For those interested in South Africa, this document provides background about some of the content in Brenda Turner's presentation, *Ed's Story*, she delivered at the BIFHSGO Monthly Meeting on February 14, 2015.

Brenda has provided further information about Michael Worsnip and his experiences in the fight against apartheid, and what he is doing now as a leader in restorative justice.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: TRC transcripts of evidence given by Fr. Michael Lapsley

Transcript of the evidence given by Fr Michael Lapsley,S.S.M. together with Michael Worsnip

to the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation
at the hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committte
at Kimberley on Monday 10 June 1996

Thank you. The hearing resumes.

Dr Alec Boraine -
A Chairperson: The following witness is Father Michael Lapsley, and I will ask him to please come forward. Father Lapsley, I am very grateful to you for coming to share with us your own experience. In particular, you will be telling us about the parcel bomb explosion of 28th April, 1990 in Harare, which brought about extremely serious injuries. Before I ask Denzel Potgieter to take over from me, would you please stand for the taking of the oath.

Father Lapsley, do you swear that the evidence that you will give before the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Thank you, you may be seated. I understand that there is a second witness, Father Michael Worsnip, I am sorry that I did not welcome you, as your name was not before me. We are very glad to see you as well, and if you would please raise your right hand, and do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God? Thank you very much, please be seated.

Denzil Potgieter, I will now hand over to you.

Thank you, Dr. Boraine. Father Lapsley and Father Worsnip, again, welcome. Father we are happy that you are in this area and that you are able to participate in the Hearings today. Perhaps just by way of introduction, you are an ordained priest of the Anglican Church and are presently the Chaplain to The Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture in Cape Town, is that correct:

"That is correct".

Before we deal with the incident that you are testifying about, perhaps you can give us a brief personal background of yourself.

"Thank you very much, I will say at the beginning that I have had the privilege of telling my story many times in South Africa and around the world, but I think for me that this has a particular poignancy and significance to be able to tell it to a Commission which represents the Nation.

I want to express my own respect to the Commissioners for the way they are hearing the pain of the Nation and for the opportunity to share my own story.

I am originally from New Zealand. I was born and brought up there. I went to Australia to train to become a Priest and I joined an Anglican Religious Community, the Society of the Sacred Mission in Australia. It was my Community, the Society of the Sacred Mission, which transferred me to South Africa in 1973. I became a University student at the University of Natal in Durban and subsequently Chaplain to the three Campuses, then in Durban.

I might also observe that throughout the time I was in South Africa, I was a convinced Pacifist, which I am sure the Arch Bishop will agree is not typical of Anglicans. It was for me, I suppose, the turning point in 1976, the Soweto Uprising, and the killing of schoolchildren that changed me very radically. I was at that stage National Chaplain for Anglican Students and I was speaking out against the killing and torturing of school children during that year.

I was expelled from South Africa in September 1976 and then I went to Lesotho where I continued my studies in Lesotho. I became Chaplain of the University, I trained Priests in the Diocese of Lesotho, but I also joined the African National Congress of South Africa. Not having been born in South Africa, that was the way that I was taking Citizenship in the South Africa which we were still fighting for. It was in Lesotho that the first indications came that I might be on a South African Government Hit List, particularly through the Citizen Newspaper and the Aida Parker Newsletter. There were articles written demonizing me, in the period around 1979-1980. At the end of 1982 the South African Defence Force attacked Lesotho and 42 people were shot dead. I was away from Lesotho at the time but it was believed, particularly by the Church Authorities, that I was one of the targets for that massacre. I was forced by the Church to leave Lesotho.

I went to Zimbabwe, where I lived from 1983 to 1992 and throughout the period I was a Chaplain of the ANC, I headed an ANC Unit at the National University of Lesotho. In the ANC I was involved in Educational, Pastoral and Theological work, the work of a Chaplain of the ANC. In Zimbabwe I was head of the ANC Education Committee for some years. But I was not an employee of the ANC. I did various Church work, working for the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, and also for the Lutheran World Federation. I did a Masters Degree in Zimbabwe as well and I was part of the exiled community of Lesotho and subsequently in Zimbabwe.

I cannot remember the exact date, but in about 1988 I think it was, the Zimbabwe Authorities came to me and said A We have information that you are on a South African Government Hit List. They said, We believe that there may be some attempt by Commandos to kill you. That is one of the moments that I remember, when I was called into this office and told that the South African Government wishes to kill me. I remember the loneliness of the moment, because it was very personal, it wasn't simply that they wanted to kill members of the ANC, but it was me in particular. And it made me ask what it was that I was living for, if in fact they wished to kill me for it. I came to the conclusion that the only way that I could be a threat to the Apartheid System was because of my theology, because I believed that Apartheid was a choice and an option for death carried out in the name of the Gospel of Life, and my work was the work of mobilizing the Religious Community in South Africa and Internationally, to oppose apartheid as an issue of faith.
1990 came, Nelson Mandela was released. The political organisations of the people were unbanned. But I forgot to say that when the Zimbabwean Government said that they had information that the South African Government would wish to kill me, they asked me to accept 24 hour armed police guards.

I had those armed police guards, I suppose it was for about 2 years, and then at the end of '89, beginning of 1990, there were assurances from Magnus Malan that there would be no further attacks on Front line states and my armed guards were removed. After February 2nd, although we kept saying we shouldn't be naive, we relaxed. February/March into April I visited Canada, invited by the Canadian Churches to speak about what the significance was of the release of Nelson Mandela. At the end of April 1990 I returned from this visit and I was about to start a new job as a Parish Priest in Bulawayo, having been working for the Lutheran World Federation for the previous couple of years. When you have been away for about six weeks, especially as a Priest, more than some other people you get lots of mail of all sorts of shapes and sizes and all this mail had accumulated whilst I was away and perhaps naturally when I first got hold of it, I read all the personal letters and left all those manila envelopes to be opened a bit later. But there had been a letter which had come from South Africa written on ANC letterhead from somebody who called himself Vusi. It was a typewritten letter, saying that he had some religious literature or some kind of struggle literature that I might be interested in, and he would soon be sending it. I didn't attach that much significance to the letter in that I had this vast amount of mail that I was ploughing through. There was also a slip from the Post Office to go and collect a registered article. So I had gone to collect that but hadn't in fact opened it - I just piled the envelope with the others envelopes. So about a week after my return from Canada I had a farewell party on the Saturday. On the Monday I was starting a new job in Bulawayo. I came back from the party in the early evening, and I continued to open mail and I sat opposite a colleague I stayed with, Andrew Mutizwa, a young Zimbabwean teacher (I stayed with two young Zimbabweans) and we were chatting about the party and I said I was about to phone Tito Mboweni who was an old friend of mine. I was about to pick up the phone and at the same time I was opening the accumulated mail. So I came upon this Manilla envelope that had been amongst the accumulated mail. I opened it. It was addressed to me and inside were two religious magazines. The magazines were wrapped in plastic, sealed in plastic, so I ripped open the plastic and took out the magazines, both religious - one in Afrikaans, one in English and put aside the Afrikaans one as my Afrikaans was not very good.

I opened the English Magazine and the act of opening the magazine was the detonating device for a bomb. One of the extraordinary things was that I, and the Doctors don't know why, I didn't become unconscious. I didn=t go into shock. The ceiling of three rooms blew out and there was a hole in the floor. I can still remember what happened, the actual explosion is still with me. I remember pain on a scale that I didn't think a human being could ever experience. I remember going into darkness, being thrown backwards by the force of the bomb, the exact angle saved my life that I opened it, I opened it on a small coffee table. If I had opened it on a table like this, it would have killed me, because it would have knocked out the heart or knocked off the head, but because I was opening it down at a lower angle. It blew off my hands. I lost an eye, my ear drums were shattered. I think perhaps the most extraordinary thing of all was that I felt the presence of God with me. I felt also that Mary who had watched her son being crucified also understood what it was that I was going through. I remember calling out for an ambulance, calling for the police.

I suppose in a way my years as a Chaplain of the ANC, the people I had to bury over the years also helped prepare me. I think I had long realised that it was only through sacrifice that freedom would come. I suppose I had faced the possibility of my own death, but I had never faced the possibility of major permanent disability. So I was taken to the Hospital For a variety of complex reasons I didn't receive treatment for about six hours and remained in pain for that period and in darkness. I guess for a little bit of the time after I came round after the operations I thought maybe it would have been better to have died when I realised I had no hands. I had never met another human being with no hands. I didn't know whether life would be life, in any meaningful sense. They didn't know whether I would ever see properly again. I'd lost one eye, I couldn't see properly out of the other, I couldn't hear properly because my eardrums were shattered. I was burned extensively, I had a broken arm and a vast number of other injuries.

But, I had also travelled the world for years in the cause of the struggle against apartheid and one of the effects of that was that (when I was bombed I became a focus of evil, because there is something very personal about a letter

bomb which was supposed to kill me) however in the response of people all over the world I became a focus of all that is beautiful in the human community, our ability to be tender, loving and compassionate. I think that is what enabled me to take that situation and make it redemptive, to bring the life out of the death, the good out of the evil. I spent a month in hospital in Harare and then I was flown to Australia where I spent three months in an acute hospital in Sydney and then another three months at a rehabilitation hospital. Then I returned to Zimbabwe to joblessness. The Bishop who was supposed to employ me said, AWell, you are disabled now, what can you do? I remember saying to him, I think I can be more of a priest with no hands than I ever was with two hands. So that is more or less the account of the bombing and the experience. I should say also that I was as helpless as a newborn baby for three months. There was literally nothing that I could do for myself but I also said to myself that my struggle now is a struggle to get well, a struggle to return, a struggle to live my life as fully, as joyfully, as completely as possible, and that would be my victory. I also realised that if I was filled with hatred, bitterness, self pity, desire for revenge, that they would have failed to kill the body but they would have killed the soul, and I would be a permanent victim. And today I would say that I see myself not simply as a survivor, but I am a victor over the evil and hatred and death that apartheid represented, a sign of the triumph of good.

I want to conclude with two other points.

I want to talk about responsibility, and also what I would ask of the Commission. In my mind, there was somebody who obviously typed my name on an envelope, a woman or a man who typed my name on that bomb, also somebody who made it, who created it. I have often asked the question about the person who made it, the person who typed my name. What did they tell their children that night that they did that day? How did they describe it, when they said, AHow was your day today? What did they say that they actually did on that day. So of course, that person has a particular responsibility, but I believe responsibility increases the higher you go up the chain of command.

To my mind I have always been clear that the person I hold responsible ultimately for my bombing is F.W. de Klerk. The reason I say that is that remembering I was bombed on April 28th 1990, on the eve of the first talks between the ANC and the Government, F.W. de Klerk was Head of State. The Death Squads remained part of the machinery of the State. They were there within the machinery of the State. He knew about them. I know that for a fact. At a Conference some time ago, I spoke to Van Zyl Slabbert and he said AI, (Van Zyl Slabbert), went to de Klerk and told him about the Death Squads. So he cannot say he didn't know, and so I hold him politically and morally responsible for the attack on me. I am not saying he gave the command, I'm not saying he even necessarily knew about my particular bombing. He may have, but I am saying that because he knew the Death Squads were there, and they were part of the machinery of state, he did nothing to dismantle them. I hold him responsible.
I would also say that there is a sense in which - I know the Archbishop often speaks about the question of forgiveness - in a funny sort of way for me forgiveness is not yet on the agenda and the reason I say that - I have said that I am not filled with hatred, bitterness or self pity, or that I want revenge, I think that what I believe in is not retribution, I believe in restorative justice, not retributive justice. For example, if F.W. was to come to me or the person who made the bomb was to come to me and said: 'I am sorry for what I did and I want your forgiveness and this is what I am now doing in the way of reparation, not to me personally, but to our country and our people, these are the kinds of things I am doing to heal our land', then of course one would say: of course, yes, forgiveness, there would be no problem about that. But I have not heard from de Klerk one word of remorse. I have heard not one word of acknowledgement of evil at all and I have heard very few voices coming from that community of perpetrators showing any signs of remorse or sorrow or willingness to make reparation. Perhaps what makes many survivors cynical is that we see rather Golden Handshakes, we see immense benefit coming from what in fact they have been party to, and I think that is particularly galling to many people.

To conclude my last part is: What do I ask from the Commission? I should say to you that the Government of Zimbabwe has an open attempted murder docket in my case, which is not complete because they have not found who was responsible. Obviously there was a whole complex range of people involved. I think one must also be clear that one is not talking about the act of an individual. That bomb was so sophisticated that it could come through the post, registered mail from South Africa to Zimbabwe and not explode until I opened it. It also came to my private post office box, in fact not even mine, one I shared with a friend. There was a great deal of intelligence and sophistication - a sophistication that only lay within a unit such as the CCB and it certainly bore the hallmarks of the CCB, whether it was them in particular or not. So I would like to say to the Commission: I would like to know who was responsible. I would like to know the chain of command and I am in someways more interested in the top of the chain of command than at the bottom because I think there lies the greatest moral responsibility although it may extend beyond the chain of command, as I have said, to the de Klerks of the world, and the Members of the State Security Council and Cabinet, so that is what I am asking.

One of the things I have been thinking, even this morning is, do I want to meet the person who made the bomb? The answer is, it depends. I don't know if I could cope with somebody who doesn't care, I don't know if I could cope with somebody for whom there is no issue, who is so dehumanised that it doesn't matter that you make letter bombs. But if there is somebody who is trapped by what they have done, by what they have been party to, perhaps to me and perhaps to many others, then I would love to meet them. I think we could have a very interesting conversation, where we could begin to discover each other=s common humanity. Of course if somebody said: 'I was sorry', I would want to ask them what they do for a living now. Do they still make letter bombs?. I am not sure what that would mean. But again if that person has sorrow, and is living their life in a new way, I would love to be able to say to them, of course, of course, I forgive you in that context.

Thank you very much."

Desmond Tutu - I should rebuke you for clapping but I think it is a response that is probably appropriate.

Advocate Denzil Potgieter Thank you, Father Lapsley, there is nothing that one can meaningfully add to that testimony, I think we will go on to the second Michael (Worsnip), and just say that you have been in Zimbabwe at the time when the incident happened and that you in fact, saw Father Lapsley after the incident. Is that correct?

Father Worsnip - "I was not in Zimbabwe at the actual moment of the bomb but I have had a very long relationship with Michael, and I would like if I may to put my perspective in terms of the context for this Bomb.

I met Michael in 1979 when I left South Africa to go to Lesotho as a war resister because I came to the conclusion that I could not serve in the SADF in any capacity whatsoever. Michael was at the time the Warden of Le Lapela Jesu Seminary in Roma. Michael's house was a meeting point for South African refugees and all of us discovered each other there. It was a most remarkable place to be in. For people like me who had lived in a fairly closed white society, it was the first time on a person to person level to be able to meet and to debate with and to converse with and to disagree with, on an eyeball-to-eyeball level, fellow black South Africans. And for me it was a conversion experience, once I had gone through that there was no turning back and I was not the only person for whom that was an important place to be. It was a house of peace. I want to emphasize that I never saw weapons there, ever. It was a house of protest, it was a house of debate where people met in real terms and could discuss and disagree and that sort of thing, but it was a house essentially of peace. It was sometimes a house of prayer. That is the context in which I met Michael.

The only violence that I personally encountered while living in Lesotho was the two raids that happened from South Africa into Lesotho in 1982 and 1985.

The level of terror which those raids caused, killing and maiming civilians inside Lesotho, is beyond description. The way in which the country and all of us living in the country felt raped by the kind of aggression and senseless killing that was taking place across the border. Michael's name was probably on a list for one of those raids, he just happened to have been out of the country at the time. There were times in Lesotho when everybody was scared, particularly South Africans living in that society, and Michael was quite clearly a particular target of the Apartheid State. Because unlike many others in the Church, Michael would make no compromise. He was a target because he was white, and because he, as a very committed and a very public Christian. supported the armed struggle against Apartheid. This was not something which the Apartheid State could easily overlook because his being challenged many of the myths which apartheid had put up, as it were, constructed.

The first myth that the apartheid state wanted people to believe was that the struggle was a struggle for the racial survival of the whites against the blacks. On the one hand the ANC was portrayed as an all black organisation, on the other no white in their right mind would want to join it because it was out to destroy them. That was the first myth.

The second myth was that the ANC was portrayed as a Marxist/Atheist Organisation. To have a priest of the Anglican Church publically being a member of it and functioning as its chaplain could not be condoned. And that despite the fact that in terms of the history of the ANC many priests, many religious people of many faiths, have belonged to the ANC. The ANC was also identified almost entirely with Umkhonto we Siswe. In other words the only picture which was given to the South African public was of an organisation with only one goal - violence, terror and destruction. Michael, while not a member of MK but wholeheartedly supporting the armed struggle, exposed some of the contradictions with this kind of presentation.

But the other thing that I think must have been an enormous threat to the state was Michael's effectiveness in communicating his message and that itself must have made him a target. Now you have already heard what Michael's experience of the bomb was and the kind of devastating effect that it had on him personally.

I saw Michael three days after the bomb in the hospital in Harare. It was an awful sight. His face was charred and blackened. His beard had melted into his skin. His face was swollen to twice its normal size. In fact the only way that I could recognise him was by a single gold filling which he has in his teeth. Both of his hands were taken off. He needed to hold his stumps up all the time because anything touching them caused him the most extraordinary pain. His lips were swollen and bleeding. His one eye was damaged completely by the explosion, and he could see nothing at all out of the other one. We had to shout to make him hear, but it seems as though he could hear just a little. He was in a terrible state. His sister Helen who was with him told us about how he would wake up at night screaming, re-living the bomb. I wanted to touch him but everywhere you looked over his body was red and swollen and sore and painful. There was nowhere to touch him.

We were grateful that he was alive, but we were very aware that his life would be changed irrevocably from that moment on. There was very little any of us could do except be there. It was an agonizing time for everyone, but none of us could even remotely imagine the kind of agony that he was going through.

For myself, I want the perpetrators of deeds like this to be exposed and to be named, or for them of their own accord to come forward and own the deeds that they have done. I would like to hear what they have to say for themselves. I would like to see them so that I can put a face to this kind of terror. The person who made this bomb that was sent to Michael is unlikely to be mad. There was a clear skill and professionalism in the way in which this whole deed was executed. To me, it is quite inconceivable that they should be allowed to remain hidden within the society without any sense of ownership or remorse or regret. It is inconceivable that anyone should be allowed to do this to another human being and to remain hidden. In any case, for their own sake, I would want them to come forward and

say what they have done and what they thought they were doing, and then at least we can begin perhaps to deal with it and take it somewhere.

Behind all of these hidden players I also want to see the Government of the Day express remorse and sorrow for what they did to us all, how they damaged the entire nation both physically and psychologically."

Thank you very much, Father Worsnip and Father Lapsley. If you have nothing further to add, I will hand back to the Chairperson.

Desmond Tutu - "Thank you very much, Dr. Boraine."

Dr. Boraine - Father Lapsley, I would like to take a little further your comments about forgiveness and restorative justice. You will know better than most that the whole question of amnesty is very controversial. You will also know that the Amnesty provisions in South Africa are unique and very different and much more demanding than any other than I certainly know of in the World. But nevertheless there is provision made for amnesty under certain circumstances. Just to clarify my own mind and make sure that I understand what you're saying. If so far we do not know who did this despicable thing to you, we can guess or we can have some very good idea about the organisation, the groupings, the authorities. But personally who typed the letter, who sealed it, who mailed it and so on, if any of those people, and it is unlikely that we are ever going to find out. That is the hard thing to accept, but if any of those came and applied for amnesty and made full disclosure, they would receive amnesty in terms of the act. How do you see this, how do you feel about this, because the feeling level is probably the strongest. Does that meet with your restorative justice or is it something beyond that?

Father Lapsley - "My view has always been that it would have been much more desirable for there to be trials, than amnesty. I was present when the Bishop of the Church of England in South Africa spoke about the St. James Massacre.

I was fascinated when he spoke about how his son went to the prison to say on behalf of the congregation to one of the people who had been found guilty, AWe forgive you. He was very quick to say, but I didn't say that he should be released. That fascinated me, that was a concept of forgiveness linked to justice. But my view has been and I have been from the beginning in support of the Truth Commission, I believe that we are sacrificing a degree of justice which I think is extremely painful to the Nation for the sake of the greater good and the greater good as I saw it was that if we had not had amnesty, we were going to have a civil war that was going to consume us all. And that is the context in which I think I support my leaders in the insistence of amnesty but it remains very painful.

But the Archbishop has been a good teacher and I believe in very old fashioned concepts of forgiveness and it seems to me that in the Christian context, forgiveness is a package deal, and we often, in South Africa, make it something glib, cheap and easy. It seems to me that the Christian understanding of forgiveness is about confession, it is about amendment of life, it is about remorse, it is about reparation, it is a whole package. Yes, I would support amnesty but that doesn't deal with the package. Amnesty=s a legal thing. One of the first things that the Archbishop said at the beginning of this Commission which he conceded was a very hard pill to swallow was that someone could come before this Commission and have no remorse and yet get amnesty. So the legal provisions have been dealt with but the moral issues remain unaddressed. They remain unaddressed for the person who seeks amnesty unless they address those wider issues and I think we need to have a moral climate in the country where we are able to say beyond the narrowness, in one sense, of the Commission, to be able to say to the country that there has to be sorrow, confession, amendment to life and reparation if the people who did it are going to be free. There is an irony in a sense in which with no hands and one eye, I am much freer as a person than the ones who did it to me.

So I say to them and to all those South Africans in the end, who supported apartheid, your freedom awaits you, but there is a whole process to go through which can never be reduced simply to the legalities of amnesty.

Dr Boraine:
You will appreciate that we have a number of other witnesses who we want to see today, otherwise I would be very tempted to enter into a very long discussion because it deserves that.
Fr Michael Lapsley
Once a theologian always a theologian.

Dr Boraine
I will restrain myself with one final comment. And I really will try to be brief. One of the things that we have heard from many people who have sat where you are sitting today, all over the country, is, and they don't know how to explain it, many of them don't even attempt to, and that is a desire to know who killed their child, who hurt them, for what reason and so on, they all know that unless the person comes forward, the likelihood of them knowing that, which would unlock something very deep withinside of themselves, will not happen.

For myself, and I just ask how you see it, and I am perfectly happy if you disagree, one of the advantages of incorporating Human Rights Violations, Hearings, Amnesty and Reparation, even without that personal remorse, is that some people are going to know for the very first time who did it, and for me this is a very big part of the work of the Commission. I just wonder how you see it?

... (end of side one of tape)
Side 2 of tape:

Michael .... But that there is unfinished business is true of me, so I think it is helpful for it to be linked.

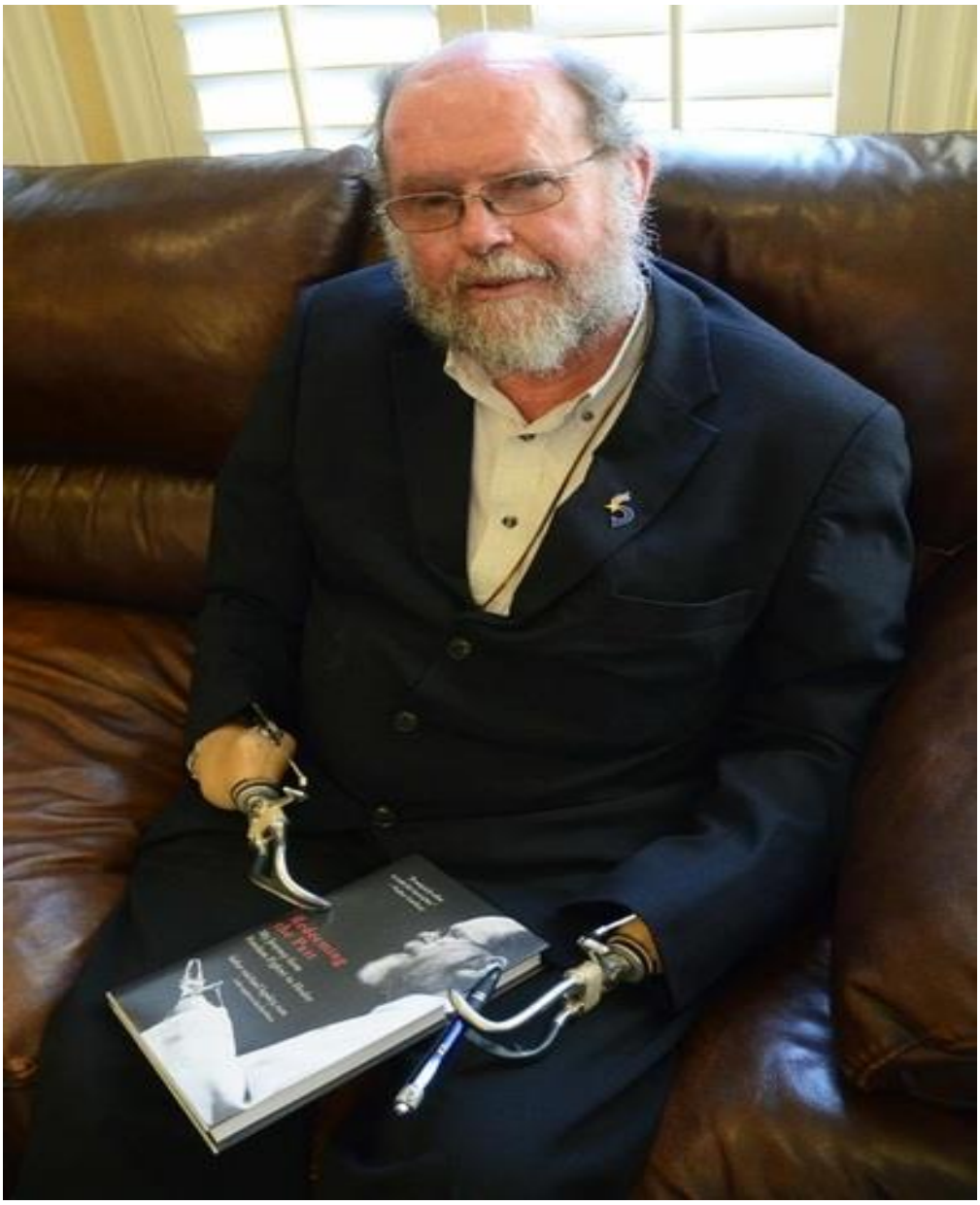
If I could just make one other point that I had forgotten to make, but I wanted to make, that really relates to reparation. Because I am a member of a religious order and a priest of the church, in twenty, thirty, forty years time, if I have problems of a medical, psychological or psychiatric character, there is a fair chance that I'll get help, but I am not sure that this may be true of some of my fellow South Africans. I am very concerned that in the recommendations that are made that it takes account of very long term needs. I have had a whole series of operations and in some ways, although with major disabilities, I am in very good health but I can imagine that in twenty, thirty years time, some of the effects of the bomb will actually come to a head in new ways and I would be very concerned if people who don't have anything to say because you say to the people here "Do you want anything?" and they say, ANo, well, we need this or that? But in twenty, thirty, forty years time, there is going to be an acute need, and we as a society need to take car**e** just as there are people who are having acute psychiatric problems around the world because of the Second World War, now, who have never had them before and I think we need to learn that, and I hope the Reparations Committee recommendations willl institute those kinds of structures for those of us who said: ANo, we are fine, but we may not be fine further down the track and I am more concerned about those who will not have the kind of access that perhaps as a professional person or as a priest or a religious, that I may."

Ms Glenda Wildschut:
Father Mike - I was very moved when you talked about your understanding at the time of your bombing, about what it must have meant for the Mother of Christ to witness the crucifixion and in a sense I was realising that you were also making reference to your own family. You talked about what that has meant for you. Can you give us an idea of what the impact of the bombing has been on your sisters and on your mother?

Michael: "No I can't, I mean it is a valid question. Can I put it this way, I see myself as belonging to a number of families, my natural family, my parents, my father is late, my brothers and sisters, the family of a religious order The Society of the Sacred Mission, the family of the church, for very many years the family of the ANC. Having lived also in Zimbabwe and Lesotho, the family of both of those nations.

When I was bombed, all those families loved me, in a very extraordinary way, and that was what enabled me, I mean the doctors said it would take 18 months to 2 years before I was well again, seven months later I returned, and I was fine, and I think that is because of all those families, and the roles through their prayers, their love and support, religious people, people not religious at all, played. Two of my sisters came to see me in hospital. The point I am making when I say that I can't is that it is difficult to know, and I think sometimes in a strange kind of way and I think I have seen this, watching this process, that for the families, the mothers, the spouses, friends, in some ways it is harder than for the survivors, and I think that when we talk about the concepts of forgiveness, I think it is much easier for the survivor than for the relative of the one who has died, and I think even if I lived, the pain that others go through in their helplessness, that pain is often much greater and so yes, I was supported very profoundly and very deeply by all those families."

Desmond Tutu - Michael was a Priest in the Diocese of Lesotho when I was the Bishop of Lesotho. He has heard me say this before, he was one of the most obstreperous, most difficult Priests I have ever had. Listening to Michael Worsnip, I think there were probably other sides that I did not alwaysn know about. It may be why he was always making you face up to things, but it was also how he did it, he was horrible. I am going to say something which I have said to Michael, which people may find difficult. I in a way give thanks to God for what happened to Michael, it is a very difficult thing to say, but he knows that I am saying it, and I am saying it as one who loves him very dearly, because the Michael after the Bomb Outrage has been an incredible person. He has been an Icon, he speaks about forgiveness in a way that he probably knows his Archbishop who is about to leave, doesn't always agree, but he is an Icon, a living example of the kind of thing that we are trying to help be incarnated, be enfleshed in our country. I am very deeply humbled, but also very proud that Michael is now a Priest in my Diocese in Cape Town and a Priest of whom I am very deeply proud. I give thanks to God for you, Michael, and I also give thanks for the experience through which you went, because you can talk about crucifixion and resurrection because it is real, it is in your body. You should see when he celebrates the Eucharist, I have sometimes stood next to him and I got a little worried whether he was not going to overturn the Chalice or something, and there is an incredible kind of hush in almost every service that I have been with you, because people somehow feel that they are in touch with goodness, in an awful situation somehow they are aware that they are in touch with light in darkness, that they are in touch with life in death, and somehow they know goodness is going to triumph over evil.



District Six lives again, 35 years later

28 May 2014

District Six was colourful and vibrant before removals and demolitions. The rebuilt suburb will try to regain some of that flavour. (Image: Department of Rural Development, Cape Town)

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Lucille Davie

The lively, cosmopolitan Cape Town suburb of District Six, like Fietas and Sophiatown in Johannesburg, came to symbolise the suffering and cruelties endured under apartheid when it was systematically bulldozed in the 1960s and 70s, forcing hundreds of families to leave their homes.

District Six was a working class area just beyond the CBD, probably dating back to the early 1800s, and was originally home to freed slaves, merchants, artisans, labourers and immigrants. Now, almost 35 years after the demolitions, the suburb is being revived, with original residents, or their descendants, reclaiming their interrupted lives.

"The return to District Six can serve as a model for restitution, as a process which has made it possible for citizens who ordinarily would not have been able to afford it to have access to prime real estate in an increasingly gentrified Cape Town. It has facilitated the process of repossession of the city by the dispossessed," according to the District Sixwebsite.

In all, some 50 000 people were removed from District Six.

Healing the scars

The area remained an empty scar of land for a decade or two, and was renamed Zonnebloem, with a campaign - Hands off District Six - preventing private development on the prime real estate. Then, in the 1980s, the apartheid city council erected housing for the police and the army, and built the Cape Technical College, now the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

After democracy in 1994 restitution claims were submitted, and the slow process of rebuilding the suburb began. In a pilot project started in 2003, 139 homes were built by the District Six Trust, created by former residents. Now, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is to go into phase three, and by next year, around 2 000 homes will be completed, resettling 1 500 people back in the suburb. Some R700-million has been set aside for the development.

The original suburb consisted of 150ha, but only 40ha is available for restitution, with pressure from the municipality to densify the area, says Michael Worsnip, the chief director of restitution support in the office of the Western Cape Regional Land Claims Commission.

Worsnip says plans are in place to restore the former New Hanover Street running through the suburb, to revive its lively atmosphere. With minimal housing, it will consist largely of shops on several storeys, with balconies overlooking the street, which will host carnivals, parades and events. The idea, says Worsnip, is to create a tourist area.

"Tourists come to Cape Town for Table Mountain, Robben Island and District Six," he explains. He envisages designated tourist routes running through District Six, with monuments and places of interest.

Revenue from events and rentals will help offset the government's capital investment in District Six.

"The plan is not to recreate what was there, but model a new suburb with the look and feel of the old District Six," he adds.

The homes, a mix of three- and four-storey apartments, and one- and two-storey row houses with balconies, all with possibilities for expansion by the homeowner, are being built by the department and given to residents - some of whom are in their 80s - for free. Restitution also gives the residents free rates for the first 10 years. Former tenants and owners will be moving in, with owners or their descendants obviously getting a better deal than tenants. Worsnip stresses that many of the original residents are now dead.

A history

In 1867 District Six was named the sixth district of Cape Town, but by the early 1900s the suburb's population began to change when the first removals took place. Resident blacks were forcibly displaced in 1901. The suburb was neglected over the following decades, and by the 1940s the municipality made plans to demolish houses in a slum clearance policy.

Then the Nationalist government came into power into 1948, and the first of a succession of Group Areas Acts became law in 1950. The act was fine-tuned by 1966, when District Six was declared a white area, and wholesale removals and demolitions were in full swing. Residents resisted but by 1982 the last of them were removed to the desolate and windswept Cape Flats – in all some 40 000 people. Several churches and mosques were all that remained. The act was repealed 25 years later, in 1991.

Generations of the mostly coloured people who lived in District Six nurtured the many artists who portrayed the suburb in literature, art, and music. Alex la Guma and Richard Rive wrote *A Walk in the Night* and *Buckingham Palace, District Six*, the latter adapted for the theatre. Artists Gregoire Boonzaaier and Gerard Sekoto captured District Six in colourful depictions. Talented musicians David Kramer and the late Taliep Petersen wrote and produced *District Six – the Musical*, which toured internationally. The musical *Kat and the Kings* was set in the District Six of the late 1950s, and poets Don Mattera and Tatamkhulu Afrika wrote emotive poems on the destruction of colourful suburbs.

The late jazz musician Basil Coetzee, who was born in the district, collaborated with internationally renowned jazz pianist Adbullah Ibrahim, their most famous song being Manenburg, which, decades later, is still a hit. Ibrahim, who has 100 albums

to his name, described the suburb in a 2001 interview with *The Guardian* as a "fantastic city within a city", "where you felt the fist of apartheid; it was the valve to release some of that pressure. In the late 50s and 60s, when the regime clamped down, it was still a place where people could mix freely. It attracted musicians, writers, politicians at the forefront of the struggle. We played and everybody would be there."

Land claims

After the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 was passed, more than 2500 former residents and owners submitted claims, and the process of resettlement began with a heritage impact assessment in 2003.

"This redevelopment of District Six is no ordinary 'development'. It is about allowing for the return of a community that was forcibly removed more than thirty years ago and for the reconstruction of a quarter in the city centre. In doing so, it is an urban project that deals primarily with social justice," states the website.

This has been followed by a succession of steps to reach the goal of restitution – first a conceptual framework, then a development framework, followed by precinct plans, and now finally, building plans.

In 1998 a record of understanding was signed by the District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust, the City of Cape Town and the Regional Land Claims Commission, in which the multicultural character of the area is acknowledged. It resolves to "provide restitution for those forcibly removed from District Six through an integrated redevelopment which will result in a vibrant multicultural community whose dignity has been restored in a developmental environment, grounded in, and meeting the social and economic needs of the claimants and broader community that will contribute towards the building of a new nation".

Twenty-four units were constructed during the first phase, while 115 units went up in the second phase, each consisting of three bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, bathroom and toilets, making up 90m² each. Work on the third phase began in mid-March, with 300 units going up. It is hoped that all claimants will be in new houses by 2015.

The restitution aims to "conceptually reflect the past but be innovative".

Seventy-five-year-old Aboubarker Brown moved back to District Six with his wife four months ago. Born in District Six, he was 49 years old when he and his family were relocated back in 1988. "I am very, very happy to be back," he says.

"I'm extremely confident – we have an amazing resurrection of a piece of land so critical to the city," says Worsnip.

He concludes, saying that over Christmas last year the suburb was buzzing, "just like it was previously", with people out on the streets, braaiing and enjoying each other's company.

"It is an exciting period ahead."