

# DIVINE RECONCILIATION AND HUMAN RESTITUTION IN A BROKEN WORLD: REVISITING ANSELM'S SATISFACTION THEORY

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence has forced us to concentrate on the unhealed realities caused by violence. In doing so, the decade has formulated the theological challenge that these realities need to be brought into dialogue with our God talk and our proclamation of the Gospel. No doubt, this can be understood as a key test for the theological reflection of the religion in whose centre stand the symbols of cross and resurrection. How may we speak of Christian hope in a plausible way as we seek to be attentive to experiences of violence?

There are two sets of questions concerning this issue which have been newly brought to our theme. First and foremost, the question is this: How should we understand the event of Jesus' coming as bringing about once-and-for-all salvation and forgiveness of sins for all humankind? Jürgen Moltmann has encouraged us in the context of a theology after Auschwitz to talk about the gift of reconciliation in light of the unredeemed state of the world.<sup>1</sup> But what is meant by the gift of reconciliation?<sup>2</sup> What exactly is this ›gift‹? And how is the connection of gift and task to be understood? Or in other words, how is the Christian work of reconciliation connected to the divine gift of reconciliation? Is it that God's gift of reconciliation becomes a gift only when people accept it as their task? How can we ensure that our talk of God's gift neither is too abstract nor becomes a deification of human action?

These questions are at the heart of the matter when churches of the

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ. Christology in Messianic Dimension* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1993), 28–37.

<sup>2</sup> See Fernando Enns on the gift of reconciliation in this volume.

South accuse those of the North that their theology is moving as if in an abstract, academic glass-bead game. These questions arise as well when the churches of the North are skeptical about the theology of the churches of the South as to whether there might be too little distinction between divine and human activity. Proponents of both positions will hopefully be able to understand and communicate with each other in a stronger eschatological re-visioning of the once-and-for-all nature of the Christ story, in which redemption is understood more as a process than as an isolated event, a process which has its beginnings in creation.<sup>3</sup> In this vein, salvation does not simply refer to forgiveness, but is rather understood to enable fullness of life, the gift of life itself. In order to clarify this position further, the theological reception of sociological and philosophical theories of the gift will prove helpful.<sup>4</sup>

The second problem concerns the connection of reconciliation and justice. If theology confines its discussion to the doctrine of justification by grace alone, is not the relationship between reconciliation and justice too quickly elided? In a non-theological context, we know this problem under the name of amnesty. How can we avoid a concept of reconciliation which ignores the dignity of the victims of violence? Is that not what justice requires? During recent years, those doing theology have looked for concepts which offered a voice for victims, and this has led to a re-visioning of the traditional Christian image of the Last Judgment.<sup>5</sup> The theological work of the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence has significantly inspired us to hermeneutically reconstruct this strong image through the model of restorative justice. This model is opposed to the dominant concept of retributive justice; God's justice does not aim at a devastating judgment of the perpetrators, but rather at enabling the common future of victims and perpetrators in a process of restoration. However, this does not exclude but rather includes the process of discovering truth. This is what is illustrated by the re-visioned image of the Last Judgment, which holds the potential to illuminate the process of separation of good and evil.

Both problems necessitate a dynamic concept of reconciliation in which the relationship between the apparent difficulties of interpersonal reconcili-

<sup>3</sup> Fernando Enns suggests a similar approach with the image of *shalom* in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> For the theological adoption of the gift-metaphoric see Veronika Hoffmann, ed., *Die Gabe. Ein »Urwort« der Theologie?* (Frankfurt: Lembeck Verlag, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> See Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, ed. *»Und das Leben der zukünftigen Welt«: Von Auferstehung und Jüngstem Gericht* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007).

ation (including a concept of righteousness that takes into account the different perspectives of victims and perpetrators) and God's proclamation of salvation is clarified. In search of such a dynamic theology of reconciliation, one would also have to explore whether the theological tradition might have as yet undiscovered treasures in store. It is this part of the task which I would like to tackle in this contribution by taking a fresh look at a very traditional aspect of Christian soteriology which has been the focus of much criticism of late: the satisfaction theory by Anselm of Canterbury.<sup>6</sup> This might be surprising at first, because it is exactly Anselm's doctrine of the inevitable restoration of God's honor, having been damaged by sin, which would show little regard for God's mercy while suggesting an explicit connection between the mercy and the righteousness of God, generally taken as a plea for a rather rigid and retributive sense of God's righteousness. This impression appears to be reinforced by the fact that the death of Jesus as *God-man (Deus-homo)* should suffice for the demand for God's righteousness. And finally, Anselm's satisfaction theory has stood for a soteriology that – in its concentration on the relationship of God and humanity – offers a dual dramaturgy: God appears as the only victim of sin; other human victims of (sinful) violence fade away out of sight. In this sense, the doctrine became *the* determinative soteriological model in the Western Church. Even the Reformers did not reject it – although we ought to say that Martin Luther used it sparsely; he resorted to other models instead.<sup>7</sup> In Reformed theology as well as in Protestant Orthodoxy, it played a large role. Today Anselm's satisfaction theory is regarded as an expression of New Testament atonement theory in evangelical circles in Europe and even more so in the US. Admittedly, this does not help matters as we attempt to gain a new perspective on it.

This endeavor occurs by no means in isolation from the rest of theological research. Surprisingly, Anselm's concept has once more become subject

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<sup>6</sup> This contribution is partly a revision of my earlier publication, »Sündig vor Gott allein? Überlegungen zur Re-Interpretation der Satisfaktionstheorie Anselms von Canterbury in schöpfungsethischer Perspektive.«, in *Die Aktualität der Sünde. Ein umstrittenes Thema der Theologie in interkonfessioneller Perspektive*, ed. Rochus Leonhardt (Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 86 – Texte des Interkonfessionellen Theologischen Arbeitskreises ITA) (Frankfurt: Lembeck Verlag, 2010), 121–143.

<sup>7</sup> For Protestant adoption see Georg Plasger, *Die Not-Wendigkeit der Gerechtigkeit. Eine Interpretation zu »Cur Deus homo« von Anselm von Canterbury* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge, vol. 38) (Münster: Aschendorff, 1993), 17–33.

of serious academic consideration, in spite of concurrent critiques, particularly in British and European-American theology as well as in German theology and philosophy.<sup>8</sup> The main trend seems to be that Anselm is being protected against his reception, both against his critics as well as his evangelical defenders. It is recognized that his concept entails more references to Biblical testimony than has been acknowledged hitherto.<sup>9</sup> Especially his concept of *ordo* is now being perceived as a dimension of a theology of creation. Drawing on this insight, the traditional reception has been changed dramatically. Anselm is now considered as already operating with ideas comparable to the concept of *shalom* as an element of a theology of reconciliation. So, recent perceptions see Anselm not concentrating only on God and humanity in cold abstraction, but in the midst of strife in the first Investiture Controversy. A world that threatened to fall apart as a result of the sin of humankind comes into focus, a world desperately in need of being rescued through God's concern for salvation. As a consequence, the connection between the interpersonal reconciliation and the divine-human relationship is particularly important to him, which befits the first of the problems outlined above.

But the second problem, an interest in a concept of restorative justice, can also be brought to light in Anselm's work. I would like to engage the conversation with reference to the contested theory of restitution, which is included in the model of satisfaction. Traditionally, the restitution theory proceeds from the perception that sinful human acts have profoundly dam-

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<sup>8</sup> Out of the many new publications see Hansjürgen Verweyen, *Anselm von Canterbury, 1033–1109. Denker, Beter, Erzbischof* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2009); Jan-Olav Henriksen, *Desire, Gift, and Recognition: Christology and Postmodern Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 269–294; Giles E. M. Gasper and Helmut Kohlenberger, eds., *Anselm and Abaelard. Investigations and Juxtapositions* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2006); Brian Davies and Brian Leftow, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); David E. Luscombe and Gillian R. Evans, eds., *Anselm. Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop 25 September 1093* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); J. Denny Weaver, »The Defenders of Anselm.«, in *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 180–188.

<sup>9</sup> See Martin Bieler, *Befreiung der Freiheit. Zur Theologie der stellvertretenden Sühne* (Freiburg: Herder 1996); Gerhard Gäde, *Eine andere Barmherzigkeit. Zum Verständnis der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury* (Würzburg: Echter, 1989); Helmut Steindl, *Genugtuung. Biblisches Versöhnungsdenken – eine Quelle für Anselms Satisfaktionstheorie?* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1998); Georg Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*.

aged God's honor in such a way that an effective restoration of the human-divine relationship appears to be impossible. Although humans are not able to pay God back, God seeks restitution for God's self as the basis of true reconciliation. The concept of restitution in reconciliation processes has been a contested issue not only with regard to Anselm's theory but also in contemporary debates. A variety of experiences of interpersonal reconciliation work as well as debates on reparation payments after historical conflicts foreground the issue of restitution. Can there be reconciliation without that wish of restitution at least being articulated? Is it so beyond our imagination that Anselm himself had possibly thought of interpersonal conflicts – drawing on his experiences from pastoral care and brotherly counsel in monastic life? In the following passages I wish to examine whether the essential aspect of Anselm's *satisfactio* (restitution) could be conceived in the meaning of restorative justice. Could it be considered as a necessary practice of reconciliation that enables a mutual future for both victims and perpetrators of violence?<sup>10</sup>

This question stands in the centre of this article. I proceed with awareness of the numerous critical objections Anselm's doctrine has received from the time he was living until today. These objections entail questions about whether the inner logic of this doctrine is comprehensible, whether it is based on too rigid an idea of God's sovereignty that conceals the love of God and dwarfs its possibilities, and whether Anselm actually lacks the awareness of the fact that the deed of restitution as explicated by him consists in the horrific death of a human being.<sup>11</sup>

## SATISFACTION FOR THE SAKE OF THE VICTIMS: A RE-INTERPRETATION

Catholic theologian Piet Schoonenberg writes about the fundamental intention of Anselm's doctrine:

The intention, however, is expressed in a confusing way particularly through the usage of a juridical framework. It becomes however clearer as one reflects on the

<sup>10</sup> Essential stimuli for this interpretation I found in Dorothea Sattler, »Erlösen durch Strafe? Zur Verwendung des Strafbegriffs im Kontext der christlichen Lehre von Heil und Erlösung,« in *Aufgebrochen. Theologische Beiträge* (Mainz: Grünewald, 2001), 11–35.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 179–224 and Jan-Olav Henriksen, *Desire*, 273–278.

question whom sin attacks. Not only God. The violation, the destructive power of sin above all attacks the creatures. It assaults God in so far as they are His creatures and His children.<sup>12</sup>

Through this explanation, a decisive change of perspective occurs. The interpersonal level comes into view and with it the »destructive power of sin« that can be felt *here*, that which »above all attacks the creatures.« Can this really be found in Anselm's work? Schoonenberg refers with his remark to Anselm's concept of *ordo* as it is presented in *Cur Deus Homo* I,15. Both in the violation of God's will and in the violation of his honor, the destruction of the world order is at stake.<sup>13</sup> In the words of Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams,

Reflecting our purpose he suggests that rectitude of will consists in loving God for his own sake; reflecting on our place he suggests that rectitude of will consists in maintaining, so far as it lies within our power, the fitting order that God has established in the universe as a whole.<sup>14</sup>

Anselm regards the order as a guarantee for the beauty of creation as well, which for Visser and Williams is an argument for the interpretation that the command theory is not there merely for its own sake.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, it means this: If God's will and God's glory stand for the order of the world, which makes life possible, the history of human sin does not concern any individual, isolated violation, and reconciliation with God. In Anselm's words,

<sup>12</sup> Piet Schoonenberg, »Tod des Menschen und Tod Christi.«, in *Auf Gott hin denken. Deutschsprachige Schriften zur Theologie*, ed. Wilhelm Zauner (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 225–243, 223. (italics: U. L.-W.).

<sup>13</sup> Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*, 91; see also Gisbert Greshake, »Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neuinterpretation der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury,« *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973): 323–345, here 328; Raymund Schwager, *Der wunderbare Tausch. Zur Geschichte und Deutung der Erlösungslehre* (Munich: Kösel, 1986), 168; Hödl, *Anselm*, 775.

<sup>14</sup> Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 196.

<sup>15</sup> See also Verweyen, *Anselm von Canterbury*, 118. The philosophical »command-theory« states that, even in a post-Christian society, moral terms such as »should« and »ought« – which could be understood as remains of talking of God as the divine lawgiver – have a broader meaning than simply a legalistic derivation; see [www.iep.utm.edu/divine-c/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/divine-c/) (accessed on May 5, 2011).

When it [the creature] wills what it ought to will, it honors God – not because it bestows something on him, but because it willingly submits itself to God's will and direction, and keeps its own place in the universe of things, and maintains the beauty of that same universe, as far as in it lies. But when it does not will what it ought, it dishonors God, as far as it is concerned, since it does not readily submit itself to his direction, but disturbs the order and beauty of the universe, as far as lies in it ... (I,15; 124).<sup>16</sup>

In keeping with God's will, humankind respects nothing less than the preciousness of creation. This insight has significant consequences that constitute the cornerstone of the new Anselm research. It changes the impression of God from narcissistic to caring. It converts the interpretation of the process of reconciliation from one modeled as a commercial transaction into one of relationship.

It is true that the breadth of meaning of these words [*debere* and *debitum*, U. L.-W.] allows Anselm to switch back and forth between the language of commercial transactions and the language of justice and obligation, but we should not be tempted to think that Anselm regards justice as a kind of commercial exchange in which God acts as a rather obsessive auditor who insists that the books be balanced down to the last farthing. Rather ... it is better to say that for Anselm, debt is a species of obligation and can therefore serve as an illuminating analogy for our relationship to God.<sup>17</sup>

In the newly aroused attention to this issue, old questions are brought up again, namely whether in the case of Anselm – according to the Catholic theologian Gisbert Greshake – one should rather assume a conscious recourse to Germanic legal systems of thought. In this line of thought, the feudal system represents, in its emphasis on the prestige of the monarch, the maintenance of the societal »order of freedom, law and peace.«<sup>18</sup> What is at stake is not merely an insult against God but rather the order of

<sup>16</sup> The English translation of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is taken from »Why God Became Man.«, in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockam*, ed. and trans. Eugene R. Fairweather (London: SCM Press, 1956), 100–183. Page numbers in brackets after the quotations refer to this edition.

<sup>17</sup> Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 224–225. See also Hendriksen, *Desire*, 270 about Anselm's relational understanding of sin.

<sup>18</sup> Gisbert Greshake, »Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neuinterpretation der Erlösungslehre von Anselm von Canterbury,« in *Gottes Heil – Glück des Menschen. Theologische Perspektiven* (Freiburg: Herder, 1983), 89.

life represented by God. In this context, it is noteworthy that not only in Germanic law but in Roman law, too, this aspect can be found.<sup>19</sup> I suggest, however, that for Anselm as spiritual advisor of a monastery, an orientation on Biblical terminology would have been more probable than the traditional reception assumes. By revisiting the Biblical strands in Anselm's work, reflections on the Biblical terminus of the *Glory of God* (in Hebrew: *kavot*, in Greek: *doxa*) become pivotal.<sup>20</sup> All these concepts, *glory/kavot/doxa*, have a relational connotation. The bearer comes to stand in a representative function for the whole. The recent theological research on the Biblical concept of the Glory of God clearly shows how God's connectedness with his counterpart should be assumed. One could even suggest a relationship that entails a particular kind of interaction similar to the concepts of call and response or – recently receiving some attention in theology – giving and actively receiving. In the New Testament, a response character can be found in the understanding of the glorification of God.<sup>21</sup> Magdalene Frettlöh translates the corresponding Hebrew concept *kavod* as »giving God weight«, and »considering God seriously.«<sup>22</sup> In surveys of German theological works, she illustrates how the concept of the Glory of God reaches beyond aspects of ruling. Instead, it gives account of God's impressive, irresistible, but also courting and enticing, effect on the creatures, which seeks for an echo, an answer that is gracious and actively involved in promoting life.<sup>23</sup> Particularly monastic life might be considered to be inspired by this theology, and one would assume that this could have been Anselm's background when he talked of God's *honor*. Georg Plasger concurs in this vein: »But his *honor* radiates onto

<sup>19</sup> See Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*, 85–98.

<sup>20</sup> See Rainer Kampling, ed., *Herrlichkeit. Zur Deutung einer theologischen Kategorie* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008); Wolf Krötke, *Gottes Klarheiten. Eine Neuinterpretation der Lehre von Gottes »Eigenschaften«* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); Magdalene L. Frettlöh, *Gott Gewicht geben. Bausteine einer geschlechtergerechten Gotteslehre* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006), 57–150; Victor H. Matthews, ed., *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible*, Semeia 68, 1996; David Arthur DeSilva, *The Hope of Glory: Honour Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1999); Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, *Die Herrlichkeit des Verherrlichten. Das Verständnis der doxa im Johannes-Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Marlis Gielen, »Von Herrlichkeit zu Herrlichkeit. Doxa bei Paulus zwischen den Polen protologischer und eschatologischer Gottebenbildlichkeit am Beispiel der Korintherkorrespondenz.«, in *Herrlichkeit*, ed. Kampling, 79–122.

<sup>22</sup> Frettlöh, *Gott Gewicht geben*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Frettlöh, *Gott Gewicht geben*, 57–121.

creation and asks for humankind's answer, for the recognition of God as ruler.<sup>24</sup> That in turn has consequences for the understanding of sin against God; it becomes transparent for those who, as creatures, have been *concretely damaged and violated*.<sup>25</sup> The violation of God through sin can, as it were, be understood in »substitutional« terms. I shall be returning to this aspect towards the end.

When one looks into Anselm's text, *Cur Deus Homo*, four observations stand out that often go unnoticed in the usual paraphrase of the satisfaction theory:

1. Repeatedly, Anselm states that it is »impossible for God to lose his honor« (I, 14, 123): »As far as God himself is concerned, nothing can be added to his honor or subtracted from it. For to himself, he himself is honor incorruptible and absolutely unchangeable.« (I, 15; 123) Ultimately, Anselm says that the violation of God's honor caused by humankind was »non actual«, meaning that it could not affect God in a way that would threaten God's »substance«. We may see here something like an apathy axiom.<sup>26</sup> However, the fact that Anselm so deliberately maintains that the violation of God's honor is »non actual«, is striking. Anselm is understood by many of his critics as insisting God is, in this case, an unbearable stickler for God's principles. But perhaps something else is at stake. Does Anselm point to the »non actual« violation of God in contrast to the »actual« destruction on the level of creation? Apparently, there is destruction of creation happening which calls for divine punishment for the sake of God's righteousness. Accordingly, Anselm's proposal reads like this: God won't lose God's honor because God would let it automatically be »regenerated« if it were violated. As a result, punishment is in turn defined to be related to the violation of creation. It consists of human beings not living up to their destiny as creatures, which is eternal sanctity (*beatitudo*) (I, 14).<sup>27</sup> This has to be prevented. Anselm's argumentation in the terminology of compensation-payments leads to the idea that it has to be prevented or else humanity forfeits its life:

In this matter we should observe that, just as man in sinning seizes what belongs to God, so God in punishing takes away what belongs to man. For not only what

<sup>24</sup> Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*, 98.

<sup>25</sup> See Henriksen, *Desire*, 270: »Anselm implicitly points to how the compensation implied includes recognition of the violated ...«

<sup>26</sup> See Schwager, *Tausch*, 169.

<sup>27</sup> See for the following Gäde, *Barmherzigkeit*, 94.

a man already possesses is said to belong to him, but also what he has it in his power to possess. Thus, since man was so made that he could obtain blessedness if he did not sin, when he is deprived of blessedness and every good on account of sin, he pays from his own property, all unwillingly, what he stole. (I, 14, 123)

What is at stake is not a »retrieval« of God's honor, but instead the *rescue of humankind* facing the loss of its future in God's presence (= eternal holiness, *beatitudo*).

2. Notwithstanding, all this is somehow »hypothetical« as far as Anselm is concerned.<sup>28</sup> He himself says that God's decision for the sanctity of humankind is irrefutable. (I, 10; II, 1; II, 4). It is therefore an established fact that only Christ brings the rescuing alternative, which can be thought of as a voluntary deed of *satisfactio*. This line of argument that Christ's satisfaction is, indeed, an affirmation of the *Gospel*, has so far not been taken into account sufficiently in the attempts to interpret Anselm. In light of this retrospective knowledge of God's salvation-pledge and in the awareness of the death of Jesus, Anselm reconstructs the history of salvation hypothetically by seeking to offer a plausible theory.<sup>29</sup>

3. Another idea of Anselm is surprising. He maintains that, if God tried to forgive humans without a deed of *satisfactio*, that they would be thereby damaged since we would then stand as beggars (*indigens*) before God (I, 24; I, 11). Whether one should follow Anselm's reasoning here is a regular issue of ecumenical debate. However, it is clear that *satisfactio occurs to the advantage not of God, but of the sinner*.<sup>30</sup>

4. The concept of satisfaction, *satisfactio*, which in the paraphrase usually gets a formalistic and narrow accent, seems, as far as Anselm is concerned,

<sup>28</sup> See for this interpretation also Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation. A Theological Analysis of Ways of Dealing with Guilt During the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and (East) Germany*, translated by Randi H. Lundell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2009), 224, in German: *Die politische Dimension der Versöhnung. Eine theologische Studie zum Umgang mit Schuld nach den Systemumbrüchen in Südafrika und Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004), 454, Anm. 81; and Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*, 122. He refers to the point that the loss of *beatitudo* as consequence of sin in fact means mortality and death. So the punishment for sin would be death, which means it is a question of death or everlasting life, and in the end the liberation of humankind that is at stake.

<sup>29</sup> See also Plasger, *Not-Wendigkeit*, 57–78.

<sup>30</sup> I contend Anselm's emphasis on the dignity of the sinner in relation to God could fairly be compared with the »Treatise on Christian Liberty.«

to be a direct result and reflection of real-life situations of reconciliation. Though juridically imposed, it serves the purpose of »setting right« whatever has been done wrong. As examples he refers to something like compensation payments, a »restitution« in case of humiliation or in case of theft, a settlement beyond merely returning the stolen item:

For it is not enough for someone who has injured another's health to restore his health without making some recompense for the pain and injury suffered, and, similarly, it is not enough for someone who violates another's honor to restore the honor, unless he makes some kind of restitution that will please him who was dishonored ... (I, 11; 119)

The issue at stake is the infringement of somebody else's personal sphere. »[I]n view of the insult committed, he must give back more than he took away.« (I, 11; 119) The »kind of restitution« should »please ... the dishonored.« (I, 11; 119) It always must be *something more* than the simple reimbursement of the damage, a materially thinkable restoration of the former status, a restitution *ad integrum*. Why such petty stinginess? Obviously, there is a greater need for reimbursement because what is at stake is a relationship – saved by honor – destroyed through culpable infringement. If one understands this concept more in sync with the Biblical terminology of the *Glory of God*, as outlined above, the relational aspect becomes much clearer. Apparently, the additional value of the *satisfactio* demanded is grounded in the recognition of the right of the damaged – expressed within the divine-human dramaturgy in the picture of the violation of God's Glory.<sup>31</sup> Thereby the question arises if there is not more behind the juridical terminology than abstract equation thinking, and, correspondingly, if the asymmetry of *satisfactio* does not point to something other than a rigidly hierarchical image of God.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Schoonenberg contends that, according to Anselm, the extent of the restitution at stake is not held to be in relation to the extent of God's Glory, but to the extent of sin; of course, the »universal« size of sin as sin of universal humankind. Christ's death outshines »number and greatness of all sins« (II, 14; 163). Also, this equivalence-calculation is, of course, thinkable only under the condition that the problem is actually already solved by God.

<sup>32</sup> Quite often the definition of *satisfaction* as retaliation is not sufficiently differentiated in the reception. It is clearly a juridical term primarily for punishment or compensation with the intention of »restorative justice« in view of the future of the community concerned. This inaccuracy can already be observed in connection with the interpretation of the respective biblical references, see Steindl, *Genugtuung*.

One must therefore say that it is a reduction of Anselm's concept to only look at the »insult« leveled against God, and not at the same time to take into account the looming danger for the world as a whole, as well as focusing solely on the gravity of the insult by comparing its size to the greatness of God. To the contrary, Anselm sees a direct relevance of the non-acknowledgement of the will of God, the Creator, for the well-being of creation – even if he may postulate this rather tentatively and, as a child of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, sees the well-being in creation mainly as the conservation of the hierarchical order on which it is based. »There would arise a certain ugliness, derived from the violation of the beauty of the order« and »God would seem to fail in his direction of the world.« (I, 15; 124) In the historic context of the Investiture Controversy and the struggle for the rights of the church against the king, this admittedly has a very concrete context. Foremost, it becomes clear that the deed of satisfaction has to occur for the sake of the sinner. It serves nothing but the restoration of humanity's dignity before God: One should be able to pursue the destination of his or her life in accordance with the order of creation as dignified partner of God, with one's head held high.

One should realize what that means: Anselm does not say that the disturbance of the glory of God brought about by sin would merely have *consequences* on the interpersonal or the creational realm. The will of God stands here for all that which God »has in mind« with his creation in general and for humanity and human nature in particular: the *beatitudo*. Insolence for God's will is being shown whenever the goodness of creation is disregarded.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF RESTITUTION/RESTORATION

Considering God as advocate for creation, the damaging of God's honor occurs as a response to the damaging of creation. In this train of thought it is fruitful to remember Anselm's dialectic of »actual« and »non-actual« violation of the Glory of God. One could develop this dialectic further into an understanding of God's complex relational nature expressed in the terms of *intercession*, *substitution*, and *representation*. One may say that the damaged and threatened creation finds in its creator not only its mediating advocate, but also a prosecutor against its enemies as well as a just judge, who acts in the interest of righteousness. In this role, one can see God also demanding »restitution« from humanity in the sense of Anselm – with the degree of strictness necessary for the healing of wounds incurred by creation through the

recurring demolition of what is life-giving. Anselm articulates this, arguing that, without *satisfactio*, something remains in disorder in God's sovereignty (I, 12; 120). Thereby, he is referring to the threateningly dangerous constellation that, through disregard of God, the life-giving structure of creation is put in disorder and, as a result, the world could be sailing towards destruction.

Following these considerations, I wonder whether this would not ultimately put Anselm's demand for restitution, *satisfactio*, into a new, as yet undiscovered perspective. Is it possible that Anselm heard God demanding *satisfactio* as an instrument of reconciliation in view of *the victims* of sin who require to be reinstated in their rights? It would clearly move beyond the original context of confession, in which it is generally understood as a process exclusively for the relief of the conscience of perpetrators. The demand for *satisfactio* as such could even be interpreted as a metaphor, which is gained from the experience of interpersonal reconciliation processes and has to be valued in that context. It reflects the fact that victims need to attain *satisfactio* while acknowledging at the same time that *satisfactio* cannot be achieved adequately. The concept would then be heard in a greater context of Biblical terms concerning the deed of reconciliation, finally as a visible sign of *metanoia*.<sup>33</sup>

But the drama of Anselmian reconciliation is even more complex. Above all, it culminates in God's deed of reconciliation in Jesus Christ who already has fulfilled the necessary *satisfactio*. Actually, the whole of humankind would be challenged to bring about this huge restitution. But as the damaged creation is represented by God as its advocate, who makes charges about the damage, Anselm also sees here the necessity of substitution. Humankind has to be represented by God, respectively by *God-man*, to bring forward restitution – otherwise adequate *satisfactio* is not possible for them. Brought forward by humanity, it could only be incomplete.

In this drama, one can therefore say God is at work in Christ – as a vindicator, who acquits the destroyer of creation (the sinner) as perpetrator. In the framework of Chalcedonian Two-Natures theory, Anselm's soteriology presents us with God as the incarnate Christ, the one bringing forward the *satisfactio* in our stead. Doubtless, he thus combines the Biblical atonement metaphoric with the juridical metaphor.

<sup>33</sup> See Raymund Schwager's ideas regarding the connection of *satisfactio* and repentance in his article, »Logik der Freiheit und des Natur-Wollens. Zur Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury.« *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 105 (1983): 146–147.

## SYMBOLIC »SATISFACTIO« IN RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

As a possible frame of reference for contemporary experiences of reconciliation, the process to which Anselm refers with the theory of satisfaction may lead one to recall the recent problematic German experience of reparation payments to the former forced laborers during the Nazi regime. Does it not lead to the realization that adequate reimbursement would *absolutely not* be brought forward? How on earth could a damages payment for forced labor ever manage to correspond to the wording of its title?

If restitution by reimbursement would obviously be inadequate, should one not totally refrain from it? Ralf Wüstenberg attended to this problem in his research on processes of dealing with guilt in South Africa and in Germany after the reunification.<sup>34</sup> He contends reimbursement as an attempt of reparation payments plays a minor role in a process of reconciliation – both materially as well as juridically, one soon reaches the limits of what could be settled by accurate calculations and weighing of charges and admissions of guilt. Wüstenberg maintains, therefore, that the concept of satisfaction could have relevance solely as a christological statement within a theological discourse on talking about God's reconciliation. More especially, it must not be understood as *prerequisite* to concrete reconciliation.<sup>35</sup>

If that was the only feasible interpretation of Wüstenberg's research, the metaphor of Anselm's *satisfactio* admittedly would be deprived of its empirical connection. The truly horrific forms of physical punishment in the Middle Ages and early modern times may serve as a negative case in point in this regard. Abhorrent pain and suffering were inflicted as a means of a retaliative measure of restitution.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, as Joachim Zehner has recently shown, one can observe a renaissance of the concept of »atonement« in many non-theological disciplines. I would like to point to recent developments in the realm of criminal law, where forms of sanctions like the perpetrator-victim negotiations are discussed and put into practice.<sup>37</sup> In juvenile criminal law in particular, it has become a trend to try to confront the perpetrators with their victims, so that the perpetrators can realize the »hurtful

<sup>34</sup> See Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension*.

<sup>35</sup> See Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension*, 223-225.

<sup>36</sup> See Joachim Zehner, »Sühne, Ethisch.«, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 32, 356.

<sup>37</sup> See Joachim Zehner, *Das Forum der Vergebung in der Kirche. Studien zum Verhältnis von Sündenvergebung und Recht* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998), 64-75.

character of their conduct.«<sup>38</sup> It is noteworthy that attempts of atonement can also play a role in mitigating a sentence. In contemporary criminal law discussions in Germany, a terminological discrimination is being developed in order to differentiate between material reimbursement and symbolic restitution. It is also discussed how far it is possible to consider situations in which *satisfactio* beyond an individual level can be taken into account, for example concerning state or public institutions.<sup>39</sup> In German political science, Gesine Schwan hints at reimbursement as a means against »silencing the guilt« after historical political experiences with guilt.<sup>40</sup>

In view of these developments, one may conclude, although retribution/*satisfactio* can neither be produced nor imagined as an adequate balancing of the consequences of the deed, it does not seem possible to do without it either. Religiously, it belongs to the sphere which is talked about in the language of atonement, including notions of remorse and repentance.<sup>41</sup> This appears to be particularly necessary for the recognition of the victims. This is an aspect which the classical theory of atonement does not explicitly attend to, but which hopefully comes to bear implicitly in the application. Retribution should be understood in a wider sense, namely as proof of the indispensable recognition of the situation of the victims.<sup>42</sup> Unsurprisingly, Ralf Wüstenberg also arrives at the conclusion that it is an essential element in the process of reconciliation that an understanding is reached about »the basic needs of the victims concerning the recognition of their suffering.«<sup>43</sup> For political reconciliation, it is necessary that their suffering be made known publicly as a mutually acknowledged »truth«. Wüstenberg calls this *moral restitution*. But also in the interpersonal or legal sphere, reconciliation processes cannot be successful if the suffering of the victims remains unheard. This can be seen in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Com-

<sup>38</sup> Zehner, *Forum*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> See Christian Laue, *Symbolische Wiedergutmachung* (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Gesine Schwan, *Politik und Schuld. Die zerstörerische Macht des Schweigens* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1997), 234.

<sup>41</sup> See Schwan, *Politik*, 29–34 and 63–68, who finds a secularized emergence of religious wisdom of reconciliation in the insight that there is a salutary necessity of atonement and penance also in punitive measures in terms of criminal law.

<sup>42</sup> One could sense this insight already even in Anselm's »more«.

<sup>43</sup> Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension*, 123 with regard to the situation in Germany, 48–50, 97–99, carefully in critical-constructive tone against romanticising interpretations with regard to the situation in South Africa.

mission, which is based on this principle.<sup>44</sup> Here, both the victims of the apartheid regime – fathers and husbands maimed through torture by police or women who had been raped and wounded – as well as perpetrators appeared and could speak. Perpetrators had to face the questions and verbal attacks by their victims. Even here, ambivalences should not go unmentioned. For example, the debate is ongoing whether the Commission's decision to grant amnesty to perpetrators who spoke publicly before the TRC about their misdeeds was an appropriate attempt to address South Africa's past.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, through the work of the Truth Commission one can gain insights in personal reconciliation processes in the context of historical guilt. In this regard, I am concerned with the realization that recognition of the suffering of the victims should be articulated not only verbally but that it should happen, in our case, in the whole interrelationship of victims, perpetrators, commission members, and audience in which the outcome for the community could be felt. Recognition cannot only be declared; it needs to take place. Wüstenberg points out that this process inevitably remains fragmented and fragile as recognition of the suffering of the victims can never mean that their suffering is ever fully understood. This holds true even more if one realizes the different perspectives of the participants in reconciliation processes. There are the immediate perpetrators and their victims, or the even more complex situation of perpetrators who were also victims, as well as people indirectly involved like relatives a generation later. Torture, experiences of humiliation, participation in massacres, and social disintegration of the family with consequences for many generations – all this can only be comprehended and recognized in fragments. Hence, it must be noted that, even in a broader sense, comprehensive and exhaustive restitution as recognition of the sufferings of the victims remains humanly impossible, yet necessary. For the community as a whole, this could mean that to hope for reconciliation means to learn to live with fragmentary, incomplete forgiveness and with repentance which falls short. It is due to this fragmentary character that reconciliation depends on symbolic actions of restitution, which have to be accepted in their actual incompleteness. In social transformation processes beyond the individual level, one has therefore to develop sensitivity for the »impossible possibility« of reconciliation and for the function of symbolic restitution.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension* 133–136, 141–173 (lit.).

<sup>45</sup> See Tinyiko S. Maluleke's essay in this volume.

<sup>46</sup> Gesine Schwan terms it a »lively consensus . . . a *common sense* . . . a civic ethical prin-

The emphasis on the need for restitution instead of *punishment* in Anselm's thoughts is grounded in his interpersonal experience of *irreconcilability* and in the general »impossible possibility« of reconciliation. The interpretation of restitution is crucial at this point. Only from the outside does it appear like compensation for there cannot be a real balancing of the scales. Nevertheless, the form of the compensation is still not meaningless because the ways victims and perpetrators relate to it shapes the arduous and painful process of the recognition of wrongdoing. The fact that God alone can perform this compensation and that God desires it is at the heart of Anselm's Christocentric soteriology.

This dimension of the Christian creed is promised to us in the justification message as an encouragement to devote ourselves to the painful process of the compensation of justice in interpersonal reconciliation. It develops in such a way that a mutual future through restorative justice comes into view. The balancing is not final but rather a means towards the disclosure of truth, recognition, and thus eventually repentance/return/*metanoia*.

## CONCLUSION

Anselm's staurocentric argument, according to which the only way for reconciliation with humankind to be brought about was that God had to become human and had to die, has one decisive fault: The *satisfactio* which is regarded as inevitable consists of the death of a human being. One may well regard his argument as having failed. The observations expressed here are not trying to give an interpretation of the death of Jesus in which he would have to be seen as a God-given sacrifice for restitution. Anselm himself tries everything in his argumentative powers to prevent that impression. He resorts to a line of formalistic reasoning that is complicated for us today, in which the voluntary giving-up of Jesus' human nature is presented in a model of an axiomatically constructed realistic Two-Natures Doctrine. In a post-medieval, modern ontology, this no longer suffices. Revisioning Anselm's theory of reconciliation needs to embrace a *practice* of reconciliation beyond this theory. And this is only possible if we interpret his dual dramaturgy of the event of God and

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ciple«, that calls for »magnitude of heart on the side of the victims«, »which one may neither demand nor expect . . . which one may plead for, which one may hope for.« *Politik*, 235.

humanity as a framework which depicts divine salvation in relation to all threatened creation.

If we read Anselm in this *socio-centric* way, an insight for a theology »after violence« may be gained. Accordingly, we are no longer to read it only as an event between God and Human, but as a dramaturgy of preservation and fulfillment of a threatened creation, which is suffering from the absence of reconciliation. The core concepts of Anselm's argumentation would then be *ordo*, the benevolent order of creation, as well as *kavod* and *doxa*, God's glory as preservation of God's magnificence in favor of creation. Following Anselm's implicit theology of representation, God could be depicted as the creation's counsel and vindicator. Representative restitution through Christ could be understood as reinstallation of those who are being victimized in the midst of sinfulness of humankind through injustice, senseless violence, or ignorance. Anselm's insisting on *satisfactio* in relation to God turns out to be a *satisfactio* which God demands for the un-reconciled life of creation. The fact that God is made available in Christ can then further be understood as a divine promise that God will also bring to completion our fragmented attempts of reconciliation. This hope can serve as an encouragement and challenge to keep on trying in the midst of the brokenness of creation.

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Translation: Ben Khumalo-Seegelken