

**How can you tell the difference between true and false guilt?** I had to deal with this issue recently in a debate on national radio. As so often happens in cases like this, I had only a few hours warning, and I didn't expect the explosive issues that would be brought up in this programme. The request had been to discuss *"healing."*

So, I pulled out some studies that I had done on bitterness, forgiveness and restitution. However, when the radio programme began, I realised that it was actually a debate between myself and two church leaders who were determined to focus on "political guilt." To them it appeared that there was only one issue that needed to be dealt with and that was "apartheid." It was a bilingual debate. They spoke in Afrikaans and I responded in English.

They claimed that all white South Africans were guilty of the sin of *"apartheid."* I asked how that could be considering that most South Africans alive today had not even been born when the system had been introduced. Many whites had opposed apartheid. My family, in the English liberal tradition, had been vocal critics of the apartheid system. Capetonians had been dismantling apartheid from the late 70's. In the early 1980's I had chosen to study Theology at a multiracial college and for the last 25 years have been dedicated to serving mostly black people, throughout Africa, some of whom were suffering the very worst persecution in the world today. Most of apartheid was dismantled over 20 years ago. Most the people living in South Africa today, being under the age of 16, neither experienced apartheid nor could have been responsible for it.

Nevertheless, one on the panel responded that just as the Germans remain guilty for crimes against the Jews in the Second World War, all South African whites remain guilty of apartheid. Why, even the United Nations and the World Council of Churches had proclaimed apartheid: *"A crime against humanity."* And that, I was told, was a *"very serious thing!"*

In response I pointed out that the Second World War ended over 62 years ago. Most of the people living in Germany today had not even been born, in fact most of their parents hadn't even born, before the Second World War had ended. There could be very few people alive today who had a significant role in any of the atrocities committed in the Second World War on any side.

I asked: *“If God was to speak to us today, would He bring up the sins of other people of decades ago, or would He confront us with our sins of today?”*

It doesn't really matter what the United Nations or the World Council of Churches says, the question is: **“What does God say?”**

The fact is that the vast majority of governments represented at the UN are unelected, have no democratic mandate from the people they purport to represent, and, in fact, most of the governments represented at the UN are guilty of heinous human rights abuses. This makes the United Nations the largest collection of unelected mass murderers in the world. As for the World Council of Churches, considering that the majority of its leaders are unregenerate reprobates who deny the authority of Scripture, and support abortions, why should we be concerned what their opinion on anything is?

**In the Bible, sin is very specific. It is a violation of the Laws of God.** Repentance in the Bible is specific and personal. We are guilty when we disobey one of God's Commandments. Sin is failing to worship God alone, it is making or worshipping an idol, taking God's Name in vain, desecrating the Sabbath, dishonouring our parents, taking innocent life, committing adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, and covetousness.

**In the Bible, guilt and repentance is specific and personal, not vague and national, and Biblical restitution is to be made by the culprit to the victim – directly and entirely.** Restitution is not meant to be some political scam, a cover for corruption, where restitution is demanded from people who didn't do the crime to be distributed to people who weren't the victims.

Our concern is that much of this raking up of apartheid is more than two decades after the majority of white voters in South Africa rejected it in the Referendum of 1983. Long ago all the essential components of apartheid were dismantled. Trying now to make people guilty of things done by others - before they were even born - is not Biblical.

Biblically, true guilt is when I personally violate a specific command in Scripture. False guilt, or

psychological guilt, is a result of selective focus, distortion of reality, ignorance of history. It is vague and it involves guilt manipulation.

**When we repent of our personal guilt in violating God's Commands, the result is forgiveness, freedom, healing and restoration.** However, as has been demonstrated, you can repent for false or psychological guilt every day for decades, but you will never find freedom and forgiveness from false guilt, because the devil is a hard taskmaster.

The Holy Spirit brings **conviction** of sin to lead us to repentance. On the other side of repentance is forgiveness and freedom, healing and restoration.

By way of contrast, the devil brings **condemnation** in order to paralyse and enslave us.

My concern, which I related on the radio debate, is that political forces are engaging in guilt manipulation, rewriting history, with a selective focus and distortion of reality in order to bludgeon an entire people into compliance and submission to new racial quotas, Black Economic Empowerment job reservation, extra rates and taxes, all of which are a cover for corruption on a massive scale.

We have enough real sins and genuine guilt of today to deal with, without having to bring up the sins of other people of decades ago.

God says: ***"Thou shalt not commit murder."*** Abortion is murder. The South African government is responsible for the killing of 500,000 babies in the last 9 years – with our taxpayers money – legally. Over 1,800 white farmers have been murdered – in the most brutal ways with excruciating torture - in the last 12 years. An average of 20,000 South Africans have been murdered every year over the last 12 years.

God says: ***"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*** The present South African government has legalised pornography and prostitution and uses our taxpayers money to fund Lovelife in our schools, to teach our children to be fornicators and whoremongers. Child abuse and rape have exploded and tens of thousands of families have been split apart by rampant divorce.

God says: ***“Thou shalt not steal.”*** Along with the crime wave of house break-ins, armed robberies, and car hijackings, have come an unprecedented tidal wave of corruption with Black Economic Empowerment scams, fraud and extortion tearing the economic foundations of the country apart.

God says: ***“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”*** Much of the state news media and school history books are bearing false witness, rewriting history, to glamourise mass murderers such as Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara; while vilifying Christians with false accusations. It is as Karl Marx declared: “The first battlefield is the rewriting of history.”

God says: ***“You shall not covet your neighbours goods.”*** But greed, envy, malice and covetousness are officially sanctioned and promoted. Senior Cabinet members have gone on record enthusiastically praising and supporting Marxist dictator, Robert Mugabe’s ZANU-PF regime on their national suicide in Zimbabwe . Senior government officials have publically stated their desire to see similar confiscations of white farms in South Africa just like the land invasions of Zimbabwe .

On a more personal level, are you personally guilty of theft? Greed? Gossip? Pride? Envy? Malice? Covetousness? Selfishness? Bitterness? Unforgiveness?

If God was to speak to you today, what sins would He confront you with? You know that He wouldn’t be bringing up other people’s sins, He would deal with what you personally are responsible for and guilty of. “The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.”

We have enough sins of our own that we are personally guilty of, without wasting our time following the political agenda of guilt manipulators seeking to get rich over other people’s misfortune.

At the end of the radio debate, the interviewer asked me what I believed the solution to the guilt of apartheid and the need for reconciliation was. I answered: *“We need to follow Jesus. We need to repent of our sins and do restitution for those sins we are personally responsible for,*

*and we need to love God with all of our heart, with all of our mind, with all our soul and with all of our strength, and we are to love our neighbour as ourself.”*

Dr. Peter Hammond