.

As I grow older I am pleasantly surprised at how relevant theology has become in my perception. In our particular work as the commission it was a relief to discover that in fact we were all really children of Adam and Eve. When God accosted Adam and remonstrated with him about contravening the order God had given about not eating a certain fruit, Adam had been less than forthcoming in accepting responsibility for that disobedience. No, he shifted the blame to Eve, and when God turned to Eve, she too had taken a leaf from her husband's book (not the leaf with which she tried ineffectually to hide her nakedness) and tried to pass the buck. We are not told how the serpent responded to the blame pushed on to it. So we should thus not have been surprised at how reluctant most people were to acknowledge their responsibility for atrocities done under apartheid. They were just being the descendants of their forebears and behaving true to form in being in the denial mode or blaming everyone and everything except themselves. Yes, it was all in our genes. "They" were to blame. There we go again, showing ourselves true descendants of our first parents.

There is a salutary counter to our tendency to push blame onto others in a book by the Harvard theologian, Harvey Cox, with the lovely title, On Not Leaving It to the Snake. This helped me to be a great deal less judgmental and to avoid gloating at the misfortune of others. It was particularly important in the commission's encounter with the perpetrators of some of the most horrendous atrocities. So frequently we in the commission were quite appalled at the depth of depravity to which human beings could sink and we would, most of us, say that those who committed such dastardly deeds were monsters because the deeds were monstrous. But theology prevents us from doing this. Theology reminded me that, however diabolical the act, it did not turn the perpetrator into a demon. We had to distinguish between the deed and the perpetrator, between the sinner and the sin, to hate and condemn the sin while being filled with compassion for the sinner. The point is that, if perpetrators were to be despairsed of as monsters and demons, then we were thereby letting accountability go out the window because we were then declaring that they were not moral agents to be held responsible for the deeds they had committed. Much more importantly, it meant that we abandoned all hope of their being able to change for the better. Theology said they still, despite the awfulness of their deeds, remained children of God with the capacity to repent, to be able to change. Otherwise we should, as a commission, have had to shut up shop, since we were operating on the premise that people could change, could recognize and acknowledge the error of their ways and so experience contrition or, at the very least, remorse and would at some point be constrained to confess their dastardly conduct and ask
for forgiveness. If, however, they were dismissed as being monsters they could not by definition engage in a process that was so deeply personal as that of forgiveness and reconciliation.

In this theology, we can never give up on anyone because our God was one who had a particularly soft spot for sinners. The Good Shepherd in the parable Jesus told had been quite ready to leave ninety-nine perfectly well-behaved sheep in the wilderness to look for, not an attractive, fluffy little lamb—fluffy little lambs do not usually stray from their mummies—but for the troublesome, obstreperous old ram. This was the one on which the Good Shepherd expended so much energy. When he found it, it is highly unlikely to have had beautiful fleece. It would almost certainly have been thoroughly bedraggled and perhaps fallen into a ditch of dirty water and was thus smelling to high heaven. That was the sheep the Good Shepherd had gone after, and when he found it he did not pinch his nostrils in disgust. No, he took it and placed it gently on his shoulders and returned home to throw a party because he had found this lost one. And Jesus says there is greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine needing no repentance.

Christians are constrained by the imperatives of this gospel, the good news of a God who had a bias for sinners contrary to the normal standards of the world. This God in Jesus Christ scandalized the prim and proper ones, the orthodox religious leaders, because he companied not with the respectable, not with the elite of society, but with the scum and the dregs, those occupying the fringes of society the prostitutes, the sinners, the ostracized ones. None of us could in my theology ever consign anyone to hell as being ultimately irredeemable. When Jesus was crucified it was in the company of two thieves. One of them became repentant and Jesus promised that he would be in paradise with him on that day. The thrust of that story is that not one of us could say with any certainty that so-and-so had gone to perdition, because none of us could ever know whether even the most notorious sinner and evildoer had not at the eleventh hour repented and been forgiven, because our God is preeminently the God of grace.
to study, we traveled through France and Italy and the Holy Land. We were going to Alice in the Eastern Cape, where I would teach at the Federal Theological Seminary. We went to East London to buy furniture for our new home. When lunchtime came we knew there would be no restaurant available for us so we bought fish and chips and sat in the car, which was parked in the street. A few weeks previously we had been able to eat in a posh restaurant in Paris and to enjoy the delicious French cuisine. Not in our motherland. The irony of it was exquisite.

We used to have picnics on the beach in East London. The portion of beach reserved for blacks was the least attractive, with quite a few rocks lying around. Not far away was a playground with a miniature train and our youngest, who was born in England, said, "Daddy, I want to go on the swings," and you said with a hollow voice and a dead weight in the pit of the tummy, "No, darling, you can't go." What do you say, how do you feel when your baby says, "But, Daddy, there are other children playing there"? How do you tell your little darling that she could not go because she was a child but she was not really a child, not that kind of child. And you died many times and were not able to look your child in the eyes because you felt so dehumanized, so humiliated, so diminished. Now I probably felt as my father must have felt when he was humiliated in the presence of his young son.

Apartheid, perversely described by Mr. P. W. Botha, sometime state President of South Africa, as "good neighborliness," had systematically stripped Coloreds, Indians, and especially blacks of their rights and denuded their humanity. It offered them a travesty for education, really education for perpetual serfdom, inadequate housing, it undermined black family life with the baneful migratory labor system with its single-sex hostels, inadequate health care where children suffered from easily preventable deficiency diseases. It was pervasive and inflicted unnecessary and untold suffering on all its victims. And you might say without exaggeration that every person who was not white was to some extent a victim of this horrendous policy. Black people should by rights have been filled with hatred and resentment and should have been baying for the blood of white people for all that apartheid had done to them. Our Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, had called us "a nation of victims" and that was an apt description up to a point. But we should also declare that ours was also wonderfully a nation of survivors, with some quite remarkable people who astounded the world with their capacity to forgive, their magnanimity and nobility of spirit. This was something we were to experience and to marvel at as we heard the stories of the victims, the survivors, over nearly two years of the life of the commission.

In a real sense we might add that even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. This is not an example for the morally earnest of ethical indifferentism. No, it flows from our fundamental concept of ubuntu. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, inexorably the perpetrator was being dehumanized as well. I used to say that the oppressor was dehumanized as much as, if not more than, the oppressed and many in the white community believed that it was just another provocative hatemongering slogan by that irresponsible ogre, Tutu, that most whites at the time most loved to hate.

Malusi Mpumlwana, now a priest and working for the U.S. Kellogg Foundation, in the late 1970s and early '80s was a young enthusiastic activist and close associate of Steve Biko in the crucial Black Consciousness Movement. He was involved with others in vital community development and health provision work with impoverished and often disillusioned and demoralized rural communities. As a result he and his wife were under strict surveillance by the ubiquitous Security Police and constantly harassed. They were frequently being held in detention without trial and at the time of my
story involving him he was serving a five-year banning order in his Eastern Cape township. He had somehow given the security police the slip and had come to Johannesburg and was with me in my office as general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He said that in his frequent stints in detention the Security Police had told him, "We are running this country," and then when routinely they tortured him he says he used to think, "By the way, these are God's children and yet they are behaving like animals. They need us to help them recover the humanity they have lost." In the end our struggle had to be successful with such remarkable people involved, even such young people as Malusi.

Thus in a way it was arbitrary to have set the kind of parameters as had been established in the law that had set up the TRC. We could quite legitimately have gone right back to the days of Jan van Riebeeck and said that all who were not white qualified automatically as those who had run the gauntlet of apartheid's viciousness and thereby were indeed victims by any definition. But this would have entailed the colossal task of dealing with literally millions of people. Clearly that would not have been feasible or manageable in any manner that would significantly have contributed to the vital process of healing a wounded people and to assisting in reconciliation. It would also have been hopelessly lopsided, with virtually all the victims coming from one side. That would have put paid from the start to any chance of this becoming a bridge-building process.

Sensibly, those who were negotiating the delicate business of the transition from repression to democracy opted for a limited and thus manageable exercise. While indeed being somewhat arbitrary in the time limits imposed, it was not entirely so. March 21, 1960, the date of the Sharpeville massacre, was indeed a watershed because significant black political organizations were banned thereafter and they were transformed into liberation movements which reluctantly jettisoned nonviolence and chose to engage in the armed struggle. May 10, 1994, was highly significant, for that was the day we celebrated in Pretoria when Nelson Mandela was inaugurated. If any event might be said to mark the advent of the new dispensation, the President's inauguration would have to be that event, saying more eloquently than anything else that this was an irrevocable break with the past of conflict, alienation, and domination of the many by some. The country would not have to be bogged down for too long in the necessarily divisive process of delving into its murky past because the commission would be required to deal with a manageable portion of our history, and in the relatively brief period of two years, later extended to nearly three. (The report presented in October 1998 was our main report, although the amnesty process continued into 1999, while the rest of the commission was put into 'suspension'.)

To establish the parameters of the commission's work, the act which established the TRC had to define the term "gross violations of human rights." For the reasons I have already alluded to, there was a measure of arbitrariness in this definition. I have already referred to the submission by five senior judges, declaring apartheid itself to be a gross violation of human rights, and we have seen that almost all black people could legitimately be designated victims of that system. The legal definition in the act of a "gross violation"—which was confined to killing (not restricted to murder), abduction, torture, and severe ill treatment—had at least two advantages. First, by limiting the mandate to these four categories, it gave the commission a manageable task that could hopefully be accomplished within the time span allocated. Thabo Mbeki, Nelson Mandela's successor as President of the ANC and later of South Africa, made an impassioned plea to the commission not to leave the new government with the legacy of unfinished business, especially regarding amnesty matters. When presenting the ANC's evidence to the commission in August 1996, he said:

It is also important that, within its lifetime, the Commission should complete the amnesty process, to ensure that the democratic state is not left with the responsibility of instituting criminal investigations and the possible prosecution of people
for actions that took place during the period covered in the
mandate of the TRC. . . . We believe that the TRC should
conclude its work as quickly as possible so that we do indeed let
bygones be bygones and allow the nation to forgive a past it
nevertheless dare not forget.

Thus the limitation imposed would assist in achieving the goal of
not leaving an unfinished task.

But this definition was important for another and crucial reason. It
meant that it would indeed be possible for the TRC to be even-handed
in the matter of designating people to be victims, because the political
affiliation of the perpetrator was almost a total irrelevance in
determining whether a certain offense or violation was a gross viola-
tion or not. If a Nationalist abducted someone or tortured or killed
someone, then that constituted a gross violation of the human rights of
the victim, and it would fall within the ambit of our act if it was as a
result of the conflict of the past. If an ANC member were guilty of the
same offenses, then those would constitute gross violations of human
rights as defined by the act. Thus there was legal equivalence between
all, whether upholders of apartheid or those opposed to apartheid who
were seeking its overthrow.

We were at pains to point out that legal equivalence was, how-ever,
not the same thing as moral equivalence. A woman shoots and kills a
man who wanted to rape her. The act constitutes homicide. A car
hijacker kills the owner of the vehicle he wanted to hijack. That death
is also homicide. The woman's act would be declared justifiable
homicide and she might even be commended for her bravery. The
hijacker would be guilty of culpable homicide and would be roundly
condemned for his dastardly act.

We have been criticized for what has been termed criminalizing the
liberation struggle and insulting those who engaged in it by placing
them on the same level as the upholders of apartheid. Nothing could be
further from the truth. We obeyed the provisions of the
act. A gross violation is a gross violation whoever commits it and for
whatever motive. Torture by a Nationalist is a gross violation. Torture
by a member of the liberation movement is equally a gross violation of
human rights.

We stated categorically that apartheid was a crime against hu-
manity. Equally vehemently we asserted that the liberation movements
were conducting a just war because they had a just cause. But the
Geneva Convention and the principles of the just war are quite clear
that justice of war requires justice in war. A just cause must be fought
by just means; otherwise it may be badly vitiated.

The ANC conducted inquiries into the abuses in its camps out-side
South Africa and has apologized for such abuses as have been revealed.
There would have been no reason to do this if the struggle sanctifies
every act committed. The end does not justify the means.

It was important to reach out to as many South Africans as possible.
Our aim in fact was to reach out to all South Africans to engage them in
the work of their commission and to ensure that none would lose out by
default, that all would get to know that they had the opportunity to tell
their stories and had the chance to qualify for the reparation that had to
be part of any serious and viable proposal for healing and reconciliation.
Thus we undertook an advertising campaign in the print and electronic
media and especially through the radio, which was more effective in
reaching illiterate persons. We put out pamphlets and posters with a
distinctive logo and with slogans such as "The Truth Hurts, But Silence
Kills." We were very greatly assisted by the faith communities, with
networks reaching into every conceivable nook and cranny of our
beautiful but sad land. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the NGOs
that cooperated with us. Our own resources, considerable as they were
compared to what had been allocated for similar commissions
elsewhere, would have been stretched to the limits without all this
additional help and what the international community so generously
contributed in personnel, in kind, and in cash. We have indeed been
singularly blessed. The
world has been intrigued because it has hoped that there might be something to learn from the South African experience for our world, plagued as it has been and still is with so many intrastate conflicts.

We employed specially trained statement takers who were deployed in the length and breadth of our country. They were aided and abetted by volunteers who helped to take statements from those who thought they might fall within the ambit of our act. As it happened, in the end we received well over 20,000 statements, which is more than any other similar commission has been able to muster. Some of the statements recorded more than one alleged violation and involved more than one potential victim.

Our very first hearing was to be held in East London in April 1996. One other characteristic of the TRC that contrasted with other commissions elsewhere was its very public nature. In Chile the Truth Commission had conducted its work behind closed doors. Not so the TRC. Originally it had been suggested that the Amnesty Committee would do its work in camera, but the human rights NGOs agitated very strongly against this and their view prevailed, to give the TRC a feature that has been much admired by people of other countries. My colleagues had worked like beavers to get the show on the road so quickly. The logistics involved with the holding of a hearing were formidable. The statements had to be obtained and there was no guarantee that people would actually want to come forward. They might have been inhibited by intimidation not to blow the whistle on those who had abused them; they might refuse to be regarded as victims since they believed themselves to be combatants in a struggle; they might be disillusioned, not believing any longer that anything worthwhile could be expected from those who were forever making promises and being so painfully slow on delivery.

We need not have worried. As I have already indicated, we ended up obtaining over 20,000 statements. People quite extraordinarily did want to tell their stories. They had been silenced for so long, sidelined for decades, made invisible and anonymous by a vicious system of injustice and oppression. Many had been bottled up for too long, and when the chance came for them to tell their stories the floodgates were opened. We were distressed that not too many white people came forward. Those who did were quite remarkable persons, as we shall hear from one or two samples that I will describe.

We were anxious on other scores. The act was emphatic that the entire process had to be victim-friendly. This was one way in which the commission might fulfill that part of its mandate to help rehabilitate the civic and human dignity of those who came offering their hearts to the gaze of the world, exposing their most intimate anguish and pain. We were greatly privileged to be given that glimpse into the secret places of the souls of so many of our compatriots. I never ceased to marvel, after these wonderful people had told their stories, that they looked so ordinary, so normal. They laughed, they con-versed, they went about their daily lives looking to all the world to be normal, whole persons with not a single concern in the world. And then you heard their stories and wondered how they had survived for so long when they had been carrying such a heavy burden of grief and anguish, so quietly, unobtrusively, with dignity and simplicity. How much we owe to them can never be computed. Their resilience in the face of daunting challenges and harassment that would have knocked the stuffing out of lesser mortals was in the end quite breathtaking. These were men and women we had arrogantly dismissed as "the ordinary people." In my theology there are no ordinary people. Each one of us, because we are God's representative, God's viceroy, God's stand-in, and a God-carrier—each one of us is a very special person, a VSP far more important and far more universal than your normal VIP.

We owed to these people a great deal more than we will ever know or be able to acknowledge. We had to ensure that they were really willing to testify because they would in a sense become public property. There was no way we could predict how the media and the public would react and how they would treat those who were
foolhardy enough to expose their grief in public. We provided counsel-
ing to those who came to our offices before what would be, even at the best of times, a grueling experience.

We provided them with people whom we called briefers, who accompanied the witnesses, sitting next to them as they testified, providing them with the comfort of their presence, passing a glass of water and the ubiquitous TRC tissues to them when they broke down, as so many did and so frequently. Some cynics disparagingly spoke of the Kleenex Commission—because of the paper tissues we had available. We were scrupulous about the seating arrangements. Pride of place was to be reserved for the witnesses. We had to avoid any impression that they were in the dock, so they sat on the same level as the TRC panel hearing their testimony.

It was important that the witnesses should feel comfortable and at ease, hence the insistence that they were free to tell their story in the language of their choice. This meant that we had to provide simultaneous translation, and that is why the public image of the TRC included those who sat wearing headphones. That added to the complications of arranging for a hearing. The witnesses were also free to be accompanied by a relative who might sit with them as they testified. Arranging the transport, accommodation, and meals for all those who might attend a TRC hearing could be something of a logistical nightmare. My colleagues and TRC staff did a remarkable job in bringing this all off without too many hiccoughs, not just in the urban areas where venues and facilities were more easily avail-able out also in the small towns and rural areas where they were often conspicuous by their absence.

The hearings were held in very different types of venues—town halls, civic centers, and especially church halls. The faith communi-
ties are to be very warmly commended for all they have done to facilitate this aspect of our work.

The TRC was not universally welcomed and popular. There were those who were passionately opposed, particularly those who felt the commission posed a threat to them, with the possibility of exposing their nefarious past, and those who had convinced them-selves that it was really a smart ploy for engaging in a witch hunt against the Afrikaners. We feared that they might very well want to sabotage the proceedings of the commission, hence security was an important issue. As it happened, our very first hearing was interrupted by a bomb scare. Proceedings had to be suspended while police dogs sniffed out the whole venue. Mercifully it turned out to be a hoax but we could not take chances, with the lives of so many at stake and with so much depending on a successful completion of our task. Those who were opposed to the process of reconciliation would have gloated at any mishap that befell the commission.

We wanted to ensure that people felt that they had had ample time to tell their story and that they had been duly acknowledged. As a result, the committee members who ran hearings were able to choose only a representative cross-section of witnesses to hear in any particular area. On average only one in ten of those who made statements was able to testify in a public hearing. Many of those who did not felt a little let down and they had to be reassured that the story described in their statement would be taken as seriously as those of the witnesses who testified in public.

We might perhaps take it as a compliment that people came to regard the public hearing so highly. In large measure it was because the media played such a splendid role—radio, TV, the newspapers gave the TRC and its victim hearings (as they did the amnesty hearings) saturation coverage. When the SABC live radio broadcasts of the proceedings in the eleven official languages stopped for lack of funds, there was an outcry even from whites who hardly attended the hearings but who obviously were following them over the radio. We were given good advice by TV consultants from overseas on how to use TV cameras in the public hearings because most courts in many parts of the world do not permit live TV coverage of their proceedings. We were able to develop a policy for such coverage
whereby the cameras were stationary and not obtrusive. Only the stills photographers complained because the requirement that they remain in one spot was too inhibiting and frustrating.

The atmosphere at our first hearing was solemn, though there were lighthearted moments later. We were going through an important ritual, too, the healing of our nation, and we could not be frivolous. Well, you could not be frivolous when you heard what had been happening to people. Our first hearing was going to be a crucial one; so much depended on our getting it right the first time, as this would impact on subsequent hearings positively or negatively as the case might be.

We were apprehensive. We held a deeply moving interfaith service in Mdantsane, a ghetto township near East London, the town where our first hearing was to be held. Asked by journalists how I felt on the eve of our first hearing, I said, "I certainly have very considerable butterflies in the pit of the tummy. But I also have a tingling sensation just being in this service, seeing so many people and the wonderful generosity of the people; that they do want this thing to succeed and that the stories must be told and that this process must end."

We prayed for God's blessings on our land, on the victims, the perpetrators, and the TRC. I always prayed in English, Xhosa, Sotho, and Afrikaans to underscore that the commission belonged to all. I welcomed all in these same languages for the same reason—to point up our diversity as a nation.

The City Hall was packed to the rafters—mainly with black people. The witnesses sat at a table facing the TRC panel and with their backs to the audience (a practice which we changed later). There were cubicles for the translators away on one side of the platform, and the hall was aglow with resplendent flowers and pot plants. Our police did a splendid job looking after security at the hearing, searching everybody at the security checkpoints.

As we filed in the audience rose to its feet and a deep hush fell over us all. I then went to shake the hands of those who were to testify at that four-day hearing, together with their relatives who had accompanied them. In silence I then lit a candle in memory of all who had died as a result of the conflict of the past. One of my colleagues read out a roll of honor commemorating all those who had fallen. And then we sang "Lizalis' idinga lakho (Let your will be done)" as we had sung it that day in Bishopscourt when Nelson Mandela and his ANC comrades met there on the day of his release from twenty-seven years in prison, and as it would be sung on countless other occasions of significance.

And then I prayed:

"0 God of justice, mercy and peace. We long to put behind us all the pain and division of apartheid together with all the violence which ravaged our communities in its name. And so we ask You to bless this Truth and Reconciliation Commission with Your wisdom and guidance as it commences its important work of redressing the many wrongs done both here and throughout our land.

"We pray that all those people who have been injured in either body or spirit may receive healing through the work of this commission and that it may be seen to be a body which seeks to redress the wounds inflicted in so harsh a manner on so many of our people, particularly here in the Eastern Cape. We pray, too, for those who may be found to have committed these crimes against their fellow human beings, that they may come to repentance and confess their guilt to almighty God and that they too might become the recipients of Your divine mercy and forgiveness. We ask that the Holy Spirit may pour out its gifts of justice, mercy, and compassion upon the commissioners and their colleagues in every sphere, that the truth may be recognized and brought to light during the hearings; and that the end may bring about that reconciliation and love for our neighbor which our Lord himself commanded. We ask this in the holy name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen."
Thereafter I welcomed all present:

"We welcome all those who will be telling their stories, as well as their relatives and friends. We will want to hear their stories. That is the basic reason for these hearings: for the Human Rights Violations Committee to help the commission determine whether particular persons have suffered gross violations of their human rights and for those persons then to be declared victims who will thereafter be referred to the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee of our commission, which then must make appropriate recommendations to the President of our country for the nature and size of reparations to be given. Thank you, all of you here in South Africa and round the world who have prayed and are praying for the commission and its work.

We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past; to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to haunt us. And that we will thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatized and wounded people—for all of us in South Africa are wounded people—and in this manner to promote national unity and reconciliation. We want to indicate that those who testify before this commission will enjoy the same privilege as in a court of law for the testimony that they give, provided what they say is the truth as they understand it, and provided what they have done is done in good faith."

I then declared the first hearing of the TRC open, a momentous occasion.

Why had we chosen to hold our first hearing in the Eastern Cape? It was no arbitrary decision, just as it had been a deliberate decision that the first public act of the commission—apart from being set on the road for our task in an interfaith service at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town attended by the President, members of the government and of Parliament, judges of the Constitutional and High Courts, and representatives of the major organs of civil society—would be victim hearings to underline the fact that those who for so long had been consigned to the edges of society as voiceless and anonymous would be emerging from the shadows and would occupy for a while, during the lifetime of the commission, center stage. It was part of how we hoped to help in the process of the rehabilitation of their civic and human dignity.

We ensured that the victims represented the broadest possible political spectrum in line with the demand that the TRC should be evenhanded as required by the law and these cases had to cover as much of the thirty-four-year mandate period as possible. They also had to be representative of the geopolitical area as well as demographically. We tried to be sensitive about women and young people so that the process could be as broadly representative as possible and could be seen to be so.

So we chose to hold our first hearing in the Eastern Cape deliberately because of the very special place the Eastern Cape occupies in South African history. This is where whites and the indigenous people first wagered full-scale wars as adversaries competing for the same geographical space. The Eastern Cape is the birthplace of black resistance to the depredations of white expansionism. This is also where the first educational institutions of higher learning for blacks were established. Thus it was the birthplace also of black learning. And this is where many of the black political leadership was born—Nelson Mandela, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Goven and Thabo Mbeki, Steve Biko, et al. It was the birthplace of black resistance and political awareness. And precisely for this reason it seemed to have attracted some of the most notorious servants to implement apartheid's viciousness. The authorities were not averse to dumping in the Eastern Cape some of its less restrained elements of darkness and repression.