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VAN DIE REDAKTEUR

Dit is 'n besondere voorreg om met hierdie uitgawe van die Nederduitse Teologiese Tydskrif (*NGTT*) vir u 25 akademiese artikels aan te bied.

Ons sluit in hierdie uitgawe van *NGTT* drie artikels in wat op die belangrike globale gesprek aangaande menseregte fokus. Professor Mark Hill se artikel “Freedom of Religion: Recent Developments in the Jurisprudence of the United Kingdom and the European Court of Human Rights” werp lig op die gesprek oor godsdienstvryheid in Europese kontekste, terwyl Prof Wolfgang Huber se artikel – wat as lesing van die *Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS)* aangebied is – ten gunste van die noodsaaklikheid en universaliteit van menseregte in ons globale gespreksvoering argumenteer. Die artikel van Dr Henry Mbaya handel eweneens oor die tema van menseregte, met 'n spesifieke fokus op die verhouding tussen kerk en staat in Malawi tussen 2004 en 2012.

Die res van die artikels in hierdie uitgawe weerspieël op verskillende maniere die veerkragtigheid en belofte van teologiese refleksie wat met die uitdagings vanuit verskeie kontekste (met 'n sterk fokus op Suid-Afrika en die res van Afrika) in gesprek tree.

Ons dra hierdie uitgawe van *NGTT* aan die vorige redakteur, Dr Gerrit Brand, op. Gerrit is in Maart 2013 aan 'n breingewas oorlede. Ons is dankbaar vir sy lewe en werk, en dan spesifiek vir sy bydrae tot die verdere vestiging en uitbouing van die akademiese gehalte van *NGTT*, asook vir sy rol om *NGTT* meer toeganklik as 'n aanlyn-tydskrif te maak. Vroeër vanjaar het 'n bundel *Godverlanger: 'n Huldigingsbundel vir Gerrit Brand met 'n keur uit sy skrywes* (met Willem de Vries en Robert Vosloo as redakteurs) by Sun Press, Stellenbosch verskyn.

Robert Vosloo (*redakteur*)

Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit van Stellenbosch

FROM THE EDITOR

It is privilege to present to you in this edition of our journal 25 academic articles, including three articles dealing with the important global discourse on human rights. Professor Mark Hill's article deals with some recent developments regarding freedom of religion in the jurisprudence of the United Kingdom and the European Court of Human Rights. Prof Wolfgang Huber's article – delivered as a lecture of the *Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS)* – argues for the necessity and universality of human rights in our global discourse. An article by Henry Mbayya also deals with the issue of human rights, this time with a focus on the tension between church and state in Malawi between 2004 and 2012.

The rest of the articles reflect in different ways the promise and power of theological discourse to enter into conversation with challenges arising from different contexts (with a strong emphasis on South Africa and the rest of Africa).

We dedicate this edition of *NGTT* to the previous editor, Dr Gerrit Brand, who sadly passed away in March 2013. We are grateful for his contribution to the academic quality of *NGTT* over the last few years, as well as for his pioneering work in making *NGTT* more accessible online. Earlier this year a book titled *Godverlanger: 'n Huldigingsbundel vir Gerrit Brand met 'n keur uit sy skrywes* (edited by Willem de Vries and Robert Vosloo) was published by Sun Press, Stellenbosch.

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NGTT DEEL 55, NOMMERS 1 & 2, MAART EN JUNIE, 2014

1. Barnard, Marcel – Stellenbosch University; Nell, Ian – Stellenbosch University; Mbaya, Henry – Stellenbosch University
Rev Pungula Wellington Dingani – Leadership in the Corinthian Church in Phepheni, Eastern Cape, South Africa
2. Du Toit, Andrie – University of Pretoria
Revisiting “Church and Society” after a quarter of a century – a critical reappraisal
3. Foot, Leon M – Universiteit van die Vrystaat; Van den Berg, Jan-Albert – Universiteit van die Vrystaat
Lewe na apartheid: Lidmate se narratiewe vanuit ’n longitudinale pastorale betrokkenheid
4. Hendriks, H Jurgens – Stellenbosch University
Theological education in Africa: Messages from the fringes
5. Hill, Mark QC – Cardiff University
Freedom of Religion: Recent Developments in the Jurisprudence of the United Kingdom and the European Court of Human Rights
6. Huber, Wolfgang – Stellenbosch University
Human rights and globalisation – Are human rights a “Western” concept or a universalistic principle?
7. Jonker, Louis – Universiteit Stellenbosch
Om as familie in Suid-Afrika te leef: Interkulturele Bybelstudie as transformatiewe krag in die samelewing
8. Knoetze, JJ – North-West University, Mafikeng Campus
Transforming a fragmented South African society through a spirituality of koinonia coram Deo
9. Kroesbergen, Hermen – University of Pretoria
Beyond realism and non-realism: Religious language-games and reality
10. Lombaard, CJS – University of South Africa
Getting texts to talk. A critical analysis of attempts at eliciting contemporary messages from ancient holy books as exercises in religious communication

11. Loubser, Gys M – Universiteit Stellenbosch
Die verskeidenheid in spiritualiteit: 'n Transdissiplinêre benadering
12. Mbaya, Henry – Stellenbosch University
Human rights – the tension and conflict between church and state in Malawi: 2004-2012
13. Nel, RW – University of South Africa
“It is better to build a bridge...” Using the praxis cycle of Holland and Henriot in discerning an African Reformed missional ecclesiology
14. Oliver, Erna – University of South Africa
The Afrikaner nation's search for a Christian identity as a consequence of the Reformed theology that was practiced between 1961 and 1990
15. Plaatjies-van Huffel, Mary-Anne – Stellenbosch University
The Belhar Confession in its historical context
16. Smit, D J – Universiteit Stellenbosch
Oor Calvyn se siening van die nagmaal
17. Snyman, AH – Universiteit van die Vrystaat
Konstansie en verandering in God se verlossingsplan
18. Strauss, PJ – Universiteit van die Vrystaat
Die Algemene Sinode van 2007 en die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk
19. Van de Beek, Abram – Stellenbosch University
Christ and Creation – Early Christian theologians on Christ's ownership of creation
20. Van der Watt, Jan – North-West University
On hospitality in 3 John – An evaluation of the response of Malina to Malherbe
21. Van Niekerk, Attie – University of Pretoria
The need for ethical quality of life practices
22. Veldsman, DP – University of Pretoria
With reasons of the heart before God. On religious experience from an evolutionary-theological perspective

23. Viljoen, Francois P – North-West University (Potchefstroom)
The law and purity in Matthew; Jesus touching a bleeding woman and a dead girl (Mt 9:18-26)
24. White, Peter and Niemandt, Cornelius J P – University of Pretoria
The role of the Holy Spirit in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches: A missiological study
25. Zuiddam, Benno Alexander – Noordwes-Universiteit (Potchefstroom Kampus)
Die Woord as maatstaf: die implikasie van Godspraak in 1 Petrus 4:11

*Rev Pungula Wellington Dingani – Leadership in
the Corinthian Church in Phepheni, Eastern Cape,
South Africa*

NGTT DEEL 55, NO 1, 2014

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ABSTRACT

Local leadership is crucial in Africa. This article focuses on leadership in African Independent Churches, more specifically on the leader of a local congregation of the Corinthian Church, Rev Dingani in Phepheni, Eastern Cape. The article is composed of two parts. The first part is a portrait of Dingani, mainly from an emic (inside) point of view. After a biographical sketch, his ministry and liturgical leadership are outlined, followed by a portrait of Rev Dingani as a theologian. The second part, which mainly takes an etic (outside) stance, places this portrait in a wider context of leadership in African Independent Churches and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. After indicating some general features of African leadership, the article focuses more specifically on two leadership styles: 1. The humane-oriented and charismatic/value-based style. 2. The participative and autonomous style. By distinguishing this emic and etic positions, we confront Western and African epistemologies, without reconciling them in advance.



1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking of leadership in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the big names come to your mind. Mandela, Tutu, Mugabe, Mobutu, Nujoma. They evoke the memory of good, bad or weak leadership, and of weak, strong or developing states and constitutional laws. However, particularly where 'the ideal of the nation-state remains forlorn' (Müller, 2011:5) and national leaders fail to meet the people's needs, local leadership is crucial. Local leaders guide, or fail to guide, the people through their daily needs. This applies to a large extent also for developing countries that until now have failed to sufficiently address the problems of poverty, unemployment and lack of facilities.

It is not by coincidence that post-colonial scholarly approaches emphasize locality. Within this context, the role of leadership in African Independent Churches 'deserves serious scholarly attention' (Müller, 2011:5). Involved in a project that included research of an African Independent Church – which we have previously published about – we therefore focused our attention on the local leader of the Corinthian Church in Phepheni, in the Eastern Cape.¹ It became clear that his leadership is, inter alia, manifested as liturgical ritual leadership in this church. Social issues such as poverty and addiction are pre-eminently raised within the context of worship. The worship ritual can be considered as a source and a catalyst for mutual assistance, especially where the government does not offer such help or cannot offer it.

Scholarly terminology used to describe leadership behaviour derives mainly from Western language, routinely used in organizational psychology and sociology. When used in a religious context it requires important re-interpretations. Also, it does not necessarily reflect African views on leadership. Locality, and examination of the local, requires that primarily the local voice sounds. Our first questions in this article are therefore, how does the leading priest of the Corinthian Church in Phepheni understand his own leading role? And, how is that understanding to be understood

1 The research project ran from 2008-2011 and was funded by NRF, Grant number 73794. The research was performed by a team of mainly South African and Dutch scholars, and led by Prof Cas Wepener, University of Pretoria. It is introduced in Wepener, C., Swart, I., Ter Haar, G., Barnard, M. (2010) The Role of Religious Ritual in Social Capital Formation for Poverty Alleviation and Social Development: Theoretical and Methodological Points of Departure of a South African Exploration. *Religion and Theology*. 17 (1,2). pp 61-82; worship in the Corinthian Church is described and analyzed in Wepener, C., Mbaya, H., Barnard, M. (2011) Worship in the Corinthian Church (AIC) of Phepheni, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Studia Liturgica*. 41 (2). pp 252-273; the start of the research is reflected on in Wepener, C. and Barnard, M. (2010) Entering the Field: Initiating Liturgical Research in an AIC. *Acta Theologica*. 30 (2). pp 192-210.

against the background of his biography? Only then will we ask the question how this leadership can be understood in the context of broader perspectives on leadership in Africa, thereby using scholarly literature. As a consequence, the article is composed of two parts. The first part is a sketched portrait of the Rev Dingani, mainly from an emic point of view. The second part, which mainly takes an etic stance, places this portrait in a wider context of leadership in African Independent Churches and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. By distinguishing this emic and etic positions, we confront Western and African epistemologies, without reconciling them in advance as noted by Ellis & Ter Haar (2007:392).

2. REV PUNGULA WELLINGTON DINGANI – A PORTRAIT

We will sketch a portrait of Rev Dingani in three parts. First, we will present some biographical facts; then, we will focus on his ministry and more specifically on his liturgical ritual leadership. Eventually, we will portray Rev Dingani as a theologian.² Other than a detailed biography, a sketch shows broken lines, vague spots and white, undesignated areas, but it shows an adequate picture. Some photographs, taken during the fieldwork, will contribute to the image of Rev Dingani in their own way.³

This biographical sketch is based on interviews with Rev Dingani, as well as on observations of the authors. We met Dingani in various places and circumstances, in his own village, usually after worship, as well as in Kokstad, the nearest town, on

2 With regard to methodology and authorship of this article: this section is mainly based on two interviews that the first author had with Rev Dingani, a long interview of nearly one-and-a-half hour on 24 December 2010 in Kokstad, KwaZulu-Natal, in the office of the Anglican Church. The third author of this article, who speaks isiXhosa as well as English, and who takes part in the project, translated the interview simultaneously. This interview was recorded. A short interview was performed on 25 December in Phepheni, Eastern Cape near Flagstaff, in the house of Rev Dingani. This interview was translated simultaneously by a local woman and also recorded. Transcripts of the English texts of the interviews were made, which were analyzed by the first author by means of Attribute Coding, Descriptive Coding and Structural Coding. The third author has checked the results. Additions were made on the basis of previous research, as it has been published in other publications (see references). In the taped interview Rev Dingani declines the offer of Informed Consent explicitly; he does not want to have insight in the article prior to publication. The interview data is stored at the Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam, Netherlands, in accordance with Dutch law. Other data of the research project is stored at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, as well as at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The second author of the article provided background information regarding leadership in African contexts.

3 The first author of this article took all photos.

the other side of the province border of the Eastern Cape, in the Sisonke District in KwaZulu-Natal. The town is about 25 kilometres from Phepheni and Dingani then travelled by bus to see us. In town, Rev Dingani was dressed in a shirt, sweater, a green jacket and blue pants (*Photos 1, 2*). On his head he had, as usual, his cap with, what we would decode as 'Islamic' symbols: a palm tree and a crescent on a cupola according to Mbaya & Chetty (2012). He himself, however, says that he does not know the interpretations of the symbols. He wears them because the founder of the church, Johannes Richmond, whose father was a Muslim, wore them. Dingani has a modern briefcase with him. In his role as liturgical leader he is dressed quite differently, as we will see later in this article.



Personally, Rev Dingani is very much an accessible and expressive man. He uses wide gestures while he is speaking. He is also accessible and connected in a more technical sense: he has a cell phone. Remember, however, that Phepheni has no electricity, waterworks or sewage. Wireless networks ignore the lack of wired and pipe facilities. Dingani likes meeting the researchers who come to visit him, and when we met in Phepheni he has always shown generous hospitality.

Rev Dingani belongs to the AmaXesibe ethnic group, and he speaks isiXhosa (mixed with IsiXesibe), but can also express himself in some Basic English phrases. Until recently most of the Xhosa people live in the Eastern Cape, but many have migrated to the Western Cape, especially in and around Cape Town, where they moved, hoping to find employment. This means that the social structure of traditional communities is broken because of the absence of these migrants. We will soon see that Dingani himself has also been a labour migrant for a substantial part of his life. Originally, Xhosa people were settlers, having cattle.

Dingani's Life

Pungula Wellington Dingani was born in the village of Emvalweni near the small town of Mount Ayliff. This is in the northern part of the Eastern Cape, roughly 125 kilometres inland from the Indian Ocean, where the land northward and westward begins to rise to the tops of the 'Draken Moutains' (Drakensberge). He was born on 29 March 1944. His parents were, as he told us, Christians and pastoral people, having cattle. He himself helped his parents with looking after the livestock. Until this day, the hills in this area are green, with cattle and sheep grazing in the pastures (*Photo 3*). Small villages of rondavels and square modest houses in pastels are scattered over the hills. He was baptized in a river and thus became a member of a church called African Church.



Dingani went to school as far as grade five. Then his parents died, and he could no longer afford to go to school. An aunt, a sister of his father, to whom he attributes an important role in his life, as we will see below, now further raised him.

Later, Wellington Dingani worked in the coalmines around Johannesburg. He thus entered into a core industry of the South African economy (see Munnik, Hochmann, Hlabane & Law, 2010). Mining shaped modern South Africa in an economic sense but has also moulded and is still moulding labour relations in the country. The apartheid regime used coal mining as ‘an avenue for advancing Afrikaner capital’ (Munnik, Hochmann, Hlabane & Law, 2010:7). Labour circumstances of the black miners were severe, not to say gruesome, and unhealthy. Wages were low. The profits went to the white mine owners. Moreover, mining from its beginning, at the end of the 19th century, disturbed social family structures, because young men left their native soil and their families for work in the Gauteng area. Conflicts surrounding the mining industries were one of the causes of the South African War. And mining labour is still a source of vehement social conflict in the ‘new’ South Africa, as the strike in the Lonmin mine in Marikana, near Rustenburg, in August 2012, shows. In this last conflict bullets from police arms killed 44 strikers. We find Wellington Dingani in the coalmines around Johannesburg from 1966 to 1981, in the harsh years of apartheid. This means that he left his family, his native soil and his cattle in the Eastern Cape and moved to Gauteng, looking for labour and money. He found mainly misery. We see a glimpse of the misery that he endured in his repeated remarks that he became addicted to alcohol and tobacco. Drinking and smoking seemed the only comfort in an otherwise bleak existence. He also tells us about his poverty. There were clearly periods of tough poverty, in which he had no money to buy trousers and other clothes, blankets and sheets. Even finding a wife appeared to be difficult, if not impossible, because of the dowry that traditionally has to be paid in African cultures.

Dingani tells us that he grew up as a praying person, and it is in this respect that he pays tribute to the aunt who raised him in his teenager years. ‘She was a very prayerful person, all the time depending on prayer life’. In the reconstruction of his life story, he says that in his poverty ‘the prayer was helpful, in the sense that through prayer people gave him things’. According to his understanding prayer made people give him things like blankets and also gave him his wife. He developed a longing to go to church for praying and becoming involved in church matters. In 1977 he experienced a call into the ministry.

His parents brought him up in the African Church mentioned earlier, which according to Dingani is very much like a Presbyterian Church. He himself, however, developed a preference for the Corinthian Church now. Dingani tells us that ‘the Corinthians were very prayerful people’. Knowing that he was going through difficulties, the Corinthians prayed for him and laid hands on him. His life improved: it was easier to get a job and he was getting money. From his point of view, his joining of the

Corinthian Church goes along with the alleviation of poverty and the meeting of his wife. This is supported by the dates he gives, as he becomes a full member of the church in the year after he left the mines. He interprets his step into the church as a life-changing event, literally, as his poverty decreased and he became a married man. His wife plays an important role in the Corinthian Church in Phepheni nowadays. She plays a big drum in the services and is leader of the women guild. Rev Dingani and his wife got three children.

From then on, his ecclesial career rapidly developed. He started to read the scriptures and the minister urged him to become a full member of the church, which was effected in 1982. His first more or less official role in the church was that of doorkeeper, surveying whether everything in the church was in order, and welcoming people. In a next step he became an evangelist. This was affected by means of a ritual in which a goat is slaughtered. The blood of the goat is mixed with water, and thereafter the blood and fat of the goat, as well as oil, are smeared on the face of the newly installed evangelist. Then the sign of the cross is made with a staff, presumably that of the priest who presides over the service, and finally the meat of the goat are eaten. According to Dingani, the necessity of this rite is founded in an appeal to the Bible, more specifically, the Old Testament and the Law of Moses. With regard to the abundant slaughtering of animals in this church, the appeal is prominent, to a degree that Pauline laws are ignored to the advantage of the Mosaic laws.

Eventually, Wellington Dingani became the leading minister of the Corinthian Church in Phepheni. The complete, extended research team of the project of which this article is part, witnessed the last biographical fact to which we refer here. It is undoubtedly a highlight in Dingani's life. The ministry gave Dingani an opportunity to follow the three-years course of the Sokhanya Bible School in Cape Town, by means of distance learning and correspondence, as announced in the brochure on the KGA-website (2014).⁴ The school 'offers Biblical training to leaders and members of all kinds of Xhosa-speaking churches'. The only textbook that the students need is the Bible and no specific literacy level is required to subscribe to the courses. Students are coached in reading the Bible and in developing 'a socio-historical and biblical-theological frame of reference'. Dr Danie van Zyl, who previously taught at the University of the Western Cape, is lecturer at the school. The school is funded privately and by a commission that is affiliated with the Dutch Reformed Church. According to the brochure on the Internet, eighty to ninety students attend the

4 Also the following quotes are taken from this brochure.

courses each year. Distance students are encouraged to shape a graduation ceremony according to their own insights.

Rev Pungula Wellington Dingani chose the visit of the extended research team in February 2010 as the suitable occasion to perform this ceremony (*Photos 4, 5, 6*). The graduation had to be performed by the leader of our research team. The bishop, Walter Zamindlela Njangule, in the picture in a blue gown, attended the ceremony. The service was held in a tent that had been especially erected for the occasion. Thus the researchers witnessed a ceremony after the service during which Dingani was clothed with gown and beret by Prof Cas Wepener from the University of Pretoria. The newly graduated minister received gifts from the parishioners as well as from the visitors. The gifts were mainly envelopes with money and blankets, the latter being a valuable present in the cold nights and sometimes also cold days in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.



A sheep had been slaughtered that morning, and the party ended with a meal cooked in pots and pans on an open wood fire in the field for all attendees. The sheepskin hung to dry in the afternoon sun (*Photos 7, 8*). The researchers were treated as guests of honour. They ate with the minister in his house, while the villagers ate outside.

Rev Dingani's ministry and liturgical leadership

There can be no misunderstanding that Dingani is the leader of the Corinthian Church in Phepheni. He is the leading priest, although there are two other priests, one of whom is a woman. He represents the church in contacts with the various visiting academics. They deal with him. He is the host. After a service, they are received in his home for a meal, usually chicken and rice with some vegetables. On special occasions, a sheep is slaughtered. Also in the worship services Dingani is the leader. Leadership in the church is hierarchically structured. A regional bishop supervises the ministers, whereas the supreme leadership of the church is attributed to the widow of the founder, Archbishop Mrs Bestina Richmond. Now let us have a closer look at his leadership.

Dingani's call to the ministry, and thus to leadership, has developed gradually, as we have seen. A longing to go to church evolved into being a lector, which progressed into his being an evangelist and eventually a minister. Asked about his tasks as a minister, he first refers to the performing of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion, and also to the associated administrative task of providing baptismal certificates to the newly baptized people. This remark gives us insight into the organizational structure of this church, which is mainly paperless. Baptismal certificates are handed over to the ministers at the yearly festival of *Isitshisa* in Mlazi, Durban. Apparently, the *Isitshisa* is a kind of a hub in the Corinthian Church's network. There, not only spiritual and diaconal values are transferred, but also documents regarding church membership through baptism. This administrative structure is the responsibility of the minister.

Rev Dingani's leadership's role in worship is clearly marked by his liturgical vestments (*Photos 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14*). A white shawl is wrapped around his hat and tied with one or three knots. He wears a green tunic with a clerical collar, and over this tunic an alb, of which he has at least two. He usually, but not always, goes barefoot during the services. He does not read from paper during his sermons, they seem to flow extemporaneously. When he reads from the Bible or from a Methodist book of worship, he wears spectacles. In worship he is the principal leader, but he encourages others enthusiastically to active participation in worship.





The pastoral care for the people in the church is another important role of the minister. Dingani frames this task in terms of the Holy Spirit, prayer and clarification. In a quote several aspects of this pastoral role are referred to:

(Translator:) ... now he is saying that during church, during worship, he prays for people to experience this power of the Holy Spirit. So the church is just the place where he encourages people to get involved in this, but when they go to their homes, they also experience this power of the Holy Spirit. Now in church sometimes, when they are praying, he has the revelation that some of the people are somehow closed, so he sometimes just slaps them... to open them.

Encouragement of the people is important in this regard, so 'that they can cultivate the spirit during worship'. Prayer mediates this cultivation of the Spirit. The minister prays for the people and 'has to be very prayerful himself'. According to Dingani, this is also what people expect from him: they want 'to see you in the Spirit of God awakening'. Leadership is first of all spiritual leadership, literary so: the leader must be filled with the Spirit. This aspect of being filled with the Spirit makes the leader a *primus inter pares*, for the content of his prayer is that the Holy Spirit will fall upon the congregation and that they will also be filled with the same Spirit. As a consequence, an important element in his leadership is that he encourages people to open up to the Spirit. This has to be understood literally. During service, it is revealed to him by the Spirit that some people are not opened to the same Spirit, and he has to physically slap them open.

(Translator:) ‘The Holy Spirit is going to tell you that no, this person is not by himself. (...) There is something in behind. (...) You feel angry, that, feel angry! You feel cross. It is not you, it is something. It is something. I hit something. I don’t see you. I hit something. Something go away! Go away! Go away, go away, something! I don’t hit him. Hit a demon. It might be a demon! (...) Then, after that, you can see all the things are right. (...) Yeah, you must be careful with the spirits. (...) demons are so clever. (...) We try to keep the demons out of another person. If you are not strong and you are not (find?) amused by the Holy Spirit, that demon can come back straight to you.’

This slapping is a really forceful procedure, performed during the circle dances or prayers in the worship service. Dingani explains that in fact it is not he who is clapping, but the Holy Spirit. And it is not the person he is hitting, but ‘something’ or a demon. Therefore, a person full of the Holy Spirit will not feel pain when being slapped.

Being open to the Spirit is not limited to the church service, but also holds at home. The presence of the Spirit in the homes of the people is confirmed by them having dreams and visions sometimes. Here the role of the religious leader as hermeneutic comes to the fore. He interprets the dreams and visions. The nature of these visions or dreams is, says Dingani, dependent on the personal guardian angel. For instance, someone sees a man sitting on a rock, or someone dreams of a person getting into the water. People come to the minister to clarify the visions and dreams. He is the diviner. Dingani explains that the person getting into the water refers to baptism, and that the man on the rock is Jesus.

Dingani also showed a more autonomous leadership style in the way he registered the presentation of the gifts that we brought for him. We brought presents when we attended his graduation ceremony, and also during other visits. Usually, we took a book and collected some money as a kind of contribution for the food that we received, and as a contribution to the new church building that is planned. The foundations of this new church have already been laid, although we have seen no progress in the building process over the years. According to Dingani the construction materials are very expensive. As a rule, Rev Dingani wants us to present the smaller gifts, like books, in the worship service, whereas he prefers to take the envelope with some money in private. To do so in public, he says, ‘would cause a lot of tension. (...) they [the congregation members – authors] think differently’. This leadership style caused a certain discomfort among researchers, who are oriented towards Western styles of leadership, because there seems to be no accountability of the gifts to the church community. However, we realize that there are no good structures in place

for transparency; there is no formal building committee that supervises and plans the building activities, and bank accounts appear not to be in use.

Rev Dingani as a theologian

In this section we sketch Dingani as a theologian. We indeed consider him to be a theologian, albeit not in the traditional way that we use the word in academic discourse. His theological, as well as his general education, is limited. Leaders in African Independent Churches seem to construct a theology in a way ‘that shows a real effort to be faithful to the Biblical text’ and they ‘work it out in detail in a “systematic” way’, but many in those churches ‘cling to a tradition which they cannot explain’ (Van Zyl, 1996:230). On the basis of our interviews and observations, we will reconstruct Dingani’s theological framework.

Reverend Dingani is first of all a pneumatological theologian. The Holy Spirit is in the centre of his theology, or, in other words, at the top of Father – Son and Holy Spirit. His pneumatology is closely connected to a liturgical theology, in which prayer forms the key. The Spirit foremost works in the members of the congregation, and in particular, but not exclusively so, in worship. Because the Spirit heals their lives and alleviates their poverty, it also has a societal impact. Conversely, poverty and disease have a spiritual component.

‘Africa is indeed threatened by some massively destructive forces that can be quite precisely identified, including disease, debt and underinvestment. At the same time, however, many Africans also consider these conditions in a spirit idiom, seeing themselves as beset by evil forces that have a known material cause but that also have a spiritual dimension’ (Ellis & Ter Haar, 2007:397).

It is interesting that Dingani did not refer to Jesus Christ in the long interview that we had with him. Müller and Wepener, however, note that Dingani’s sermons have a ‘distinct Christocentric hermeneutic’ (Müller & Wepener, 2011:5). On the basis of our observations and interviews, we have related dance and rhythm to the prayer to the Holy Spirit: dancing is closely connected to the evocation of the Spirit, and this is the rubric that most frequently returns in the liturgical orders. Dingani confirms this: the drumming ‘gives you power and is very much connected to the Holy Spirit, to the descent of the Holy Spirit’.

The work of the Spirit foremost favours the members of the church. This work refers to healing and alleviation of needs. Healings in and through the worship services are directly attributed to the Spirit – in the interviews that we had with Rev Dingani he refers in this regard to the healing of his own backache. The broader society

comes into view via the people prayed for. By praying for them needs become social: through prayer needs are shared among the members of the church. This prayer also confirms the fact that in African epistemology needs have a spiritual dimension that can be cured through prayer. It is in this indirect way that society comes into view through the worship rituals.

Corinthians for example hold true that in their church you do not smoke or drink. If they nevertheless do, they are being prayed for, and in that sense the church contributes to a healthy society. Conversely, the Spirit that comes through prayer can cure smoking and drinking addictions. Poverty is addressed in the same way. The church prays for poor people, so poverty becomes public and can be alleviated through reciprocal help. The yearly *Isitshisa* festival has a strong diaconal element and serves as a lesson for the participants and their local congregations to do good to the poor and needy. In so far, this theology of the Spirit that comes through prayer stimulates social bonding, whereas structural analyses of poverty and addiction in a more western sense seem to be absent. Questioned whether he is involved in politics, Dingani says that he is not much interested in it and expresses no great trust in political leaders. The names of South Africa's most prominent leaders, even the national Xhosa leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and Desmond Tutu, are virtually absent in the conversations with Rev Dingani.

The theological leadership of Rev Dingani requires a precise discernment of the different spirits that hover around and through the empirically observable world: the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the church founder and the other spirits have to be distinguished very precisely. The Holy Spirit is closely connected in a kind of cooperation to the spirit of the late founder of the church, whereas the spirits of the ancestors and also, as we have seen, the demons, are clearly distinguished from the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the founder, in the theology of Dingani. These categories of the spiritual world are distinguished, but at the same time juxtaposed, and in the case of the demons opposed. Besides the Holy Spirit the spirit of the founder of the Corinthian Church is evoked in worship. The spirits of the ancestors play no part in public worship, according to Dingani, but in individual services, so-called *ladi*. These are special services in case of individual problems. Dingani explains that in such a service the person who is in trouble, while the minister prays for the person with the problem evokes the spirits of the ancestors. The spirits come to assist the person and to sort out the problems. The different spirits are connected to different colours of candles. In public worship the white candle on the table refers to the Holy Spirit, in *ladi*-services candles in different colours are placed on the floor.

Dingani's references to the Bible are rather loose or at least difficult to systematize. Müller and Wepener speak of a 'spiritualising hermeneutic' (Müller & Wepener,

2011:5). Yet, his theological education was focused on the Bible. Dingani appears to consider the Scripture a predicate of the Holy Spirit: the Bible is ‘read and understood under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit and then applied directly without use of interpretative skills’ (Müller & Wepener, 2011:5). Sometimes, Dingani expresses uncertainty about what the Bible says. When talking about angels, he says: (translator) ‘maybe he is saying something which is not in the Bible, I don’t know – he does not know either’. Sometimes, however, he is very resolute on hermeneutic choices and shows a certain freedom towards the literal text or at least does not problematize contradictions within the Scripture itself. The sacrificing practices of the church are, he says, strongly rooted in the Mosaic law. So are the dressing codes. They are performed according to the old-testament laws, and to the detriment of Paul, – according to Dingani, rightly so. Without further reflection he says that in this regard ‘the Jewish custom’ is followed. Sacrifices are in a Mosaic way seen as a way to communicate with and to express thanksgivings to God, but also have a bonding effect on the community.

3. LEADERSHIP IN THE “AFRICAN CONDITION”

Features of sub-Saharan leadership styles

Regarding sub-Saharan African leadership styles, Peter Northouse (2010)⁵ found a prevalence of a ‘humane-oriented leadership’, in which ‘(c)oncern for family and friends is more important than concern for the self’ (Northouse, 2010:347). Concerning the sub-Saharan Africa Leadership Profile he writes:

‘An ideal leader is modest, compassionate, and sensitive to the people...

In addition, they believe a leader should be relatively charismatic/value-based, team orientated, participative, and self-protective. Leaders who act independently or act alone are viewed as less effective in these countries. In short, the Sub-Saharan Africa profile characterizes effective leadership as caring leadership’ (Northouse, 2010:353)

5 Northouse makes use of House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W. & Vipin Gupta (eds.) (2004) *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The Globe Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks/ London/ New Delhi: SAGE Publications. Northouse has identified nine cultural dimensions that determine the character of leadership. On the basis of these markers he has proposed six perspectives of leadership behavior, which in different compositions characterize leadership in ten ‘clusters of world cultures’. Sub-Saharan Africa is one of these clusters. The research for this cluster was performed in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, Nigeria and South Africa (black sample).

Thus, in a hierarchical order, the following features characterize effective leadership: humane-oriented, charismatic/value-based, team-oriented, participative, self-protective, autonomous (Northouse, 2010:354). Northouse's findings correspond with the conclusions of Van Zyl, Dalglish & Lues (2009:32), a group of South African researchers, although they are much more critical of many of the negative characteristics found within African leadership in general. However, they also refer to features like spiritual collectivism, inclination towards consensus, humility and helpfulness, an inclusive system, perpetual optimism and a belief in superior forces as part of the African cultural value system.

We take these features as a generalization of Sub-Saharan Africa style of leadership and use them as a heuristic instrument in probing into the leadership of the Corinthian Church.

Humane-oriented and charismatic/value-based leadership in the Corinthian Church

From an emic perspective successful leadership in the Corinthian Church is primarily characterized by charisma and the work of the Holy Spirit. From an etic perspective it is particularly striking how successful leadership seamlessly joins traditional African values and social structures. The Corinthian Church is a church of the poor and for the poor, thus existing within the contexts of poverty and of governments that are unable to meet the basic needs of the people. Taking the etic and academic view, the leadership style in this African Indigenous Church primarily shows a human orientation. Charisma/value-based and participative leadership styles, together with a more autonomous style, represent strong secondary characteristics.

It was the vision and initiative of the church's founder, Johannes Richmond, to give the blind a central place in the yearly *Isitshisa* festival (Barnard, Mbaya & Wepener, 2014). They, as well as other needy persons who are normally excluded socially, benefit from the generosity of the Corinthians when they try to give them equal opportunities and attempt to transform the social conditions of the blind. The festival, similar to the local services, is performed to re-establish solidarity in a broad sense, that is, including friendliness, brotherhood, et cetera. In interviews with the wife of the founder, the present archbishop of the church, Mrs Bestina Richmond, strongly expressed to believe that the leadership of the Church has derived from divine calling in her late husband, prompted by the Holy Spirit. She is of the opinion that the founder is said to have had a very special calling from God as prophetic and charismatic figure. It is observed that in Zionist churches – to which the Corinthians do not count themselves, but which are big African indigenous churches – the bishop is a central figure, and “is understood to have supernatural powers to intercede on

behalf of his followers” (Müller, 2011:189). Charisma is clearly needed to enhance an attitude of friendliness and brotherhood.

The emphasis on brotherhood or friendship can be evaluated from the perspective of African worldviews and values that emphasize the importance of the extended family. The organizational structure of the church and of its leadership hierarchy is focused on the transfer of not only spiritual but also diaconal values. Thus African Independent Churches and their leadership “constitute a form of parallel nationality” (Müller, 2011:5). Whether this process of value transfer succeeds, is dependent on the charisma of its leaders and their commitment to common values.

By analogy with the national leaders, also local leaders such as Rev Dingani claim to be driven by the Spirit. Dingani also sees it as his mission to heal and alleviate needs of the congregation. His charisma, that is, in his self-understanding, his being led by the Holy Spirit, is leading in this assignment. According to his own views, he shapes his mission mainly in the context of liturgical ritual by identifying needs, that is by identifying demons and other hindrances that keep people closed for the Spirit, and opening them to the Spirit, which in turn heals and provides for their needs. From a more distanced academic point of view, he can be said to join traditional African worldviews of richly populated spiritual realms and traditional African values of the extended family and *ubuntu*. He gives people their self-esteem back in a context of humiliating poverty and a failing government. The key to unlocking the enigma of the success of Zionist churches is ‘residing in its ability to integrate and make whole the various fragmented realities that constitute contemporary South African society’ (Müller, 2011:5). The striving for human wholeness, especially among people experiencing marginalization and deprivation on account of poor living conditions, is also in the centre of the activities of the Corinthian Church.

Hence, the interface of religion and culture is aimed at in these churches, and the success of leadership is connected with the extent to which they successfully perform such integration. As a consequence, the success of leadership is dependent on the extent to which the liturgical ritual is really African. On the other hand, leadership is dependent on the recognition that the leader is called, created and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Participative and autonomous leadership in the Corinthian Church

We find the most important aspect of the participation in leadership activities in the Corinthian Church in the ritual and liturgical setting. The rituals characterize the leadership role of the minister, for instance as the enactor of the rituals and celebrant of sacraments. He also encourages participants to participate actively in the liturgy.

One of the outstanding features of performing the rituals within the liturgical setting is of course the participation of all the participants in the sanctuary through rhythmic dancing, blowing of trumpets, prophecies, praying and many other ritual activities. Further, Rev Dingani is not the only priest in the church in Phepheni, two others, one of who is a woman, accompany him. However, upon receipt of some of the gifts, we have observed deliberately non-participative leadership behaviour.

It is significant that the wife of the founder is revered as ‘woman leader’ [*umongamelikazi*] and is regarded as the custodian of the traditions of the church with a special role to play, as we discovered in another interview. It is she who brought in the golden iron sword [*induku*], which bestowed authority on the bishop to preside over all the following proceedings. It is clear that the future of the Corinthian Church depends on the extent to which a member of the family – in this case the wife of the founder – sees to it that the traditions of the church are performed in terms of the rulings prescribed by the founder, e.g. the right sacrifice for the *isitshisa* ritual.

Leadership is also autonomous in the sense that it is hierarchical, where the power is distributed in a command line of authority. From this observation, it can be concluded that succession is critical, as it has to ensure continuity of the tradition and therefore its legitimacy and authenticity. Because of this, the right rituals must be performed correctly to ensure legitimacy of authority. In the Zionist Christian Church we find a similar ‘history of dynastic leadership’: ‘one is struck by how much of it seems to be about the Lekganyane family, rather than about the ordinary people making up the church’ (Müller, 2011:15).

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*Revisiting “Church and Society” after a quarter of a century – a critical reappraisal*¹

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ABSTRACT

Apart from the more immediate catalysts for “Church and Society” such as the Reformation Day Confession, the Open Letter, the suspension of the Dutch Reformed Church from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Confession of Belhar, also the legacy of Cottesloe, the demise of “Ras, Volk en Nasie”, contributions of the Cape Synod, pressure from overseas Reformed institutions and growing internal misgivings about apartheid, should be kept in mind. Two divergent currents met in “Church and Society”, causing it to become a document of compromise. Theologically, it improved on its predecessor, but its ambivalent character subjected it to severe criticism. The most basic strategic mistake in “Church and Society” was the exclusion of the rest of the Dutch Reformed family. The Dutch Reformed Church was not yet ready to confess apartheid unreservedly as sin. Finally, it is suggested that our present situation urgently calls for a new, prophetic ecclesiastic directive, but then one coming from the Dutch Reformed family as a whole; still better: from one united Dutch Reformed Church.

1 Expanded version of a presentation at the Stellenbosch conference on the theme *Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika en die stryd om geregtigheid: 1960-1990 onthou*, 14-16 May 2012.

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1. THE BUILD-UP TO “CHURCH AND SOCIETY”

In his investigation into the apartheid history of the Dutch Reformed Church³ and particularly the two official documents, popularly called “Ras, Volk en Nasie”⁴ and “Kerk en Samelewing”⁵, J.M. van der Merwe (1990) singled out the “Reformation Day Confession” by eight Dutch Reformed theologians,⁶ the “Open Letter”, addressed to the DRC by 123 signatories, the 1982 meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches where the membership of the DRC was suspended, and the Confession of Belhar⁷ as the more immediate “impulses” to the decision by the DRC to review “Ras, Volk en Nasie” (Van der Merwe 1990:216-457). The following complementary remarks to Van der Merwe’s investigation may be in place:

It will be impossible to understand the background of CS, its nature, the synodical decisions around it and the reactions it elicited unless we start with the 1960 Cottesloe conference where representatives of the Dutch Reformed Churches of the Cape and the Transvaal as well as the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika were engaged in serious deliberations with representatives from several (mainly) English speaking churches⁸ and the World Council of Churches regarding racism and ethnicity in South Africa. The vast majority of the members of the DRC, and many other white South Africans were not ready for the outcome of Cottesloe.⁹ To put it mildly: After the publication of the Cottesloe report the white Afrikaans

3 Henceforth abbreviated as DRC.

4 Its full title in Afrikaans is “Ras, Volk en Nasie in die lig van die Skrif”. The English title reads “Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture”. Henceforth abbreviated as HRSAS.

5 The full title is “Kerk en Samelewing. ’n Getuienis van die Ned Geref Kerk”. Its English version is “Church and Society. A Testimony of the Dutch Reformed Church”. Henceforth abbreviated as CS. Where differentiation is necessary, the concept report put before the synod of 1986 will be indicated as CS^{concept}, the report approved by the synod as CS¹⁹⁸⁶, and the revised 1990 report as CS¹⁹⁹⁰.

6 Which he considered “the beginning of a new beginning for the Dutch Reformed Church” (1990:270).

7 The Confession of Belhar and the proclamation of a *status confessionis* by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church were the culmination of a long process of painful wrestling on the part of the Mission Church with the DRC on issues dealing with apartheid. Concomitant with Belhar and the *status confessionis* went the indictment of the DRC of heresy and idolatry.

8 For a full list, see Lückhoff (1978:173-175).

9 Cf the admission of this in the statement by the Algemene Sinodale Kommissie (1997:18)..

speaking ecclesiastical scene was in turmoil. It stirred up deep-seated emotions, prejudices and painful reminiscences which had become engrained in the attitudes and thinking of many. Even the prime minister of the time, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, commented on Cottesloe and rejected it in the strongest terms. The shadow of Cottesloe hovered over the DRC for many decades. Important issues raised by Cottesloe hung in the air. In addition, Cottesloe left a painful scar in the collective memory of many of the church's members, and this scar has yet not fully healed. The rift opened up between the proponents and opponents of Cottesloe cloned itself in later DRC reports. Fortunately, more positive tendencies gradually came to the fore, but even today much persuasive and reconciliatory work remains to be done.

In 1974 the DRC General Synod accepted *Ras, Volk en Nasie* (= HRSAS).¹⁰ It was intended to be the official policy document of the DRC on ethnic relations in South Africa, but, to an important extent, it also represented the reaction of the DRC to Cottesloe. Due to its reactionary nature and its efforts to appease worried church members, it showed radical theological deficiencies, such as its insistence on diversity at the cost of unity, its statement that “the New Testament allows for the possibility that a given country may decide to regulate its inter-people relationships on the basis of separate development” (section 13.6; cf also 49.6),¹¹ and its censure on racially mixed marriages. It became clear that HRSAS could under no circumstance be the DRC's last word on ethnic relations. Its demise called for its revision. To its credit, it was far-sighted enough to claim in its opening statement that the church “can never allow itself the luxury of regarding its consideration of relations between races and peoples completed” and that “it will always be the calling of the church to listen anew to the Word of God.”

Some other contributing factors should also be highlighted here.¹² The Cape Synod made some important positive contributions. At its 1975 session it made efforts to move away from the HRSAS's repudiation of racially mixed marriages and its rigid emphasis on diversity (cf Van der Merwe 1990:136-142). In 1979, it emphasized “that all forms of racial discrimination which conflict with (a) the ethical norm of neighbourly love, which includes justice, and (b) the principle that all people enjoy

10 All official documents quoted in this article are available in the archives of the DRC, situated on the premises of the Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch.

11 To be fair, it should be said that the following qualification that a policy of separate development should comply with the norms of love for one's neighbour and social justice, is often overlooked.. This acid test, if critically applied, would have dealt the death blow to ecclesiastically sanctioned apartheid.

12 Van der Merwe carefully treated all of these, but I shall focus on their relevance for the decision to revise HRSAS.

equal status before God clash with the biblical message” (see Algemene Sinodale Kommissie 1997: 27-28). Certainly the qualification that suggests that there may be acceptable forms of discrimination was very misplaced. However, at least some progress was made towards tackling the scourge of racial discrimination and it prepared the way for CS to reject all forms of racial discrimination.

Various painfully honest and theologically penetrating encounters with fellow ministers and theologians of Reformed tradition in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany also contributed significantly towards setting the scene for CS.¹³ Within this context, a 1979 visit of eight Dutch Reformed theologians to Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands for discussions with delegates from Reformed institutions in these countries should be highlighted. The members of this delegation were Professors C.W.H. Boshoff, A.B du Toit, J.A. Heyns, W.D. Jonker, E.P.J. Kleynhans, N.J. Smith, P.A. Verhoef and Dr. F.E. O’Brien Geldenhuys (cf. Van der Merwe 1990: 220-221).¹⁴ On their return the South African delegation made a well-motivated recommendation to the Plenary Moderature of the DRC that a commission of specialists should be appointed to thoroughly revise and rewrite HRSAS. This recommendation made no small contribution to the eventual decision of the 1982 Synod to revise HRSAS (see esp. Algemene Sinodale Kommissie 1997:25-26).

As to the factors building up to the revision of HRSAS, there is one less obvious development which should be mentioned: The fact that many leading white Afrikaans speaking Christians at this time began to realize that apartheid was a mistake, not only on practical grounds, but also from a moral perspective. Telling in this regard is the account of J. Lensink, a former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, of a visit by himself and three other ministers of the Reformed Church of Africa to Mr B.J. Vorster, then Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, shortly after the Soweto uprisings of June 1976. The purpose of this visit was to hand a memorandum to the Prime Minister. The group had severe misgivings about the visit and expected a stern, dominating, and paternalistic figure. Instead the opposite happened. The original fifteen minutes became an hour and a half. The Prime Minister addressed them as fellow brothers in Christ and told them, in essence, and in the highest confidence, that he and his government realized that apartheid was a mistake, but they needed time to persuade white South Africans that change was necessary. According to Lensink, the delegation left the meeting-room, toy toying with joy. The essential authenticity of this account can hardly be

13 Discussed *in extenso* by Van der Merwe (1990:153-197).

14 It is not without importance that three members of this group were also signatories to the “Reformation Day Confession”, viz. Professors Heyns, Jonker and Du Toit.

questioned.¹⁵ To my mind it at least indicates that even in some staunch Nationalist circles some serious rethinking was taking place. This was also increasingly the case among other white Afrikaans intellectuals.

At this stage, a growing number of DRC theologians, ministers and church members were already convinced, or becoming aware, of the wrongs of apartheid, as illustrated by some of the “impulses” and factors mentioned above. As a matter of fact, quite a number of them had a long time previously already embraced the essence of the Cottesloe decisions. They realized that apartheid was wrong and that the increasing violence engendered by it made it even more evil. However, many others still felt the opposite. The scene was thus set for the deliberations finally eventuating in CS.

2. TYPIFYING CHURCH AND SOCIETY

CS was a document of compromise, symptomatic of a watershed period in the thinking of leading white Afrikaans speaking Christians. In the committee entrusted with the task of revising HRSAS two divergent currents converged. Conscious of the fallacy of oversimplification and disregarding the minor differences which existed within each group, we may nevertheless speak of the progressives on the one hand and the status quo on the other.¹⁶

The first group realized the ecclesiastical risks involved, but were convinced that obedience to the will of God, as they understood it, should receive priority – the current church and political policies needed critical re-examination and, in fact, a change of direction. The latter group was deeply conscious of the possibility of a massive rift (*kerkskeuring*) in the Dutch Reformed Church and were therefore bent on minimizing the effects of any radical deviation from former positions.

The fear of losing a substantial number of church members – which afterwards proved to be not wholly unfounded – was already apparent in the letter, which Rev Kobus Potgieter, at the time moderator of the DRC, wrote to the designated members of the commission. After notifying the addressees of their appointment, he cautioned them as follows: “You know yourselves ... how serious this matter is and how very discreet we should deal with it.”

Questions regarding the theory and practice of apartheid on the one hand, and the fear of “kerkskeuring” on the other, seesawed during discussions, created tension and eventually determined the typical ambivalent nature of the final document. No

15 Lensink entered a verbatim account of this meeting into his diary and kindly gave me permission to refer to it here.

16 A third group, for various reasons, preferred not to compromise themselves either way.

wonder that, in a critical evaluation of it, Smit (1989:56) came to the conclusion that this report spoke with two voices. And König (1989) found that in CS two opposing concepts of the church were at work.

3. THE COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

The Executive Members of the Moderature were appointed as the chairpersons of the four sub-commissions tasked with preparing the preliminary reports. The sub-commission on the evidence of Scripture was chaired by the Rev G. S. J. Möller (vice-moderator); the other members of this group were Professors P.A. Verhoef and A.B. du Toit. Dr P. Rossouw (church administrator), together with Professors J.A. Heyns and P.B. van der Watt, were responsible for the study on “Church, Kingdom and Ecumenism”. Dr D.C.G. Fourie (registrar of the DRC), Professors P. Smit and D.A. du Toit, as well as Rev D.J. Viljoen and Dr M.M. Nieuwoudt, were entrusted with investigating the issues of “Church and Justice in Society”, as well as “Marriages and Mixed Marriages”. Rev J.E. Potgieter, Prof C.W. H. Boshoff and Rev D.S. Snyman had to devote their attention to “Church and Mission”. The procedure of appointing so many “conservative” members on the commission eventually backfired since these could later only with difficulty argue against a report to which they themselves were signatories.

The opposing positions are more or less reflected by the two minority stances towards §319, as eventually put before the synod. This paragraph stated as follows: “The conviction grew gradually that a policy of separation could not be supported and applied unless it could be justified from Scripture. This led some to the conviction that the separate development of peoples is a biblical requirement and that the church should prescribe it to the political authorities as a biblical demand.” This was then followed by the corrective in §320 that the DRC wants to unequivocally distance itself from the view that the church is called to prescribe any political model or policy to the state. However, it should insist that the demands of love, justice and human dignity must be incorporated in society. The first minority report endorsed §320, but proposed that §319 should be extended by the following: “The elevation of apartheid to a religiously coloured ideology, which undeniably also occurred in the Dutch Reformed Church, is a serious fallacy (*dwaling*) which, though unintentional, especially in its practical application, contributed to much pain, suffering and bitterness. This should be confessed in all sincerity before God and men.” This amendment was underwritten, in alphabetical order, by Professors A.B. and D.A. du Toit, J.A. Heyns and P.A. Verhoef. Had this amendment gone through it would have been the first time in the history of the DRC that she confessed apartheid as a sin. The second amendment to §319, which was endorsed by Professors C.W.H.

Boshoff, Drs D.C.G. Fourie and M.M. Nieuwoudt, and Reverends D.S. Snyman and D.J. Viljoen, stated: “The debate regarding the fundamental and scriptural basis of a policy of segregation continued through the years, inter alia in the DRC, in ecclesiastical journals, conferences, commissions and synods. Although some advocated it at certain stages, the conviction grew with time that the forced segregation and separation of peoples cannot be deduced, as a demand, from the Bible.” The difference between these two amendments tells its own story. Whereas the first amendment proposed that the ideology and practical application of apartheid should be confessed as a sin, the second one avoided it.

4. COMPARING “HUMAN RELATIONS AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENE IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE” AND “CHURCH AND SOCIETY. A TESTIMONY OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH”¹⁷

Compared with HRSAS (1974), CS, as approved by the 1986 Synod of the DRC,¹⁸ certainly reflects a positive development, be it with some important qualifications:

1. Whereas the Afrikaans title of HRSAS (*Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudings in die lig van die Skrif*), and also its content, cantered around race and ethnicity, CS focused on the church and its responsibilities within society. This departure from an obsession with race and *ethnos* is significant. A theology of blood and soil gave way to a theology of the church.
2. The recognition of CS¹⁹⁸⁶ that the biblical justification of apartheid was a mistake¹⁹ was a step in the right direction, although as yet disappointingly insipid. However, CS¹⁹⁹⁰ §283 improved on this: “While the Dutch Reformed Church over the years seriously and persistently sought the will of God and his Word for our society, the church made the error of allowing forced separation and division of peoples in its own circle to be considered a biblical imperative.

17 CS was amended in several respects by the 1990 Synod. I shall focus primarily on CS as approved by the 1986 Synod (CS¹⁹⁸⁶), but occasionally I shall refer to its 1990 version (CS¹⁹⁹⁰).

18 The original submission of the commission (CS^{concept}) was amended in several instances. It important to note that the much disputed §§305-307 (CS¹⁹⁸⁶) were amendments accepted during the session of the synod.

19 CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §305 only called it “an error”. Cf, however, CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §43 which states that this reading into the Bible “of a particular social or political policy, whether it be ‘apartheid’ or separate development or integration, must be emphatically rejected”.

The Dutch Reformed Church should have distanced itself much earlier from this view and admits and confesses its neglect.”

3. Positive was also the admission that “the application of apartheid as a political and social system by which human dignity is adversely affected, and whereby one particular group is detrimentally suppressed by another, cannot be accepted on Christian-ethical grounds because it contravenes the very essence of neighbourly love and righteousness and inevitably the human dignity of all involved” (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §306). Also, in CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §307, the Synod declared, “To the extent that the church and its members are involved in this (that is, *in causing the suffering of people* – AdT), it confesses its participation with humility and sorrow.” However, the majority of the commission and the synod of 1986 were still not prepared to summarily denounce apartheid as sin. It was only in November 1990 that Prof W.D. Jonker, followed by the DRC delegation to the Rustenburg meeting, and confessed apartheid without reservation as sin. The editor of “Die Kerkbode” of November 16, 1990, justifiably described this occasion as a “moment of liberation” for the DRC.
4. Compared with HRSAS, CS shows a greater sensitivity for the fate of the poor and the fragile of society, as well as a greater consciousness of the suffering caused by apartheid. Unfortunately, this was spoilt by many qualifications and reservations (cf CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §307).
5. Positive points were also the condemnation of racism (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §§112, 114; cf CS¹⁹⁹⁰ §§110-114), the emphasis on biblical justice, compassion, service, human dignity and rights (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §§135-199) and the concomitant statement that the withholding of political emancipation is a serious impairment of human dignity (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §338). However, the latter paragraph was still much too theoretical and academic. It should have identified and denounced the injustice endemic in the existing system in a concrete manner.
6. Whereas HRSAS came to the conclusion that racially mixed marriages are “physically possible” – what an unbelievable banality! – and that such marriage are “extremely undesirable” (section 65, as amended²⁰), CS refrained from a moral censure of mixed marriages, simply stating that Scripture condemns marriages in cases of consanguinity and strong religious differences (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §221).
7. An important progressive step was the recognition that faith was the only condition for belonging to the church of Jesus Christ and that church

20 However, the Afrikaans original adds the word “ontoelaatbaar” = “impermissible”.

attendance and church membership should be open to all (CS¹⁹⁸⁶ §§62, 265, 270, 273). It were primarily these decisions which led to the much feared rift in the DRC and the founding of the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* which currently has roundabout 40 000 members. But also within the DRC, negative undercurrents came into being²¹ and these remain active to this day. Typically, they are presently lobbying against the acceptance of the Confession of Belhar within the DRC. Synodical decisions are one thing. To change hearts and minds is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Despite its deficiencies it would nevertheless be incorrect to conclude that CS was a futile exercise. To the contrary, it certainly was a step forward. Although it did not as yet signify the end of the DRC's journey away from apartheid, it marked a significant turning point and had a positive impact on the thinking and attitude of the DRC as an institution and also on many, if not the majority, of its members.

5. SOME REACTIONS TO “CHURCH AND SOCIETY”

As we have indicated, CS was a compromise. Reactions varied according to the point of departure of its reviewers. Many were positive, sometimes enthusiastically positive. Reactions from the “right” as well as from the “left” were strongly negative.

Some conservative groups within the DRC were extremely alarmed and reacted vigorously. In just eight days after the adjournment of the 1986 Synod some 200 church members from 80 congregations convened in Verwoerdburg. On November 28, more than 3000 gathered in Pretoria. A continuation committee was formed to rally all “alarmed” DRC members, to compile a memorandum of objections and to appeal to the General Synod to reverse certain decisions. This committee was responsible for the booklet *Geloof en Protes* (“Faith and Protest”). According to this document the “God-given” cultural pluriformity of nations and the preservation of a nation's cultural and national identity (“volkseie”) should be the hermeneutical key towards church formation. Church unity is an attribute of the invisible church and should therefore not be enforced. This implies that the DRC should be a church reserved for white Christian Afrikaners and all tendencies towards the opposite should be rejected. Since the DRC was not prepared to comply with these objections, the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk* was formed in 1987.²²

21 See also further below.

22 Professor C.W.H. Boshoff also reacted against certain synodical decisions in his booklet “Kerk en Samelewing in Oënskou. Kommentaar en Kritiek”, in which he criticized the downplay of diversity in CS, warned against politicizing, and emphasized that the DRC is the “church of Jesus Christ for the Afrikaner nation” (1987:30).

From the opposite side of the spectrum objections were *inter alia* that CS did not go far enough and was too ambivalent. Kinghorn (1989:42) labelled it “a tragic document” and “a symbol of dishonesty”. Theologians from the Dutch Reformed Mission Church also rejected it, not only in its 1986 wording, but later also in its 1990 rendering. Boesak (1989:96), for instance, declared: “It boggles one’s mind that a church which is so full of competent theologians can really believe that something which is so inherently evil, so clearly anti-Christian, can be implemented in a fair and just way. And to speak objectively of admitting a mistake instead of confessing it as sin, is really not consistent with normal ecclesiastical pronouncements and once again indicates that the DRC has not rejected the policy of apartheid as such” (my translation). This was also the dominant evaluation of CS in *Farewell to Apartheid?* – a collection of contributions presented to the 1993 session of the World Alliance of Churches. Botman (1994) deplored the fact that CS still did not admit that apartheid was inherently sinful, that it overemphasised cultural diversity and tends towards a-political escapism. However, he conceded that CS might perform an educational function within the DRC itself.

Durand (1994:62-63) perceptively put his finger on the inhibiting role of fear in the proposals of CS (cf. also Holtrop 1994:59) – others would call it caution or even ecclesiastical realism. It cannot be denied that apprehension about the dire consequences which drastic proposals and decisions could have for the DRC constituency, played a significant role in the preparation of CS, as later at the sessions of the Synod. Allow me to affirm this diagnosis in the instance of one preparatory document, which was not incorporated by the commission. Under the title “The Unity of the Church”, the sub-commission on the evidence of Scripture concluded: “Due to the New Testament demand that the empirical aspect of the church’s existence should increasingly reflect the fact of her being in Christ, it is necessary that the family of Dutch Reformed churches should reflect their unity also in their ecclesiastical structuring. This means quite concretely that this unity should become visible in one church formation (*een kerkverband*)” (my translation). All that eventually survived of this statement was a minority proposal that served before the Synod.²³

6. CONCLUSION

The most basic strategic mistake of CS should be traced back to the composition of the Commission for Revision. In retrospect it is almost incomprehensible that the rest of the Dutch Reformed family was not invited to take part in or at least

23 Cf. the minority proposal to CS^{concept} §270.

contribute to this report (see also Nicol 1989:28). Had this happened, CS would have moved much closer to the harsh South African reality. Also, the dehumanising effects of apartheid and the political system upholding it would have received much more prominence. This could have made CS a genuinely prophetic document.

However, the DRC was not yet ready for that. Unfortunately, even after the 1986 synod, certain DRC ministers devoted more time to appeasing and reassuring church members than to align themselves with the letter and spirit of the synodical decisions and to explain and implement them. These ministers, often together with their church councils, thus significantly neutralised the positive effect that CS could have had. Even more sadly, others, instead of guiding their congregations towards understanding and accepting CS, did exactly the opposite. No wonder that more or less 100 ministers, most of them from the DRC, eventually joined the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk*.

The critical question is whether we, at this stage, do need a new, more prophetic and down to earth ecclesiastical analysis of our situation. In my opinion this is absolutely necessary. Understandably, with its past in mind, the voice of the DRC has become not more than a whisper. The same is true – for other reasons – of the other members of the Dutch Reformed family and many other churches. Many church members are confused and uncertain. Partly due to the existing vacuum, civil organisations and individuals have to a large extent taken over the responsibility of acting as moral monitor to our country and authorities. Our present political, social and religious situation, with all the red lights that are showing: impoverishment, criminality, corruption, nepotism, deterioration of moral standards and values, lack of service delivery and quality education, a renewed hardening of attitudes etc. is crying out for spiritual guidance. To make matters worse, South African Christians are increasingly retreating from the public domain, seeking refuge in political escapism and pietism. Reformed churches should rediscover the Calvinistic-Reformed refusal to surrender this world and its structures to the evil powers. Christians of various denominations should no longer shirk their duties. Also the member churches of the Dutch Reformed family have an undeniable responsibility in this regard. But then it should be the concerted voice of this whole family – still better: the voice of one, unified church.

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TREFWOORDE

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*Lewe na apartheid: Lidmate se narratiewe vanuit 'n
longitudinale pastorale betrokkenheid*

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ABSTRACT

Living beyond apartheid: narratives of church members from a longitudinal pastoral involvement

How do white Afrikaans Christians live in post-apartheid South Africa? This question was investigated with members of the Dutch Reformed Church as co-researchers over a period of fourteen years (1998-2012). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) revelations form a backdrop for their stories. Themes include white people's idea of apartheid, guilt and confession, reconciliation and the role of the church. The research is placed within practical theology and specifically in a postmodern paradigm informed and supported by social construction discourse. By using a longitudinal narrative informed methodology a series of group discussions were held in 1998 with co-researchers with the themes mentioned above as focus. In 2012 a series of individual conversations were once again conducted with the same co-researchers focusing yet again on the same themes mentioned above. Despite changes on various levels of South African society very little has changed in the views of the co-researchers during this period. In some cases they have even taken a more racist position than in 1998. The focus in the research is mainly on the Dutch Reformed Church and the process of reconciliation, reintegration and the possible role of the Confession of Belhar in this process.

1 Hierdie artikel is gebaseer op Dr. Leon M Foot se doktorsale navorsing met die titel: *Lewe na apartheid: Lidmate se narratiewe vanuit 'n longitudinale pastorale betrokkenheid*.



1. INLEIDING – ’n APARTHEIDSVERHAAL

Wit Afrikaners kan baie verhale oor hul onlangse geskiedenis vertel, maar as hulle eerlik wil wees, moet hulle veral ook ’n apartheidsverhaal vertel. Daar was uiteraard ook verhale oor die kerk² en kultuur, persoonlike verhale van liefde en leed, maar in al die verhale was die beleid van apartheid die onontkombare, die allesomvattende, allesbepalende faktor in die lewe van alle mense in Suid-Afrika. Niks het in Suid-Afrika gebeur wat nie op een of ander wyse deur apartheid aangeraak is nie. Formeel het die bedeling tot ’n einde gekom met die verkiesing van 1994.

Sedert dié verkiesing en die afloop van die Waarheids-en-Versoeningskommissie (WVK), het daar reeds byna twee dekades verloop. Hierdie artikel beskryf ’n langtermyn navorsingsprojek (Foot 2013) wat sedert 1998 onder ’n groep wit NG Kerk lidmate in Welkom gedoen is om hulle reaksies op die afskaffing van apartheid oor hierdie tydperk te ondersoek. Die aanvanklike navorsing vind plaas in die tweede semester van 1998, in die tyd waarin die WVK se verslag gepubliseer word. Die opvolgnavorsing vind veertien jaar later aan die begin van 2012 plaas.

Die agtergrond van dié navorsing word gevind in die gegewe dat Suid-Afrika bekend is as ’n baie godsdienstige, en by name Christelike land. In die Vrystaat, waar hierdie navorsing onderneem is, is die persentasie Christene (volgens inligting van die nasionale sensus wat die laaste keer in 2001 oor geloofsoortuiging berig het) onder die algemene bevolking 89.6% en onder wit mense ’n volle 91% (Statistics SA 2005:25). Van die kernsake van die Christelike geloof is die opdrag om ander mense soos jouself lief te hê (Matteus 22:39) en ook om aan ander te doen wat jy graag wil hê hulle aan jou moet doen (Matteus 7:12). Die onthullings wat by die WVK gemaak is, plaas onmiddellik wit Afrikaanse Christene se getrouheid aan hierdie uitgangspunte onder verdenking. Voor 1994 het slegs wit mense stemreg gehad waardeur hulle die politieke beleid van die land (help) bepaal het. Die vraag, wat ook die navorsing rigtinggewend beïnvloed het, word daarom onwillekeurig gerig op hoe hierdie wit mense gedink het oor die diskriminerende beleid van apartheid in die lig van hulle godsdienstige belydenis.

Die navorsing word vanuit ’n prakties-teologiese uitgangspunt onderneem om juis die diskrepansie tussen belydenis en praktyk en tussen leer en lewe te ondersoek en te beskryf. Onderliggend aan dié navorsings benadering is die vier kerntake van ’n praktiese teologiese navraag, naamlik die deskriptief-empiriese taak, die

2 In hierdie artikel word die term kerk gebruik om te verwys na die ekumeniese verstaan van die Christelike kerk as die totale liggaam van Christus soos wat dit sigbaar word in die lewe van individuele gelowiges. Die term *NG Kerk* of soms net *Kerk* (met ’n hoofletter) verwys na die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk as denominasie.

interpretatiewe taak, die normatiewe taak en die pragmatiese taak (Osmer 2008:4). Ter uitdrukking van dié prakties teologiese navraag word die narratiewe aard en karakter van die verhale van medenavorsers en die navorser self in die formulering en dokumentering van die navorsing beliggaam en erken. Die navorsing is voorts aan die hand van die momente van ’n narratiewe navorsingsmodel (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:76-96) ontwikkel, beskryf en gedokumenteer.

In die dokumentering van die navorsingsproses word ’n oorsig enersyds aangebied oor die longitudinale navorsingsproses en -gesprekke met andersyds ’n bespreking van die moontlike betekenis en implikasie van die betrokke perspektiewe soos onder meer aangestip deur medenavorsers. Ter agtergrond word vervolgens ’n opsommende beskrywing gebied van die onthulling van die apartheidsvergrype soos dit voor die WVK afgespeel het.

2. DIE SOSIALE GEHEIM ONTBLOOT

In 1996 is die WVK in die lewe geroep om growwe skendings van menseregte te ondersoek (Meiring 1999:12). By die sittings van die WVK was daar onthullings wat koue rillings langs mense se kollektiewe rûe af gestuur het. Vir baie Suid-Afrikaners was dit bloot die openbare proklamering van iets wat deel van hulle lewe was (Krog 1998:45). Vir ander, veral vir die wit gemeenskap, was dit ’n groot skok. Verhale van moorde, marteling, ontvoering en ander menseregte-vergrype is vertel (Bell 2001; Krog 1998). In die hoofartikel van *Die Kerkbode* van 19 Desember 1997 (Gaum 1997:4) verwoord die redakteur waarskynlik die tipiese reaksie van die wit Afrikaanse Christen as hy, met verwysing na die gruverhale, lidmate aanhaal wat sê dat hulle nooit geweet het van, en nooit gestem het vir só ’n beleid nie.

Die “brutale werklikheid” (Campbell 1998:14) van die onthullings van mense wat in diens van die vorige regering was (De Kock & Gordin 1998), het daagliks die kokon van ontkenning verder oopgebreek. Die aanvanklike selfversekerdheid het oorgegaan in ontkenning, maar ook dit moes plek maak vir ontugtering en ongelooft. Die sosiale geheim (Imber-Black 1993; Mason 1993) van apartheid is wreed in die openbaar uitgestal (Pauw 1997). ’n Sosiale geheim word gedefinieer as dit waarvan geweet is, of vermoed is, maar nooit oor gepraat is nie. Al gebruik Imber-Black (1993) en Mason (1993) nooit die uitdrukking *sosiale geheim van apartheid* as sodanig nie, was die onthullende verhale wat een na die ander voor die WVK vertel is, vir baie mense soos ’n sosiale geheim wat skielik aan die hele wêreld ontbloot word. Al te dikwels was dit wit Afrikaners wat as die skuldiges uitgewys is.

Die wit gemeenskap wat jare lank die voordeel van apartheid gesmaak het, is ontugter. Vrae soos “was ons werklik deel hiervan?” en later “hoe leef ons nou

verder in die nuwe Suid-Afrika, gegewe ons spesifieke geskiedenis?”, het in alledaagse gesprekke en tydens huisbesoeke na vore gekom en het uiteindelik aanleiding gegee tot hierdie navorsing. Die vraag wat Ariel Dorfman (1994:49) na aanleiding van Chili se Rettig-kommissie³ vra, is ook die vraag waarmee in die post-apartheid Suid-Afrika geworstel word: “How can those who tortured and those who were tortured co-exist in the same land?” Hoe kan bevoorreedes en benadeeldes van apartheid in een land saam leef? Óf jy moet jou oë sluit vir die werklikheid, óf jy moet die werklikheid erken en die gevolge dra. Krog (1998) vat hierdie dilemma vir NG Kerklidmate goed saam as sy haar boek opdra “aan elke slagoffer wat ’n Afrikaner van op haar lippe gehad het.”

Wat waar is van die breë gemeenskap, is soveel te meer waar van die kerk as die gemeenskap wat God se genade sigbaar maak. Hoe kan wit Christene hulle swart broers en susters in Christus in die oë kyk op die pad wat hulle saam loop in die nuwe Suid-Afrika? Dreyer (1996:183) sê tereg dis die uitdaging van die kerk om sy lidmate die geleentheid te gee om nuwe identiteite en nuwe rolle te definieer in die nuwe bedeling.

3. DIE NAVORSING

Getrou aan die onderliggende narratiewe aard van die navorsing is persone wat aan die navorsing deelgeneem het, beskou as medenavorsers ter erkenning en uitdrukking van eie unieke en gevalideerde bydraes wat vanuit persoonlik ervarings gelewer is (Morgan 2000:119; Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:76). In hierdie studie was die medenavorsers almal wit Afrikaanssprekende Christene wat bande met die NG Kerk het. As een van die leraars van die NG Gemeente Welkom-Suid, het ek in 1998 ’n oop uitnodiging in die gemeenteblyd geplaas waarin alle belangstellendes uitgenooi is om deel te word van ’n gespreksgroep oor apartheid en die lewe in die “nuwe” Suid-Afrika. Die aanvanklike groep medenavorsers het mans en vrouens ingesluit. In ouderdom het hulle gewissel van 37 tot 85 jaar met ’n gemiddeld van 49 jaar. Wat beroepe aanbetref was daar – in geen spesifieke orde nie – ’n huisvrou, ’n aantal maatskaplike werkers, ’n aantal persone in die onderwys, drie uit ’n tegniese beroepsveld, ’n pensioenaris en ’n verpleegkundige. Hierdie groep het oor etlike weke vir agt geleenthede bymekaar gekom vir semi-gestruktureerde gesprekke oor die voorkoms en funksionering van apartheid in alle dimensies.

Die navorsing se bedoeling is om weer te gee wat ’n bepaalde groep mense dink en gedink het oor apartheid en verwante sake. Onderliggend aan die navorsingsaanpak

3 Die Rettig-kommissie was die populêre naam vir Chili se Nasionale Kommissie vir Waarheid en Versoening.

was 'n narratiewe geïnformeerde benadering waarin gefokus word op die verhale wat mense vertel asook op die woorde wat hulle gebruik om dit te konstrueer. Ten einde die medenavorsers se narratiewe te kon verwoord, is die gesprekke opgeneem en later getranskribeer. Die identiteit van die medenavorsers is beskerm deurdat elkeen 'n skuilnaam gekry het. Ek het ter uitdrukking van my eie subjektiewe betrokkenheid by die proses ook aan myself as navorsers 'n skuilnaam toegeken. By een geleentheid het ons ook drie swart gaste ontvang wat aan die gesprek deelgeneem het.

Ten einde sinvol te kan verwys na die woorde van die medenavorsers, het ek 'n stelsel ontwikkel wat die nommer van die gesprek sowel as die reëlnummer aandui. Elke transkripsie is genommer en van reëlnummers voorsien. 'n Aanduiding soos [Danie 3-267] beteken dus dat dit 'n aanhaling van Danie is uit die 267^{ste} reël van die derde gesprek.

Ek wou uitvind of die medenavorsers se sienings oor tyd verander het. Hiervoor was 'n longitudinale "re-study" (Foster, Scudder, Colson & Kemper 1979:9) nodig. Die aanvanklike navorsing van 1998 is opgevolg deur soortgelyke navorsing in 2012. Vanweë praktiese oorwegings, soos verhuising, was dit nie moontlik om weer die hele groep byeen te bring nie. Ek het egter individuele gesprekke met elkeen gevoer oor dieselfde temas wat in 1998 aan die orde gekom het. Hierdie gesprekke is weereens opgeneem en getranskribeer. Alle transkripsies is as bylae in die oorspronklike verslag (Foot 2013) opgeneem.

4. AANVANKLIKE NAVORSING

Die medenavorsers was dit eens dat hulle niks anders as apartheid geken het nie. Op die vraag oor hoe apartheid in hulle lewe in ingekom het, antwoord Mike [2-283] so: *Dit het nie in ons lewe ingekom nie, maar ons het in apartheid ingekom.* Ter selfdertyd erken hulle ook dat hulle dalk nie krities genoeg gekyk het na die beleid wat so deel van hulle lewe was nie. Van die wreedhede, voer hulle aan, het hulle nie geweet nie: Ben [6-089], die oudste van die medenavorsers, erken: *Daar was darem vreeslik baie wreedhede, wat ons as gewone mense nie van geweet het nie, verskriklike ongeregtigheid.*

Uit die reaksies van die medenavorsers kan die effek van apartheid beskryf word in terme van vyf breë areas wat vervolgens uiteengesit sal word. Die weergee van die onderskeie temas word nie aangebied as 'n volledige akademiese beskrywing van die verskillende sake nie, eerder as dat dit aanduidend wil wees van herhalende aksente in gesprekke met medenavorsers. Hierdie vyf temas is in die gesprekke genoem en het algemeen onder byna al die medenavorsers voorgekom. Van die opskrifte hieronder verskyn in aanhalingstekens omdat dit getrou aan die narratiewe aard

van die navorsing, direk ontleen is aan die woorde en metafore soos gebruik deur medenavorsers tydens die betrokke gesprekke.

4.1 “Twee wêrelde”

Apartheid het twee wêrelde in een Suid-Afrika geskep. Dit was asof wit en swart in twee verskillende en aparte wêrelde geleef het, terwyl die wit wêreld totaal onbewus was van die swart wêreld. Sello (1998:15) skryf: “Een van die tragiese erflatings van apartheid is dat dit die wit gemeenskap van die res van Suid-Afrika geïsoleer het ...” Hierdie sentiment word geëggo deur Isak [1-609] as hy sê: *Ek het so wit grootgeword, hierdie mense is absoluut twee wêrelde van mekaar af.*

4.2 “Minder mens”

Die een onderliggende beginsel aan apartheid was die idee van ’n inherente meerderwaardigheid van wit mense en ’n gepaardgaande inherente minderwaardigheid van swart mense. Soos Elsa [1-394] dit stel: *dit is ... in ons kele afgedruk van kleins af dat swart mense sleg is, dat dit baie moeilik is om daarvan ontslae te raak.* Krog (1998:44) beskryf hoe “ordinary people” wat voor die WVK verskyn hulle ervarings verwoord: “We were treated like garbage; worse even than dogs. Even ants were treated better than us” en “How could we lose our humanity like that?”

4.3 Rassisme

Rassisme is een van die oorsake van die politieke beleid van apartheid. Vir diegene wat grootgeword het in die tyd van apartheid, was dit terselfdertyd ook ’n gevolg van die politieke beleid. De Klerk (2000:33) noem dit dan ook een van die sewe sondes van apartheid. Elsa [3-749] sê: *Ons bly dink in terme van wit en swart. Ons dink nie aan mense nie,* waarop Johan [3-805] reageer met: *Jou definisie kom iets kort. Jou definisie kom daai emosie kort van haat of liefhê. Rassisme is gekoppel aan emosie.*

Rassisme is ’n fenomeen wat nie net op interpersoonlike vlak opereer nie. Rassiediskriminasie kan ook geïstitutionaliseerde vorms aanneem. Apartheid was so ’n vorm van rassisme. Villa-Vicencio (1993:133) praat van die “institutionalised racism of apartheid.” Die onderliggende uitgangspunt vir rassisme is ’n gevoel van meerderwaardigheid teenoor ander mense. Die idee dat een ras meer werd is, of beter is as ’n ander, is nie ’n nuwe idee nie. In die tyd van wettige slawerny en kolonialisme was die gangbare idee dat Afrika onbeskaafd en ongekultiveerd en daarom minderwaardig teenoor die Weste is (Kasenene 1993:55).

4.4 Paternalisme

'n Vierde gevolg van die sisteem van apartheid was paternalisme. Paternalisme is die gedrag van 'n dominante klas teenoor die ondergeskiktes of gekoloniseerde mense, soortgelyk aan die van 'n pa teenoor sy kind, maar dan 'n kind met beperkte of geen eie vryheid of regte nie. Alhoewel paternalisme ook 'n belangrike rol gespeel het in die ontstaan van die beleid van apartheid, was dit – nes rassisme – vir diegene wat groot geword het onder apartheid een van die gevolge van die beleid.

In die gesprekke is verskillende voorbeelde aangebied van paternalisme. Die terrein van die godsdiens is waar paternalisme veral sigbaar was. Frans [1-440] vertel van huisgodsdiens waarheen die swart werkers *ingenooi is as hulle daar was om saam met ons huisgodsdiens te hou*.

4.5 Groot en klein apartheid

Die finale effek van apartheid was die skepping van 'n beperkte en oppervlakkige siening van die beleid in die gedagtes van wit Afrikaners. Wanneer die medenavorsers apartheid bespreek het, was dit gewoonlik in terme van wat genoem word “klein apartheid.” Dit was sake soos aparte geriewe wat voorop in die gedagtes van die medenavorsers was: *Dit is soos julle sál – julle mag daar sit en nie daar nie en julle moet hierdie toilette gebruik en nie daardie nie* [Mike 2-265]. Die wit perspektief begin altyd hier, en eindig gewoonlik ook net hier. Die beleid van apartheid word telkens geëvalueer in terme van alledaagse dinge wat wit mense gehad het of kon doen, maar wat swart mense nie gehad het of kon doen nie. Dit is asof die diskriminasie verwyder kon word deur bloot dieselfde toilette te gebruik!

Selfs wanneer Willem De Klerk (2000:39), politieke kommentator en oud-predikant, krities skryf oor die verkeerdhede van apartheid en hy sommige voorbeelde noem, fokus hy uitsluitlik op sogenaamde klein apartheid: “Gedwonge verskuiwings ... kerkdeure gesluit ... derdeklastreinwaens ... 'net blankes'-bordjies ... aparte ingange ... blankes-alleen sportspanne ...” Die ware tragedie gedurende die tyd van apartheid en nou nog, is dat baie – indien nie die meeste nie – wit Afrikaners nie in staat blyk te wees om die beleid op prinsipiële gronde te evalueer nie. Hulle kyk bloot in die dae vas en vind regverdiging vir hierdie dae sonder om ooit die onderliggende motiewe te beoordeel.

Om egter te erken dat die beleid van apartheid enigsins verkeerd was, bly vir wit mense baie moeilik. Ongeag die argumente wat aangevoer word, blyk dit duidelik dat by baie van die groepslede daar weinig begrip is vir wat apartheid aan swart mense gedoen het. Die onthullings voor die WVK sou egter alle onkunde uit die weg ruim.

5. REAKSIES OP DIE WVK

By die sittings van die WVK is verhaal na verhaal vertel van die misdade wat in die naam van apartheid gepleeg is. Swart mense het begin om hulle narratiewe in die openbaar te vertel en dit is wêreldwyd uitgesaai. Die reaksie wat dit veroorsaak het, kon skaars voorgestel word. Die WVK voorsitter sê dat Afrikaners geskok is, “juis nie deur die leuens nie, maar oor soveel waarheid, soveel aaklighe. Hulle wil dit eerder nie weet nie, eerder glo dis leuens” (Tutu, aangehaal in Retief 1998:15). Tematies sou die volgende verskillende reaksies op die werksaamhede van die WVK verwoord kon word:

Die reaksies op die WVK begin daar waar die onthullings as onwaar afgemaak word. Enersyds is daar ’n volledige ontkenning dat enigiets verkeerd ooit gebeur het. Andersyds is daar diegene wat wel ruimte laat vir ’n beperkte erkenning, maar dit word onmiddellik teengewerk met argumente oor die voordele van apartheid vir die swart inwoners van Suid-Afrika. Daar is ook ’n ander tipe ontkenning wat sê dat alhoewel apartheid verkeerd was, dit nie nêr verkeerd was nie, maar dat daar tog baie goed uit gekom het (Giliomee 1998:12).

’n Tweede verontskuldigende reaksie op die WVK se bevindinge was die verwysing na die eksterne bedreiging van kommunisme. Johan [4-504] vra: *Het iemand al ooit ... die invloed van die kommunisme op ons beeld van dat apartheid so sleg is, gaan bepaal*. Hy impliseer dat die wêreldwye veroordeling van apartheid nie so prominent sou gewees het, as dit nie vir die kommunistiese propaganda was nie. Gegewe die agtergrond van sensorskap [Hanlie 2-460], disinformasie (De Kock & Gordin 1998:119) en breinspoeling [Danie 2-405] gedurende die apartheidsjare, is dit te verstane dat wit mense so ’n vaste geloof gehad het in die sogenaamde *Rooi Gevaar*.

Die derde reaksie op die WVK is dat die regering die inwoners – lees wit mense – mislei het deur die mag wat hulle uitgeoefen het oor die media asook deur direkte intervensies soos die noodtoestande en doelbewuste leuens aan die publiek. *Ek is nou nog so verstom dat die Afrikaners so ’n onwrikbare geloof in ons kerkleiers gehad het, en ook ons politieke leiers* [Isak 1-612].

Die vierde groep besware teen die onthullings van die WVK handel oor die idee dat dinge in Suid-Afrika tog baie verander het oor die afgelope aantal jare. Johan [3-708] sê: *Al het jy Nasionaal gestem, het jy nie elke keer vir dieselfde ding gestem nie*. By die medenavorsers is daar ’n (soms onuitgesproke) erkenning dat baie dinge nie reg was in die tyd van apartheid nie, maar dat dit uitgekanselleer word deur die goeie wat die wit regering teweegbring het.

Uiteindelik het een van die medenavorsers, Elsa [6-096], die moed gehad om dit hardop te sê: *Ons het die mense basiese menseregte ontnem in hierdie land, hulle het geen sê gehad in hierdie land nie, en as dit nie sonde is nie ...* Die een oorweldigende indruk uit die gesprekke in die groep asook uit lesersbriewe aan koerante en in algemene gesprekke, is dat wit Afrikaners graag die boeke oor apartheid sou wou toemaak, om te vergeet wat gebeur het en om oor te begin. *Dit voel net vir my dat ons by 'n punt moet kom soos wat jy gesê het dat ons hierdie goed moet afsluit en moet aangaan in die nuwe SA* [Frans 1-469].

6. OPVOLGNAVORSING

Aan die begin van 2012 het ek al die medenavorsers besoek en in 'n persoonlike gesprek weer die temas van 1998 aan die orde gestel om te bepaal watter, en indien enige, verandering daar by hulle plaasgevind het. In die eerste opvolggesprek, met Elsa, druk sy haar vinger presies op die seerples van apartheid, naamlik die miskenning van swart mense se menswaardigheid. Dit het nie gegaan oor *stemreg* of *regeer hulle die land nie*; die kern was dat swart mense *absoluut as niks* beskou is [Elsa 9-242]. Die feit dat wit mense 'n posisie van meerderwaardigheid teenoor swart mense ingeneem het, hulle menswaardigheid aangetas het en alle selfbeskikking in hulle geboorteland ontnem het, is doelbewus of onwetend geïgnoreer. Die volgende deurlopende temas in die gesprekke met medenavorsers tydens die opvolgnavorsing wys dat hierdie standpunt weinig verander het in die afgelope veertien jaar. Soos ook tydens die rapportering van die gesprekke wat tydens die eerste rondte plaas gevind het, is die meeste van die opskrifte in aanhalingsteken om aan te dui dat dit die eie woorde van die medenavorsers is. Die temas kom ooreen met dié in afdeling 4, maar is nie identies nie as gevolg van die narratiewe aard en karakter van hierdie navorsing.

6.1 “Apartheid het sin gemaak”

In antwoord op die vraag oor hoe hulle nou dink oor wat die probleem van apartheid was, was daar vier tipiese reaksies van die medenavorsers en ander wit mense. Die eerste was die argument dat apartheid sin gemaak het. Op die vraag of hy nou anders dink oor apartheid as veertien jaar gelede was Johan [17-043] se nadruklike antwoord: *Nee, inteendeel ...* Sommige van die voorstanders van apartheid gaan selfs verder. Só skryf Ludolf Du Toit (2010:elektroniese bron) 'n artikel op die Pro-Afrikaanse Aksiegroep (PRAAG) se webblad met die opskrif “*Apartheid het sin gemaak.*” Vir hom was apartheid net [*l*]ogiese menslike gedrag ... om na jou eie om te sien [sy beklemtoning].

6.2 “Dis wetgewing se skuld”

’n Tweede reaksie was om wetgewing te blameer vir apartheid. In 1998 blameer Mike [2-265] die *wetgewing* wat bestaande gebruike verpligtend gemaak het. In 2012 handhaaf hy steeds hierdie standpunt as hy praat oor die beleid van apartheid: *Dit was in elk geval daar; ons het net ’n wet daarvan gemaak en toe is almal ongelukkig daaroor* [Mike 10-248] en dan bevestig hy dit met *jy kon nie teen die wet optree nie* [Mike 10-260]. Wanneer hy dan ’n voorbeeld gee van wat hy dink apartheid behels het, is dit steeds sake soos *’n blanke man en ’n anderskleurige vrou mag nie saam voor in ’n bakkie gery het nie* [Mike 10-245]. Hierdie beperkte siening van wat apartheid behels het, het groot implikasies vir die vraag na skuld en regstelling.

6.3 “Dit was ’n fout”

Alhoewel daar medenavorsers is wat met ’n baie beperkte definisie van apartheid werk, is daar egter ook van die medenavorsers wat anders na die saak kyk. Hier is dit veral drie persone wat uitstaan in hulle mening, naamlik Elsa, Hanlie en Isak. Elsa [3-145] het byvoorbeeld in 1998 reeds gesê: *Ek dink apartheid het die swartmense heeltemal ver-“ontmens”* en in die 2012 navorsing gebruik sy steeds hierdie woord: *Ek dink apartheid... het mense heeltemal ontmens. Dit het van mense diere gemaak, of goed. Hulle was nie mense nie. Ek dink dit is die verskriklikste ding ...* [Elsa 9-238].

6.4 “Twee wêrelde”

’n Verdere tema wat in die aanvanklike navorsing na vore gekom het, is die twee wêrelde waarin wit en swart in SA bly. Die kontak was grootliks beperk tot die werksituasie waar dit gewoonlik die swart persoon was wat ’n ondergeskikte posisie ingeneem het. Volgens die 2011 SA Versoeningsbarometer is Suid-Afrikaners steeds geskei op grond van taal, etnisiteit en ras (NPC 2011:elektroniese bron).

Wat wel gebeur is dat die blootstelling by die werk en in die openbare lewe dramaties vermeerder het. George [15-037] vertel van sy swart kollegas wat geleidelik deel van sy werkswêreld geword het. Die beste van alles sê hy: *Dit is ’n ding wat spontaan gebeur het, dit was nie gedwonge nie*. Op ’n meer persoonlike vlak was die noue kontak met ander rasse ook nie altyd so maklik nie. Frans [9-072] het sy kinders redelik liberaal grootgemaak, maar toe sy dogter met ’n bruin man uitgaan, *toe dit naby aan my bas kom, toe is dit ’n ander storie*.

6.5 Rassisme

Rassisme wat in 1998 prominent was, is steeds ’n faktor om mee rekening te hou. Die meeste medenavorsers sal, soos waarskynlike die meeste ander mense ook, sê

dat hulle nie rassiste is, of ten minste nie wil wees nie. *Ek sou sê ek is minder rassisties as vroeër* [Isak 16-190] of *Dit is net nog 'n mens* [Frans 9-093].

Daar is al meer getuienis dat ten minste sommige mense doelbewus daarna strewende om nie meer rassisties te wees in hulle optrede nie. Karin [18-029] verklaar: *Ek sien alle mense ongeag van ras of geslag as mensekinders wat deur God geskape is*. Elsa [9-436] sê: *Met my hele diepste wese wil ek nie 'n rassiste wees nie* en ook Isak [16-174] se voorneme is duidelik: *Ek het doelbewus besluit om my gedagtes en denke nie deur rassisme te laat oorheers nie*. En tog is dit moeilik om by hierdie voorneme te hou. Sommige van dieselfde medenavorsers waarna hierbo verwys is, erken ruiterlik dat hulle sukkel om konsekwent nie-rassisties op te tree. Isak [16-174] sê: *Ek sou genoeg redes kon vind om rassisties te wees, en om meer rassisties te word*.

Op die vraag hoekom sekere mense klaarblyklik tans meer rassisties is as vroeër antwoord Isak [16-194] so: *Ons sien die effek van misdade, korrupsie, swak dienslewering, politici se uitsprake. Die plaasboere is onder bedreiging en onveilig. Regstellende aksie*. Van die raáksien van hierdie probleme is dit dan 'n kort sprong om 'n ras-kleur daaraan te gee.

6.6 Skuld vir apartheid

'n Laaste tema wat uit die aanvanklike navorsing kom, is die aanvaarding van die verantwoordelikheid vir skuld. Skuldbelydenis oor wat apartheid aan ander gedoen het, is onmoontlik, *omdat ons eintlik nie geweet het nie* [Hanlie 12-274]. Terwyl sommige medenavorsers bereid is om te erken dat daar fout was, is daar ander soos Danie wat nie eers wil praat oor wat fout was met apartheid nie. Hy wil net sorg dat die blaam op Verwoerd [Danie 13-552] val, of op Van Riebeeck en die Engelse [Danie 13-488]. Om te erken dat daar fout was met apartheid is vir hom net om *vir die ander groep 'n stok gegee om mee te slaan* [Danie 13-534]. Ook Johan [17-112] voel nie skuldig nie: *Ek sal nooit erken en daarom nooit bely dat afsonderlike ontwikkeling 'n sonde was nie en daarom het ek nie skuld nie*. Karin [18-191] probeer ten alle koste ook die ander rasse betrek by dinge wat dalk verkeerd was in die verlede en dan voeg sy by dat daar *ook positiewe gebeurtenisse* [Karin 18-278] was. Danie [13-502] stel dit pertinent: *ek voel geensins skuldig in enige sin vir apartheid nie* en George [15-568] eggo hierdie woorde: *Ek voel nie ek het skuld aan apartheid nie*. Waar daar wel sprake van belydenis is, word dit bloot vergeestelik *as jy voor God vergifnis gevra dan is dit mos nou klaar* [Linda 13-517].

Wanneer erken word dat apartheid swart mense benadeel het, is dit onvermydelik dat een of ander vorm van regstelling wel moes gebeur. Onder die medenavorsers is dit egter nie 'n eenvoudige saak nie. Johan [5-635] glo nie aan die meriete van

regstellende aksie nie. Vir hom is dit bloot omgekeerde rassisme: *Regstellende aksie behoort op meriete gebaseer te word*. Ander [Isak 5-589] is ook skepties oor die waarde van sulke aksies: *Op die korttermyn kan ons 'n paar sake regstel, maar op die langtermyn gaan niemand daarby baat nie*. By een mede-navorsers [Danie 13-116] was daar in 2012 'n bitterheid wat nie in 1998 daar was nie. Vir ander is dit 'n realiteit en 'n gegewe in die NSA. *Teen die agtergrond van apartheid is regstellende aksie 'n logiese (hoewel steeds diskriminerende) praktyk* [Isak 16-301].

7. DIE PAD VORENTOE

Die meeste van die medenavorsers gebruik woorde soos *positief* [Frans 9-850], *hoop* [Elsa 9-895], *ons probeer* [Johan 11-212] en *ons vorder* [Isak 14-401] wanneer hulle praat oor die toekoms van Suid-Afrika. Johan [17-029] is dalk die eerlikste as hy sê dat hy die *veranderings as onvermydelik aanvaar en daarby probeer aanpas*. Elsa [9-898] verraai tog, te midde van baie optimisme oor die toekoms, 'n stukkie nostalgie as sy sê: *Sal miskien nooit weer heeltemal wees soos in die tyd toe die blankes regeer het nie*.

Ten spyte van hierdie positiewe houding ten opsigte van die toekoms, spreek die medenavorsers hulle uit oor kwessies wat hulle meen dit vir hulle moeilik maak om positief te bly oor die toekoms van Suid-Afrika. Vir Karin [18-315] is daar *talle voorbeelde van uiters patetiese diens, arrogansie en Babelse verwarring*. Johan is bekommerd oor die vertroue tussen wit en swart. Hy sê reguit dat die twee groepe mekaar nooit sal vertrou solank daar *nog Malemas rondloop nie* [Johan 17-219]. Ten spyte van Danie [13-292] se geloof dat God nog 'n taak vir die wit mense hier het, klink hy tog heel sinies as hy praat oor Suid-Afrika: *Ons sit met korrupsie, die hoogste in die wêreld, ons sit met moord en doodslag, die hoogste in die wêreld*. Korrupsie speel ook by van die ander 'n rol: *Ek begin mense wantrou vanweë die geweldig baie bedrog. Van mense wat in vertrouensposisies is* [Karin 11-246].

8. PERSPEKTIEWE OOR DIE TAAK EN ROL VAN DIE NG KERK

'n Kritiese buitestaander kan verstaan dat lidmate groot probleme met die NG Kerk het. Frans en van die ander medenavorsers sou kon identifiseer met die standpunt van Meyer en Naudé (1994:169) wanneer hulle die NG Kerk beskuldig van 'n dualistiese Christenskap. Die fokus was amper eensydig op die gelowige se persoonlike verhouding met God en die implikasies wat dit het vir die leefwêreld van die gelowiges, is nie verreken nie. Later sou die NG Kerk erken dit was té lank té teoreties besig met die apartheidskwessie (Ned Geref Kerk 1990:39). In die eerste gesprek verwoord Frans [1-444] sy probleem met die NG Kerk so: *Dit voel vir my ...*

asof ons amper 'n geestelike rat voor die oë gedraai is, want dit [apartheid] is wat reg is, dit is soos dit moet wees. Volgens die kritiek van die Sendingkerk was apartheid se uitgangspunt die onversoenbaarheid van mense en daarom moes hulle apart gehou word – ook in die kerk: “Die politieke en kerklike bestel van Suid-Afrika is 'n bestel waarin onversoenbaarheid tot 'n samelewingsbeginsel verhef word” (NG Sendingkerk 1982:elektroniese bron).

Die NG Kerk het teen 1998 wegbeweeg vanaf 'n posisie waarin aanvanklik na die kerk verwys is as “die Nasionale Party in gebed” (Giliomee 1979:240) tot 'n afwysing van die beleid van apartheid in *Kerk en Samelewing 1990* (Ned Geref Kerk 1990). Dit het uitgesluit professor Willie Jonker se skuld belydenis namens die NG Kerk en die Afrikaners by die kerkeberaad in Rustenburg. Die sitting van die Algemene Sinode van 1994 was bekend as die “sinode van versoening” omdat mense soos professor Ben Marais en doktor Beyers Naudé wat vroeër 'n koue skouer van die Kerk gekry het, nou hartlik ontvang is. Ook die eerste nuwe president van 'n demokratiese Suid-Afrika, meneer Nelson Mandela is 'n spreekbeurt gegee. Die sinode het ook kennis geneem van die stigting van die VGKSA en het besluit geneem oor die “daarstelling van een kerkverband” (Ned Geref Kerk 1994:442). Vier jaar later het die volgende Algemene Sinode die Kerk weer verbind om “een kerkverband tot stand te bring” (Ned Geref Kerk 1998:422).

In die 1998 navorsing was daar veral twee kwessies rondom die NG Kerk wat sterk na vore getree het. Die een was dat die NG Kerk vir jare lidmate mislei het deur die beleid van apartheid teologies te regverdig [Frans 1-456]. Die tweede was dat die NG Kerk aan die slaap was vir soveel jare [Danie 4-466] en nooit die onreg, die spreekwoordelike olifant in die kamer, raakgesien het nie.

Tydens die opvolgnavorsing was dit veral Elsa en Frans wat baie negatief is oor die rol van die NG Kerk. *Ek wil net sê dat die twee mense wat hier sit, wat jy in hele ander hoedanigheid geken het, gaan glad nie meer kerk toe nie.* [Frans 9-747]. Beide van hulle was op 'n stadium kerkraadslede wat baie betrokke was in die werksaamhede van die NG Kerk. Die rede vir hulle standpunt is duidelik uit hulle antwoorde op die vraag of die NG Kerk 'n rol speel in versoening: *Nee, hulle doen nie* [Frans 9-754] en: *Ek glo nie regtig so nie* [Elsa 9-756]. Sy beskryf die Kerk as 'n plek waar jy nie hoor dat *apartheid 'n ewel* was nie. Dit is asof niks daar verander het nie. Die NG Kerk is “oop” maar daar is steeds nie bruin of swart mense daar nie, *die gesindheid is nog nie oop nie* [Elsa 9-786]. Oor versoening sê Frans [9-760]: *Ek glo nie die kerk speel 'n rol nie. Ek dink die kerk trap water.*

As die kerk nie weer daarvan beskuldig wil word dat hy aan die slaap is nie, sal die kerk doelbewus lidmate moet leer dat alle mense menswaardig behandel moet word

ongega van kleur. Die kerk kan nie langer sy oë toemaak vir hierdie olifant in die kamer nie.

Die kerk sou 'n rol daarin kon speel om lidmate te begelei tot belydenis en versoening, maar reeds in die eerste gesprek is daar frustrasie met die NG Kerk uitgespreek [Frans 1-459]. In die opvolgnavorsing is Frans [9-771] steeds van mening dat die Kerk nie 'n positiewe rol speel nie. Elsa [9-782] noem dit 'n *klub waaraan sekere groepe mense behoort wat graag soontoe wil gaan*. Danie [13-323] is selfs nog meer sinies oor die Kerk: *Ag weet jy ek dink die kerk het nie 'n rol gespeel in die tye van apartheid nie en die kerk speel nie 'n rol ...* Isak [16-426] trek die lyne van die kritiek op die NG Kerk saam as hy sê: *Ek wil egter glo dat apartheid die kerk in 'n integriteits- en geloofwaardigheidskrisis gedompel het*.

Konkreet sou kerkhereniging en die rol van die Belydenis van Belhar genoem kon word. Die Belydenis dra vir verskillende mense verskillende gewig. Danie [13-562] distansieer homself geheel en al van die belydenis: *Hulle moet dit los, dit is 'n afgeforseer belydenis wat vir my niks beteken nie* terwyl dit vir Linda [13-571] bloot mensewerk is – asof die ander belydenisskrifte nie ook mensewerk is nie: *Dit is 'n belydenis wat deur mense geskryf is en ons bely 'n lewende God*. Isak [14-330] beskou Belhar as 'n *sweep om NGK mee te slaan* wat besig is om 'n *wig in te druk wat onnodig is* [Isak 14-318]. Teenoor hierdie afwysende houdings vra Hanlie [12-691] reguit: *wat is daar in Belhar om nie te aanvaar nie?*

9. HIERVANDAAN VERDER

In 'n sekere sin bied die voorafgaande gerapporteerde perspektiewe net 'n wegspringplek vir verdere navorsing. Benewens die aangeduide temas sou 'n volgende navorser in meer diepte kon ondersoek instel na die rol van die NG Kerk in die pastorale begeleiding van lidmate in 'n post-apartheid Suid-Afrika tot verdere fasilitering van die tema van versoening.

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TREFWOORDE

Apartheid
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Theological education in Africa: Messages from the fringes

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ABSTRACT

The article asserts that the quest for power is one of the debilitating cultural impediments that keep theological education caught in an out-dated paradigm. It uses case studies to illustrate the hypothesis as well as the journey to escape the stranglehold of the colonial heritage. Philippians 2:1-18 posits the normative theological principle of *kenosis* that should guide us in passing through the needle of an old paradigm. An experience in Kampala and research from the Anglican Church in Kenya illustrate the problem while case studies from Angola, Malawi and South Africa illustrate the paradigm shift from an institutional to a missional paradigm in theological education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between leadership and power may be the biggest problem that we face in our continent. Does theological education provide the right kind of training for church leaders so that they can illustrate a Christian alternative? We have come to the end of the Christendom era with its strong institutional focus (Walls 2002). It is a relief that the missional identity of the church has been rediscovered.² The paradigm shift from an institutionally centred church to that of a missional one has profound ontological and epistemological roots. This is important to understand, but is not the direct focus of this article.³ In missional theology, one of the most important lessons to learn is listening to the fringes, to the voices of “the other.”⁴ One of the advantages of the networking of theological institutions in Africa is the fact that it opens fresh perspectives on issues (e.g. theological education), which have become bogged down in tradition and institutional hierarchies. This article tells the stories of colleagues and institutions in our continent.

As a practical theologian, I believe that theology is a continuing hermeneutical concern that discerns how the Word should be proclaimed in word and deed in the world (Hendriks 2004:19). This discernment *is not simply an academic rational activity*, but a journey of faith like that of Abraham. We are in a liminal space as regards theological education and we need to journey together to understand what the missional implications of this paradigm shift entail⁵. Thus, the article will focus on the Word as well as on observations made while journeying in Africa.

2 Missional church literature is flooding the market. My journey started with Bosch (1991), Newbiggin (1989) and Guder (ed. 1998).

3 David Bosch (1991) and Meylahn (2012) will be of assistance in this regard.

4 Walls (2002: 32) illustrates from history how major missiological breakthroughs took place when Christians outside of the inner circle of the institutional hierarchy were given the freedom to initiate work guided by the Word and the Spirit.

5 The writer concurs with the Cape Town Commitment (2012:52) of the Lausanne movement: “Those of us who lead churches and mission agencies need to acknowledge that theological education is intrinsically missional. Those of us who provide theological education need to ensure that it is intentionally missional, since its place within the academy is not an end in itself, but to serve the mission of the Church in the world.”

2. KAMPALA'S SILENCE

I was a plenary speaker at a TEA conference⁶ in Kampala in August 2013. The paper was titled *Contextualizing Theological Education in Africa by doing theology in a missional hermeneutic* (Hendriks 2013a:818-831). The animated audience of 350 people ranged from untrained pastors (from the African Initiated Churches) with no formal training, to vice-chancellors of Christian universities. During the presentation, I asked the audience “What are the characteristics of true Christian leadership?” The reaction was immediate and enthusiastic and I acknowledged all the answers. However, I continually repeated that I missed what, to my mind, was the most important answer. After a while, the group became silent and despondent. Upon my explanation that leadership’s most important characteristic is the giving away of power, their reaction was apparent disbelief, a dumbfounded silence. After seconds of silence, I asked whether they knew of an African president who gave his power away after just one term in office. The lights went on! Upon my questions, “What was the case of most African presidents?” there was laughter! And, “Who was the most respected African president?” “Mandela!” rang out.

These questions initiated myriads of discussions. The point was that the inability to share and give power away is one of the scourges of African leadership and distinctly does *not* follow Christ’s example. The patriarchal family, the tribal system, the leadership style of African leaders were mentioned and discussed. Authoritative leadership that keeps power centralised also has its parallel in the church. This, I think, is something we need to address in our journeying in this continent and especially in theological education. Let’s use this cue as a hermeneutical tool to address the question on how to train leaders.

If theology is about listening to the world and the Word, we should actively engage in listening to the Word, especially in liminal phases, where we try to find a way forward.⁷ The question put to the Kampala audience had its origin in the congregation where I serve as an elder. The congregation had experienced a difficult leadership transition and decided to dwell in the Word,⁸ i.e. Philippians 2:1-18, at all the church

6 TEA is an acronym for Theological Education in Africa. The Christian Reformed World Missions Eastern and Southern Africa Ministries held its third TEA conference in Kampala, Uganda, in August 2013.

7 Keifert, in Keifert (ed.) 2009:27-47, uses the same approach when addressing the challenge. His chapter “The Bible and theological education: A report and reflections on a journey” echoes the same approach as this article.

8 Dwelling in the word is a discernment exercise in which the Bible plays the key role (Ellison 2009).

board's meetings.⁹ This we did for two years. The Word is slowly transforming us; thus, the congregation's identity is also being transformed. We had to unlearn a CEO leadership style,¹⁰ and are currently in a process of discovering how to give power away. The challenge to understand the role of leadership in empowering a congregation for missional, Kingdom service, confronts us. In this article, dwelling on Phil 2:1-11 is also a crucial part of the journey; it describes the theology of giving away power! Read and reflect on this passage.

3. THE MESSAGE ABOUT DOWNWARD MOBILITY

Philippians 2:1-18: He took on the status of a slave

1-4 If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ,
if his love has made any difference in your life,
if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you,
if you have a heart,
if you *care* –
then do me a favour: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends.
Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top.
Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead.
Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage.
Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

5-8 Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.

He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human!*

9 The passage from the translation in *The Message* is used because it is a contextualized translation. I consulted Wright (1991:56-98) and Gorman (2009:9-39) on this passage but refrained from indulging in the exegetical detail. The broad and basic significance for our topic is, however, clear. Gorman (:13) writes: "... I would suggest that Phil 2:6-11 is truly Paul's master story." Similarly the passage forms a crucial chapter in Wright's (56-98) book.

10 CEO or Chief Executive Officer refers to an executive officer or leader with more or less absolute power that usually rules his/her organization in an authoritarian way.

Having become human, he stayed human.

It was an incredibly humbling process.

He didn't claim special privileges.

Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

9–11 Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honoured him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honour of God the Father.¹¹

4. *KENOSIS* AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Philippians 2 is about the paradox of power. Paul is in prison in Rome. Epaphroditus visits him (2:25). Paul writes this letter to thank the Philippians for their generosity, but also to encourage them and advise them about the meaning of following Christ in an awfully dangerous and broken world. The context is described by words such as opposition, suffering, struggle, death and dying, and a corrupt, squalid and polluted society; but also words like courage, victory, obedience, trust, joy, etcetera. This is applicable to many places on our continent where we too must train successors to Timothy and the Philippian congregation. What are the theological parameters that should shape this training?

- First and foremost, it is about following Christ. Philippians 2:1: “If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ ...” What does “following Christ” imply in training Christian leaders?
- Philippians 2:1-4 says that this implies that the love, community and compassion of the Trinity should become visible in harmony, love and unity amongst Christ’s followers. It implies being utterly unselfish, crucifying individualism’s ego-alpha male culture. It is about “downward mobility” (Gorman 2009:16).
- Jesus Christ exemplifies this (2:6-8). Followers of Christ are “in Christ” if a three-step journey is embarked upon: 1) Christ had equal status before God, but 2) He relinquished this and became human. 3) He lived a selfless, obedient life and died a selfless, obedient death – crucified.

11 Peterson, E.H., 2002, *The Message: The Bible in contemporary language*, Php 2:1-18, NavPress, Colorado Springs, Colo.

The key word here is *kenosis*, which means emptying in Philippians 2:6, He “emptied himself.” He unselfishly surrendered his pre-existent, divine mode of being (Brown 1975:1:547) and gave himself to a broken world. Healing comes through brokenness: his crucifixion led to his resurrection.

- This is about the paradoxical mystery of giving away power and having power in a new and stronger, but counter-intuitive, way. The translation in *The Message* (2:13) senses this as follows: “Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is *God’s* energy, energy deep within you”
- The passage is about the crossing of sometimes-intractable boundaries. *Kenosis* is about emptying, about moving purposefully from one way of being to another; serving and self-sacrifice. God becoming human and, being human, he took the disciples to people and places where they had never been before. Some lectures were in the temple, but most were not. He took them where people were suffering, where human dignity was wasted, trampled upon. There he healed, fed and taught.
- This passage reveals the essence of a missional theology, of the *missio Dei*. Gorman (2009:38) summarizes it:

The community that bears witness to this divine mission (Phil 2:12-18) does so through participation, by means of Spirit-enabled theoforimity, in the reality of the life of the kenotic triune God that is described in Philippians 2:1-4 and revealed in Paul’s master story of the incarnate, crucified, and exalted Messiah (Phil 2:6-11) who effects the eschatological mission for God the Father.

Philippians 2 provides a glimpse of God’s counterintuitive *kenotic* and cruciform identity that should be an integral part of theological education in order to form its dream and goal. Does this narrative of a vulnerable God inform and structure a missional theological education?

Probe the current practice by asking:

- If downward mobility is what it takes to follow Christ, if unselfish service and giving form is the essence of *theosis*,¹² we should ask how it could be embodied in theological education.

12 *Theosis* refers to escaping from this world’s corruption and temptation in order to become participants or partakers in the divine nature. Classic text: 2 Pet 1:4 (Gorman 2009:5).

- Are the structures and organization, as well as the practice of theological educational institutions, predominantly institutional (law) or missional (and *kenotic*) by nature (Wright 1991)?
- According to what parameters is the evaluation of theological education done?
- How do we evaluate theological students and how do we reward “good students?” Who receives bursaries? Do the principles of Philippians 2 play any role?
- Do we cross boundaries in theological education? Do we go out to where it hurts? How do we choose our professors and how do they teach? Do they, like Christ, set an example in crossing boundaries? Are they present (physically) with their students where people are in pain?
- Are discipleship principles – the way that the Christ taught his disciples – still applicable in any practical way? Describe the typical setup in theological schools and the relationship and interaction between the staff and students. Discuss this. Are these two scenarios not two systemically different realities? How do we handle the differences?

At the end of a 500 year era (Tickle 2008) and confronted with an emerging post-Christendom Christianity (Tickle 2012), theological education, in a sense, is embarrassed. Transformation processes are problematic. An emerging future challenges us to move from ego-systems to eco-systems (Scharmer & Kaufer 2013). It involves the courage to stop downloading old patterns and systems and to suspend your inner voices of judgement, cynicism and fear. It requires an open mind, an open heart and an open will, gaining a sense from the world and Spirit by being present in the now of new opportunities. We need places and practices of quietude and presence, simply dwelling in the Word and in the world, letting the new come to us and, once we sense and experience it, embody and act upon it (Scharmer 2009:38-47). This is about the release of the old forms of power and sense of security that the old paradigm systems offer. Many of these have collapsed, as evidenced in Europe and elsewhere in the global North (Jenkins 2002).

5. THE ANGOLAN CURRICULUM

Andrew Walls (2002:32), the superb observer of the missionary process in Christian history, especially in Africa, made this observation:

There is a significant feature of each of these demographic and cultural shifts of the Christian centre of gravity. In each case a threatened eclipse of Christianity was averted by its cross-cultural diffusion. Crossing cultural

boundaries has been the lifeblood of historic Christianity. It is noteworthy that most of the energy for the frontier crossing has come from the periphery rather than from the centre. The book of Acts suggests that it was not the apostles who were responsible for the breakthrough of Antioch, whereby Greek-speaking pagans heard of the Jewish messiah as the Lord Jesus, but quite unknown Jewish believers from Cyprus and Greece (Acts 11:19-20).

A testimony from Angola on the “energy from the periphery” may be of assistance in our quest for rediscovering a way to teach theology in Africa. The following quote is from a brochure called “Kinkuni” of the Igreja Evangelica Reformada de Angola (IERA, i.e. the Reformed Church of Angola).

Kinkuni Skills Training Seminary

Years ago the Reformed Church in Angola (IERA) had a beautiful seminary at Kinkuni, Uige province in Angola. It was twice destroyed during the 40-year period of war and faction fighting.

In rebuilding it as an open seminary for churches in the region a specific philosophy of theological training and of being church is followed. The church strives to make a difference in society. Its ministers will be trained in more than just theology. The seminary is also more than simply an academic compound. When pastors are doing practical work in congregations Kinkuni will be used as a skills training centre for local communities.

From its inception the seminary trained men and women in practical skills ranging from carpentry, farming, plumbing, teaching and whatever skills were required. As such they will be able to sustain themselves and earn a living while being ministers. They will also be able to train others in the skills that they have mastered.

The church will participate in the building of the new seminary. It will be a skills-training exercise in which the whole church, presbytery by presbytery, will come to Kinkuni to provide the labour. At the same time they will be trained in construction methods and acquire the appropriate certificates of competency. The goal is to empower congregations to form “companies” that can successfully complete building projects in their home areas. As such unemployment and sustainability will be addressed.

Since 2004, the writer has been involved with IERA and theological training at Kinkuni in the Uige province of Angola. A team from South Africa helped in

planning the new seminary, writing its business plan, etcetera, but we had to discard our way of thinking about building and operating a seminary. The Angolans revealed a complete new understanding of a pastor's role and ministry. Before their war of independence and the subsequent cold war and faction fighting, pastors were trained in theology and skills with which to serve their communities, thus earning a living through work and the Word. Paul must have been their example. Not much in this regard has been documented; it simply lives in the church's shared memory. When they were ready to begin the process of rebuilding the twice-destroyed seminary, the fringes remembered and provided solutions. The writer did some research on the IERA's Western-style seminary training that took place in Luanda as from 1978 to date. It's not working. The Luanda-trained pastors are reluctant to work in the rural areas where they cannot earn a living wage. In a sense, they can deal only with the typical institutional way of being church where a congregation pays them. However, during the 40 years of war when the institution had to go underground, the church grew from 84 000 members to an estimated 250 000 – largely without seminary-trained pastors.

South Africa is part of Africa and we need to ask ourselves: What is happening in our continent? And, as we take cognizance of the fringes, we need to discern what their stories teach us about theological education and being church.

However, when considering Philippians 2, we recognize some patterns. The Angolans instinctively insisted that their new seminary should be built as a skills-training centre to equip their ministers for service in communities where, after 40 years of war, unemployment and a lack of skills are endemic. Theological training was viewed as an inherent part of community development, as the Gospel holistically reflects Jesus' ministry and crossing of boundaries. Even more fundamental: learning from their Luanda-training period, they realized that pastors, who are trained to serve an institution and receive salaries there, are reluctant to serve in rural congregations. Therefore, they want their pastors to be trained as community servants who are able to empower their communities through work and the Word.

6. THE ANGLICAN DILEMMA IN KENYA

Whereas the Angolan development is about adjusting its theological training to address contextual realities, the research of the Anglican Church of Kenya may assist us as it illustrates a worst-case scenario. However, this is not without precedent in South Africa.¹³ Case studies are useful to illustrate tendencies and systems (Babbie & Mouton 2010:280-283; De Vos *et al.* 2011:320-322).

13 This section has been adapted from Hendriks 2013b:1006-1007.

In 2008, Rev Dickson N Kagema (2008:2) completed his PhD on *Leadership training for mission in the Anglican Church of Kenya* at UNISA. His research question was: “How best should the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) train leaders who can effectively meet the demands of the rapidly growing Kenyan society?” To evaluate leadership training in Kenya, he applied the four-self mission strategy advocated by the ACK’s own 2004 strategic plan. The aim of the leadership training should be a self-sustaining, self-propagating, self-governing and self-theologising church (2008:4, 41-53).

This research provides a general overview of the ACK, the above-mentioned mission strategy, its history and the growth of this Church. In 2007, the ACK had 3.7 million members constituting 10.6% of the total Kenyan population of 35 million (3.4% more members compared to the 1980 census market share) (Kagema 2008:54-67) while 1 555 ordained clergy served its 4996 congregations (1352 parishes). This translates into roughly 2 400 members per clergyman. Of the clergy 83% had diplomas or certificates and less than three years’ training. Only 17% had degrees. An empirical analysis was made of the theological colleges and their curricula. The views of Anglican leaders (bishops, clergy, lecturers at colleges, lay and youth leaders) pertaining to the colleges’ leadership training and curricula triangulated the data. A pretty uniform picture emerged (:144-235). Kagema’s conclusions confirm the emerging picture of the church in Africa (:70):

The ACK lacks enough shepherds and the possibility is that most of its flock is spiritually unfed. It is practically impossible for one pastor to effectively satisfy the needs of such a big group. The challenges of the 21st century are immense and call for a pastor who is quite near to his/her sheep so that he/she can understand them and their challenges fully and as such he/she is in a position of meeting their spiritual needs.

In attempting to solve the problem of an adequate number of clergy, dioceses grouped together and started their own colleges. The process, however, was saturated with tribalism and a search for power (Kagema 2008:195):

... some of the theological colleges were started out of the desire by some of the church leaders to have their own colleges where they would have direct influence and control. ... this self-interest coupled with ‘tribalism’ has continued to affect the training of church leaders in the ACK up to date, greatly affecting the provincialization process ...

When the four-self requirements were put to the test at these colleges, all failed, which the church leaders acknowledge. The curricula are not contextualized and relevant. The seminaries are understaffed and depend on foreign donors for survival.

The qualifications of the lecturers are substandard, while half of the principals are expatriates (Kagama 2008:199).

Regarding curriculum issues, Kagema (2008:232) is outspoken:

The curriculum of any learning institution is very important as it determines the kind of products produced by that institution. If the curriculum is haphazardly done, the people produced by it are also haphazard and their work is haphazard ... The clergy produced by these colleges are “half baked” ... And as such cannot stand the challenges of the 21st century... This has rendered the ACK not to be a self-theologizing Church, a mission principle that is very instrumental for any growing church. ... the curricula used in the ACK Provincial Colleges are uncontextualised and irrelevant. These curricula look more Western than African and as such fail to address the main issues affecting the Kenyan society today.

As with the PCN in Nigeria,¹⁴ Kagema (2008:41-42) bewails the tribalism and points out that the chaos, which befell the country after the December 2007 elections, was due to pent-up ethnic anger that simply erupted as the different factions within the ACK supported their kin.

Throughout Kagema’s dissertation, a self-destructing cycle is evident; because of a lack of leadership the ACK’s decisions to improve theological training were not implemented and the financial problems continued. Those drawn to study as clergy are mostly low-level candidates unable to find employment or opportunities for study elsewhere. This is self-defeating; people no longer respect their fellow African clergy, catechists and evangelists. Good lecturers are scarce, underpaid, and more often than not tempted to emigrate, which exacerbates the brain drain of Africans who leave for lucrative work abroad (2008:22-34,288). At all the colleges, theological training is offered in English (2008:281). However, theology remains foreign if not taught in the mother tongue. Kagema’s (:308-311) dissertation is an emphatic call addressed to the African Christian intellectual leadership.

This ends the summary of Kagema’s dissertation.

A critical correlation between this case study and Philippians 2:1-18 highlights the discrepancy between the scriptural guiding principles and the ACK’s educational system. The ACK may be a worst-case scenario, but it is the reigning system of theological education in many denominations in Africa. Kagema’s honest remarks

14 The remark refers to another case study that was taken from the doctoral dissertation of Onwunta (2006), which was recently published (Onwunta 2010).

on tribalism and issues of power should warn us that these tendencies are interwoven into the system. Our basic presupposition is that the typical Western theological system of education is institutionally, not missionally, driven. Kagema's research in the ACK leaves no doubt about this.

However, the ACK is growing in numbers. Why? Allow Malawi to answer this question.

7. ANSWERS FROM MALAWI

The dissertation of Dr Davidson Chifungo (2013) of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Nkhoma Synod, is an example from the fringes (see Walls 2002:32 discussed above) that can shed some light on our quest. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod was one of the founding members of NetACT, a *Network for African Congregational Theology*,¹⁵ which was founded during 2000 and 2001 in Kenya and Zambia. Its mission statement reads:

NetACT is a network of theological institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, created and directed by these institutions, to assist them in preparing leaders for missional congregations.

In NetACT's first publication, *Studying Congregations in Africa* (Hendriks 2004), the Network motivates its emphasis on congregations.¹⁶ Subsequently, many PhD studies¹⁷ have dealt with this challenge proving the relevance and importance of training that focuses on empowering congregations. Few made a stronger case for this stance than Chifungo. The conviction of these leaders is grounded in scriptural passages, such as Philippians 2:1-18, which is about "downward mobility" and the role of pastors to empower people for missional ministry.

The growth of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod (Chifungo 2013:48-53) tells an important part of the story. Missionary work began in 1889. In 1962, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod received its autonomy from the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South

15 NetACT's website <http://academic.sun.ac.za/tsv/netact.html> has the full history of the network, is well documented and kept up to date. One of the chapters in Phiri *et al.* (2013) *Handbook for Theological Education in Africa*, tells the NetACT story (Hendriks 2013b:1001-1017).

16 For the same emphasis and arguments, but applied to the Northern American situation, Keifert's chapter on "The return to the congregation in Theological Education" (in Keifert, [ed.] 2009:13-26) is informative.

17 Some examples available on the web are Msangaambe (2011), Ruturo (2007) & Munikwa (2011).

Africa. There were 35 congregations with approximately 1 000 prayer houses, 70 000 communicant members and 20 000 catechumen. At the October 2012 Synod, it was reported that the church had 158 congregations, more than 2 500 prayer houses and in excess of 1.5 million members, but 32 congregations had no clergy. However, Chifungo's most important observation was that 90% of the preaching was done by untrained lay preachers. As in the case of the ACK (above), the growth of the church is directly linked to the preaching and presence of the elders/lay preachers. Chifungo (2013:3-4) deals with this phenomenon and the abstract of his PhD dissertation reads:

This dissertation aims at recording, evaluating and analysing sermons of the lay preachers in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Nkhoma Synod in Central Malawi. Basically, these preachers have an oral culture. This analysis reveals the inherent ability of the oral lay preachers to communicate effectively using their indigenous knowledge system and modes of communication, which are characteristic of an oral culture.

Secondly, the analysis also reveals some lack in these sermons in terms of biblical understanding. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to develop a homiletical theory and praxis, which will regard the biblical text and the people's context – Word and world – as serious.

Finally, the research proves that, if the strategy of implementing a training process in the congregations for all lay preachers, in order to empower them to use both their traditional modes of communication and an understanding of the Bible, could be realised, the spirituality of the people would improve and Christianity would have a greater impact in the society.

Msangaambe's (2011) research indicates how more than preaching can, and should, be implemented to attain community development and how missional practices realize core traits of God's Kingdom. However, both Msangaambe and Chifungo highlight a central theological principal from Phil 2:1-11. The clergy should give power away by empowering lay leaders and the laity. They should act as disciples by crossing boundaries to where people live and work. *The growth of the church in Africa is taking place where ordinary people, lay-Christians, Women's Guild members and youth choirs are witnessing* (Msangaambe 2011:57). Their research has proved that goal that NetACT leaders had set in 2001 concerning the empowering of congregational leadership, was sound.

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod makes good use of their lay training centre at Chongoni (Chifungo 2013:52; Msangaambe 2011:52). One of the biggest challenges to these young academics, which graduated with doctoral degrees, is not to fall into the trap

of the institutional church and its power hierarchies. They could, and should, play a crucial role in the transformation of theological education, as they are the people who have seen the light!

8. A MISSIONAL SHIFT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Fresh expressions of the missional movement are appearing everywhere and in all denominations (Church of England 2009) and are catching on in South Africa.¹⁸ The DRC accepted a resolution at its 2013 General Synod that being church means being missional. It describes the basic theological framework of a missional church in great detail (Algemene Sinode Raamwerkdokument 2013:199-215). The attributes of Phil 2:1-17 are quite clear in the *Raamwerkdokument*. The following quotation illustrates downward mobility and empowerment (:209):

Gewone lidmate is die operasionele basis vanwaar die missio Dei begin. Hulle beklee sonder twyfel die belangrikste amp. Die ouderlinge en diakens (en leraars) kan nooit op hulle eie gemeentes help om volledig en in alle omstandighede sout vir die aarde en suurdeeg vir die wêreld te wees nie. Die lidmate is die sout en suurdeeg. (Laity is the operation base of the missio Dei. Theirs is the most important ministry. Elders, deacons (and pastors) cannot substitute congregations in being salt of the earth and yeast of the world. Laity should be the salt and the yeast (*my translation*).

This document also addresses theological training (:212-213). The reports of the Curatoria of the different Theological Faculties echo the first *Raamwerk* (Framework) report and the theological argument that it pursues (Algemene Sinode: Algemene Kuratorium 263-277, specifically addressed on pp. 273-276). It states explicitly that the DRC's identity is missional (:273) and that this implies discipleship (:274). Point 3:10 expounds the implications for missional leadership in terms of theological training (:276):

Voornemende predikante moet deur hulle teologiese opleiding gevorm word om geloofsonderskeidend met die Skrif om te gaan sodat die boodskap op 'n wetenskaplike verantwoorde wyse met die konteks in verband gebring kan word. In 'n missionale hermeneutiek moet die nodige kennis en vaardighede ontwikkel word oor die aard van kultuurverandering, die vorming van netwerke, die dinamika en sinergie van spanwerk. Daar moet geleer word om vernuwend en kreatief met

18 Google "Fresh Expressions." Websites such as this tell the story: <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/missionshapedministry/george13> Accessed Nov 1, 2013.

die (beperkte) middele om te gaan. (Theological training should form prospective ministers in discernment skills using Scripture as well as scientifically applicable contextual data to inform their sermons. A missional hermeneutic should shape knowledge and skills to understand cultural transformation processes, formation of networks as well as the dynamics and synergy of teamwork. Even when means are scarce innovative and creative ways to deal with challenges should be part of theological training (*My translation*).

There is no doubt that this sets the stage for serious wrestling with theological education. The practical steps that the DRC Synod accepted to implement its decisions are positive. So, the journey has started ...¹⁹

9. IT IS NO EASY JOURNEY, BECAUSE THE CAMELS ARE LOADED

The realities of our continent – its numerous problems and deep pain – confront the church with many challenges. The church is experiencing unprecedented growth which, obviously, is a mile wide and an inch deep. Theological education is being challenged. Can we train pastors and empower the laity to be the proverbial salt and light to make a difference in society?

In concluding this article, I want to share from the work of Otto Scharmer and the Presencing Institute,²⁰ which I found most valuable to help organizations in

19 Robert Schreiter (2011:11) called this shift at the Catholic Maryknoll centennial symposium the “third wave of mission” and defines it “Regarding mission and evangelization in a world impacted by globalization, it follows that the agents of mission will be mobile, flexible, and part time. Most will come from the ranks of the laity.” My observation in Africa in protestant circles is that the growth and “mission” of the church is linked to the role of laity in congregational and other networks. They are the prime agents, more so than “mobile, flexible and part time” agents.

20 From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Scharmer (Accessed Oct 9, 2013): “Dr. C. Otto Scharmer is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the founding chair of the Presencing Institute. He chairs the MIT IDEAS program and helps groups of diverse stakeholders from business, government, and civil society to innovate at the level of the whole system ... He also is a Vice-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on New Leadership Models. Scharmer introduced the concept of "presencing" - learning from the emerging future - in his bestselling books ... that have been translated into 15 languages ... With his colleagues, he has used presencing to facilitate profound innovations and changes in health, education, sustainability, and business systems. His best known publications are:

2013. *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco. Co-authored with Katrin Kaufer.

liminal spaces in dealing with profound transformation. He often quotes Albert Einstein who said, “We cannot solve problems with the same kind of thinking that created them” (Scharmer & Kaufer 2013:11). This, of course, is what Thomas Kuhn (1970) explains in greater detail. When a paradigm changes, everything changes. I referred to the works of Tickle (2008) and Walls (2002) who both, in their own way, described the historical paradigms and the liminal phase in which we are today. Thus, in concluding this article, a word from Scharmer & Kaufer (2013:22) will help us to be more realistic about the challenge that we face:

Pass through the eye of the needle. At the deepest point of each U journey²¹ is a threshold. Crossing that threshold, passing through the eye of a needle, can feel like dying and being reborn. According to the Bible, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The phrase “eye of a needle” refers to a gate in ancient Jerusalem: For a man to fit his camel through Jerusalem’s gate, he had to remove all the bags from the camel’s back. Likewise, if we want to go through the eye of the needle at the bottom of the U, we have to let go of everything and offload all the baggage that isn’t essential. Going through that gate means encountering the two root questions of the journey: “Who is my self?” and “What is my work?”

In *Leading from the emerging future*, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013:27-43) discuss some of the most epochal events of our time, such as the fall of the Berlin wall (1989), Chernobyl, the effect of the tsunami on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, the near meltdown of the Western financial system in 2008, and several examples from the Arab Spring. This they do to illustrate the cracks in the old system (paradigm) and the typical reaction in the liminal phase of transition. On page 29, a remark supports the eye of the needle quotation. In all the examples of epochal events quoted, one finds, after some time:

... the rebound of the old forces as soon as the memory of the collapse began to fade away; the old forces tried to obscure the actual root causes of the breakdown in order to extend their privileged access to power and influence (an example is Wall Street’s financial oligarchy).

At the moment that we reach the point of meltdown, we have a choice: We can freeze and revert to our deeply ingrained habits of the past, or we can

2009, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco.

21 Theory U is the key concept describing Scharmer’s (2009) methodology.

stop and lean into the space of the unknown, lean into that which wants to emerge.

10. CONCLUSION

To transform theological education will not be an easy journey. The camel is loaded with benefits and securities for those who own it, thus it will continue to rebound.

However, the cracks in the system are clearly evident for all who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

I am filled with hope and expectation about what is happening in the fresh expressions and missional shift in many mainline churches. The examples from the DRC discussed above are promising because they addressed the two questions that Scharmer and Kaufer (2013:22) asked about identity and mission. At the heart of the reformulation of their identity and mission is the *kenosis* principle and a realization that Philippians 2:1-18 describes the journey. However, the institutional structures in which theological education is embedded in tertiary institutions will be the eye of the needle. However, the rebound forces will be strong, which is evident in the Kenyan case study. We shall need wisdom, dialogue and “presencing” which, to my understanding, boil down to a process of theological discernment.

We need to hear the voices from the fringes. The stories from Angola, Kenya and Malawi are excellent illustrations. Similar stories exist all over Africa. I am worried that the academic theological institutions prefer to travel to the global North for conferences in big hotels, and find it difficult to embark on potholed roads less travelled. However, if we wish to follow Christ, then downward mobility will be the hallmark of a truthful journey. The church will be reborn if we are willing to be with the widows and orphans, and travel to places where we have not been before.

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KEY WORDS

Theological education in Africa
Kenosis – power
Kinkuni Angola
CCAP Malawi
Anglican Church of Kenya
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Third wave missions

Freedom of Religion: Recent Developments in the Jurisprudence of the United Kingdom and the European Court of Human Rights¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper begins with an overview of the legal landscape in the United Kingdom as it has developed over the past decade or so in relation to the promotion and protection of religious liberty. It analyses several of the more recent cases on the subject and seeks to identify trends and trajectories for future development in the light of the parallel supervisory jurisdiction exercised by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

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- 1 Paper read on 19 September 2012 at the South African Council for the Promotion and Protection of Religious Rights and Freedoms (Revised for publication, 10 January 2013).
 - 2 Professor Mark Hill QC is a barrister specialising in law and religion. He is Honorary Professor in the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University and sometime Visiting Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He has written extensively on religious freedom and discrimination and is Editor of the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*. His books include *Religious Liberty and Human Rights* (2002), *Law and Religion in the United Kingdom* (2011) and *Religion and Discrimination Law in the European Union* (2012). He is President of the European Consortium for Church and State Research and sits as a Recorder of the Crown Court on the Midland Circuit and as a judge in the Diocesan courts of the Church of England.



SETTING THE SCENE

The early years of the current millennium have seen the development of a sophisticated United Kingdom jurisprudence in both individual and collective religious freedom.³ Whilst these rights have long been articulated in instruments of international law (of which English common law has taken substantive cognisance), they have effectively been ‘domesticated’ through primary legislation emanating from the Westminster Parliament. Historically, for example, fact specific exemptions were given to laws of general application: for instance Sikhs were exempted from the requirement to wear a safety hat on a construction site and from the law relating to the wearing of protective headgear for motor cyclists;⁴ while Jews and Muslims enjoyed exemptions from rules on animal slaughter methods.⁵ Occasionally, special provision has afforded on grounds of religion: for instance it is a defence to charge of having a blade in a public place if the blade is carried ‘for religious reasons’.⁶ Similarly, section 1 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and various other statutes regarding the care of children recognises the right of children to have ‘due consideration’ given to their ‘religious persuasion’. But traditionally these privileges were rare and hard fought. The law provides no special protection for Rastafarians for their use of cannabis on religious grounds⁷ nor would a defence grounded on divine law be sustainable.⁸

However, two recent developments in religion law have led to greater prominence being given to freedom of religion. First, the Human Rights Act 1998 gave ‘further effect’ to the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the ECHR. Whereas previously the ECHR merely had the status of a treaty obligation under international law,⁹ Convention rights (including freedom of religion under Article 9) are now part

3 See M. Hill & R. Sandberg, ‘Is Nothing Sacred? Clashing Symbols in a Secular World,’ [2007] PL 488–506 and R. Sandberg, ‘The Changing Position of Religious Minorities in English Law: The Legacy of *Begum*’, in *Legal Practice and Cultural Diversity*, ed. R. Grillo et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 267–282.

4 Employment Act 1989, s. 11; Road Traffic Act 1988, s. 16. For a full account, see S. Poulter, *Ethnicity, Law and Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Ch. 8.

5 Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995, SI 1995/731, Reg 2.

6 Criminal Justice Act 1988, s. 139.

7 *R v. Taylor* [2001] EWCA Crim 2263, *R v. Andrews* [2004] EWCA Crim 947.

8 *Blake v. DPP* [1993] Crim LR 556.

9 Although individual petition to the European Court in Strasbourg had been permitted since 1966.

of domestic law, justiciable in domestic courts. Second, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003¹⁰ and the Equality Act 2006 prohibited for the first time discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in employment and the provision of goods and services. These provisions are now to be found in the Equality Act 2010.

Since October 2000, pursuant the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, Article 9 of the ECHR are directly justiciable in domestic courts. It provides:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

This Article provides a positive right to both the freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the manifestation of one's religion or belief. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absolute. It includes the right to hold a religion or belief and to change it free of State interference.¹¹ In contrast, the right to manifest one's religion or belief is limited by Article 9(1) in that the manifestation must be 'in worship, teaching, practice and observance' and, more importantly, by the possible qualifications in Article 9(2) which permits the State to interfere with the right if the three tests in Article 9(2) are met. The interference must be 'prescribed by law', have one or more of the legitimate aims listed in Article 9(2) and be 'necessary in a democratic society'. Thus, in relation to the right to manifest, litigants need to show that there has been an interference with their manifestation of religion or belief under Article 9(1), the onus then falls on the State to show that this interference is justified under Article 9(2).

THE RISE AND RISE OF LITIGATION

Most disputes concern the right to manifest. The case law on individual religious freedom under the Human Rights Act 1998 may thus be conceptualised as involving

¹⁰ SI 2003/1660.

¹¹ *Manoussakis v. Greece* (1997) 23 EHRR 387; *Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia v. Moldova* (2002) 35 EHRR 306. *Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v. Russia* [2006] ECtHR (No. 72881/01) (5 Oct. 2006).

two broad questions: first, whether there is an interference with the right to manifest under Article 9(1) and second, whether that interference with the right to manifest is justified under Article 9(2). It should be noted, however, that in the language of the Human Rights Act 1998 such claims can only be made against public authorities. Unexpectedly, one of the early human rights cases to reach the House of Lords (now reconstituted as the United Kingdom Court of Appeal) concerned the juridic status of the Church of England.¹²

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has generally taken a formulaic approach to Article 9 cases. The Court invariably begins by stressing the importance of the right, citing the leading case, *Kokkinakis v. Greece*,¹³ which described how ‘Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is one of the foundations of a “democratic society” within the meaning of the Convention.’¹⁴ The *Kokkinakis* justification is twofold, stressing both the social and personal functions of religion.¹⁵ The European Court of Human Rights permits a ‘margin of appreciation’ allowing States to differ from each other in relation to their laws and policies to some extent to allow for their different cultures. While previously Strasbourg has spoken of the existence of a wide margin of appreciation in the sphere of morals and religion (especially in relation to attacks on religious convictions),¹⁶ recent decisions suggest a degree of inconsistency in the deference, which the Strasbourg Court will afford to national legislatures on matters of religion.¹⁷

The European Court then asks whether there has been an interference with Article 9(1) and if there is whether that interference is justified under Article 9(2). The question of whether there has been interference is often a formality. The question is sometimes expressed as asking whether Article 9 has been engaged. Some cases suggest that these are two separate tests; others suggest that they are the same

12 *Aston Cantlow Parochial Church Council v Wallbank* [2002] Ch 51.

13 (1994) 17 EHRR 397.

14 *Ibid.* Note also the extra-judicial opinion of the current President of the European Court of Human Rights: N Bratza, ‘The Precious Asset: ****’ in M Hill (ed) *Religion and Discrimination Law in the European Union* (Trier, 2011).

15 P.W. Edge, ‘Current Problems in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights,’ *Juridical Review* (1996): 42 at 47.

16 See, e.g., *Otto Preminger-Institut v. Austria* (1995) 19 EHRR 34 at para. 56.

17 See *Sahin v. Turkey* (2005) 41 EHRR 8 and *Lautsi v. Italy* [2009] ECtHR (Application No. 30814/06), and in the Grand Chamber, 18 March 2011.

question expressed differently. This perceived dissonance is likely to be resolved in the forthcoming judgment in *Eweida & Chaplin v United Kingdom*.¹⁸

Strasbourg has employed three ‘filtering devices’ to exclude claims under the question of interference: the definition of belief, the manifestation/motivation requirement and the specific situation rule.¹⁹

I. THE DEFINITION OF BELIEF²⁰

The European Court of Human Rights has taken a liberal approach to the definition of religion. Strasbourg institutions have considered claims concerning scientology,²¹ druidism,²² pacifism,²³ communism,²⁴ atheism,²⁵ pro-life,²⁶ Divine Light Zentrum,²⁷ the Moon Sect,²⁸ as well as ‘splinter’ groups within larger traditions,²⁹ and have invariably done so without questioning whether the objects of such claims are protected.³⁰

The general practice of the Court may be illustrated by its treatment in *X v. Austria*³¹ where the question of whether Nazism was outside the scope of Article 9(1) was

18 Oral argument took place in Strasbourg on 4 September 2012 and the judgment will be delivered on 15 January 2013.

19 R. Sandberg, ‘The Changing Position of Religious Minorities in English Law: The Legacy of *Begum*’, in *Legal Practice and Cultural Diversity*, ed. R. Grillo et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 267–282.

20 See R. Sandberg, ‘Defining Religion: Towards An Interdisciplinary Approach’, *Revista General de Derecho Canonico y Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado* 17 (2008): 1–23.

21 *X and Church of Scientology v. Sweden* (1978) 16 DR 68.

22 *Chappell v. United Kingdom* (1987) 53 DR 241.

23 *Arrowsmith v. United Kingdom* (1978) 19 DR 5.

24 *Hazar, Hazar and Acik v. Turkey* (1991) 72 DR 200.

25 *Angeleni v. Sweden* (1986) 51 DR 41.

26 *Plattform 'Ärzte für das Leben' v. Austria* (1985) 44 DR 65.

27 *Omkarananda and the Divine Light Zentrum v. Switzerland* (1981) 25 DR 105.

28 *X v. Austria* (1981) 26 DR 89.

29 For example, *Serif v. Greece* (1999) 31 EHRR 561 (Mufti elected by Mosque congregations in opposition to the Mufti appointed by the Government).

30 R. Ahdar & I. Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 124; P.M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 207.

31 (1963) 13 CD 42.

not addressed; the Commission simply relied on Article 9(2) to hold that the limitation was justified. Alternatively, the question of definition may be posed but left unanswered: in *Chappel v. UK*,³² for instance, although the existence of Druidism as a religion was questioned, the case was decided purely on the grounds that State restrictions on the celebration of the summer solstice at Stonehenge were justified under Article 9(2).

On occasions, however, Strasbourg will require claimants to prove the existence of the religion in question: in *X v. UK*,³³ for example, an application from a prisoner who sought to be registered as a follower of Wicca failed on the grounds that the applicant had 'not mentioned any facts making it possible to establish the existence of the Wicca religion', what Wicca was and why there was a breach. However, 'more recent decisions suggest more generous acknowledgment of non-mainstream religions'.³⁴

Strasbourg case law tends to revolve around the definition of 'belief', rather than the definition of 'religion'. The term 'belief' is considered in Strasbourg jurisprudence to require a worldview rather than a mere opinion: it was defined in *Campbell and Cosans v. United Kingdom*,³⁵ in reference to Article 2 of the first protocol to the ECHR, as denoting 'views that attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance'.³⁶ However, Strasbourg has only been prepared to use the belief filter in exceptional cases, such as in relation to a strong 'personal motivation' to have your ashes scattered at home,³⁷ support of the notion of assisted suicide,³⁸ and preferences on the part of prisoners as to prison uniform.³⁹

The Strasbourg approach has been replicated at the domestic level. In the House of Lords decision of *R v. Secretary of State for Education and Employment and others ex parte Williamson*,⁴⁰ discussed below, Lord Nicholls noted that the protection

32 (1987) 53 DR 241.

33 (1977) 11 DR 55.

34 M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 208, citing *Omkarananda and the Divine Light Zentrum v. Switzerland* (1981) 25 DR 105, *X v. Austria* (1981) 26 DR 89 and *Chappel v. UK* (1987) 53 DR 241.

35 EHRR 4 (1982): 293.

36 Paragraph 36.

37 *X v. Germany* (1981) 24 DR 137.

38 *Pretty v. United Kingdom* (2002) 35 EHRR 1.

39 *McFeely et al v. UK* (1980) 20 DR 44.

40 [2005] UKHL 15, [2005] 2 AC 246.

of ‘religion or belief’ meant that the question of ‘deciding whether a belief is to be characterised as religious ... will seldom, if ever, arise under the European Convention’ because it does not matter whether the belief is religious or non-religious.⁴¹ Moreover, Lord Nicholls noted that ‘Freedom of religion protects the subjective belief of an individual.’⁴² Lord Walker of Gestingthorpe, in particular, doubted whether it was right for courts, except in extreme cases, ‘to impose an evaluative filter’ at the stage of identifying whether there was a belief, ‘especially when religious beliefs are involved’.⁴³

Lord Nicholls held that these requirements applied to ‘a non-religious belief, as much as a religious belief’; moreover, a non-religious belief ‘must relate to an aspect of human life or behaviour of comparable importance to that normally found with religious beliefs.’⁴⁴ For Lord Hope the current jurisprudence did ‘not support the proposition that a person’s belief in his right to engage in an activity which he carries on for pleasure or recreation [fox hunting in this instance], however fervent or passionate, can be equated with beliefs of the kind that are protected by Article 9’ since that would make it difficult to ‘set any limits on the range of beliefs that would be opened up for protection.’⁴⁵

Generally, however, domestic courts have not relied upon the definition of belief as a filter in their interpretation of Article 9.⁴⁶ This is shown by two cases concerning religious drug use:⁴⁷ in *R v. Taylor*⁴⁸ and *R v. Andrews*,⁴⁹ cases concerning respectively the possession and importing of cannabis by Rastafarians, the Court of Appeal held that anti-drug laws could be justified under Article 9(2). It was assumed without comment that Rastafarianism was a religion and that drug taking was capable being a manifestation of that religion under Article 9(1).

41 Paragraph 24.

42 Paragraph 22.

43 Paragraph 57.

44 At para. 24.

45 *Whaley v. Lord Advocate* [2007] UKHL 53 at para. 18.

46 Compare this with the case law on religious discrimination.

47 See P.W. Edge, ‘Religious Drug Use in England, South Africa and the United States of America’, *Religion & Human Rights* 1, no. 2 (2006): 165–177; M Gibson, ‘Rastafari and Cannabis: Framing a Criminal Law Exception’ *Ecc LJ* (2010) 12: 324.

48 [2001] EWCA Crim 2263.

49 [2004] EWCA Crim 947.

The High Court decision in *R (on the Application of Ghai) v. Newcastle City Council*⁵⁰ suggested however that Article 9 only affords protection to activities that are at the core of religious life. Hindus and Sikhs who sought to have cremations on open-air funeral pyres brought the case. Noting the Secretary of State's contention 'that the weight to be given to religious rights depends on how close the subject matter is to the core of the religion's values or organisation', and rejecting the submission 'that the determination of the core content of the Hindu religion is not a matter for the court', Cranston J held that Hindu beliefs about an open air funeral pyre satisfied what he styled 'the *Williamson* thresholds': they had 'the requisite degree of seriousness and importance' and were 'concerned with central rather than peripheral matters'.⁵¹ In relation to Hindu claims the High Court held that there had been interference with Article 9(1) but that this interference was justified under Article 9(2). In contrast, Cranston J held that 'Article 9 accords no protection to the Sikh tradition of using open air funeral pyres; because it was conceded that their use was 'simply a matter of tradition' and 'not a matter of dogma and belief'.⁵² The pending ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in *Eweida & Chaplin v UK* is likely to address the degree to which a practice must be doctrinally mandated before it amounts to a manifestation of religious belief.

II. MANIFESTATION

The second filter used in relation to Article 9(1) is the manifestation requirement, which requires that the particular practice is one used by a person to manifest his or her religion or belief as opposed to being merely motivated by it.⁵³ This rule has been criticised on the basis that the presence or absence of religious motivation may serve as a good indicator of whether a belief should be protected and that a rigid adherence to the manifestation requirement 'would seem to discriminate against religions without an established cultural base in European States' whose devotions

50 [2009] EWHC (Admin) 978.

51 Paragraph 101.

52 Paragraph 102. Although the High Court's decision was later reversed on appeal ([2010] EWCA Civ 59), the Court of Appeal held that the accommodation of the claimant's wishes would not in fact necessarily infringe the legislation relating to cremation. The appellate judgment, therefore, did not focus upon the Art. 9 claim.

53 *Arrowsmith v. United Kingdom* (1981) 3 EHRR 218.

‘take different forms, such as sexual intercourse, ritual violence, or refusal to pay taxes to a centralised state hostile to their beliefs.’⁵⁴

It is not surprising, therefore, that this filter is not always employed by the court.⁵⁵ At Strasbourg, the test has often been rephrased as requiring, for example, that the action is ‘intimately linked’ to the claimant’s religion or belief,⁵⁶ or whether the actions ‘give expression’ to it.⁵⁷ These requirements are seemingly less strict. At first, it appeared that the domestic courts were to follow Strasbourg in adopting a relaxed interpretation of this requirement.

In *R v. Secretary of State for Education and Employment and others ex parte Williamson*,⁵⁸ head teachers, teachers and parents of children at four independent schools where discipline was enforced by the use of mild corporal punishment alleged, *inter alia*, that the new ban on corporal punishment in schools⁵⁹ breached Article 9 as being incompatible with their belief that physical punishment was part of the duty of education in a Christian context.⁶⁰ While the Court of Appeal dismissed the claim, holding that the infliction of corporal punishment was not a manifestation for the purposes of Article 9,⁶¹ the House of Lords dealt with Article 9 ‘overtly and comprehensively, paying careful attention to freedom of religion and belief.’⁶² The House of Lords held that although there had been interference with the applicant’s Article 9 rights, this was justified under Article 9(2) as being prescribed by law,⁶³ necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of

54 P.W. Edge, ‘Current Problems in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights’ *Juridical Review* (1996): 42 at 45–47.

55 S. Knights, *Freedom of Religion, Minorities and the Law* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007), 44; R. Sandberg, ‘The Changing Position of Religious Minorities in English Law: The Legacy of *Begum*’, in *Legal Practice and Cultural Diversity*, ed. R. Grillo et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

56 *C v. UK* (1983) 37 DR 142, 144; *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria* (2002) 34 EHRR 55.

57 *Knudsen v. Norway* (1985) 42 DR 247.

58 [2005] UKHL 15, [2005] 2 AC 246.

59 Education Act 1998 s. 548 (as amended in 1998).

60 See, for instance, Proverbs 13:24.

61 [2002] EWCA Civ 1926.

62 S. Langlaude, ‘Flogging Children with Religion: A Comment on the House of Lords’ Decision in *Williamson*’ *Ecc LJ* 8 (2006): 335, 345.

63 Since the ban was ‘prescribed by primary legislation in clear terms’, Lord Nicholls at para. 48.

others,⁶⁴ and as having a legitimate aim to protect children as a vulnerable group and promote their well-being.⁶⁵

Although Lord Nicholls did note the motivation requirement, stating that ‘Article 9 does not “in all cases” guarantee the right to behave in public in a way “dictated by a belief”’,⁶⁶ he held that this should not exclude the claim. He further noted that if ‘the belief takes the form of a perceived obligation to act in a specific way, then, in principle, doing that act pursuant to that belief is itself a manifestation of that belief in practice’ and that ‘in such cases the act is “intimately linked” to the belief’.⁶⁷ However, he added this did not mean ‘that a perceived obligation is a prerequisite to manifestation of a belief in practice’.⁶⁸ That a belief was obligatory was simply good evidence that the exercise of that belief was manifestation protected by Article 9; it was not the case that a belief had to be obligatory to be protected by Article 9.

A later domestic decision, albeit by a lower court, seemingly misinterpreted Lord Nicholls’s statement as suggesting that a belief must be obligatory to be protected by Article 9.⁶⁹ In *R (on the Application of Playfoot (A Child)) v. Millais School Governing Body*⁷⁰ an application for judicial review of a decision by a school to prevent a schoolgirl from wearing a ‘purity’ ring on grounds of Articles 9 and 14 of the ECHR was refused by the High Court on the question of interference: Michael Supperstone QC, sitting as a High Court judge, held that Article 9 was not engaged since, although the claimant held a ‘religious belief’, in that she had made a decision to remain celibate until marriage because she was a Christian, the wearing of the ring was not ‘intimately linked’ to the belief in chastity before marriage because *Playfoot* was under no obligation, by reason of her faith, to wear the ring.

In deciding this, the judge correctly cited Lord Nicholls in *Williamson* as stating that if ‘the belief takes the form of a perceived obligation to act in a specific way, then, in principle, doing that act pursuant to that belief is itself a manifestation of that belief in practice’ but incorrectly said that this meant that the reverse was also true: if there

64 Lord Nicholls at para. 49.

65 Lord Nicholls at para. 49. The means chosen to achieve that aim were appropriate and proportionate: Lord Nicholls at para. 50.

66 Paragraph 30.

67 At paras 32–33.

68 At paras 32–33.

69 R. Sandberg, ‘Controversial Recent Claims to Religious Liberty’, LQR 124 (2008): 213.

70 [2007] EWHC Admin 1698.

was no such obligation then the act cannot be a manifestation of that belief.⁷¹ This is the reverse of what Lord Nicholls stated. It is noteworthy that cases concerning religious discrimination law have not adopted the *Playfoot* position. In *R (on the application of Watkins-Singh) v. The Governing Body of Aberdare Girls' High School*,⁷² a schoolgirl who was an observant though non-initiated Sikh sought to wear her Kara bracelet to school. Silber J heard expert evidence that although the Kara was often worn it was only compulsory in the case of initiated Sikhs. Nevertheless, it was held that this was not fatal to the claim of religious discrimination. Silber J stated that the needed disadvantage would occur – but would not only occur – where a pupil is forbidden from wearing an item where ‘that person genuinely believed for reasonable grounds that wearing this item was a matter of exceptional importance to his or her racial identity or his or her religious belief’ and where ‘the wearing of the item can be shown objectively to be of exceptional importance to his or her religion or race, even if the wearing of the article is not an actual requirement of that person’s religion or race.’⁷³ This approach, though related to religious discrimination law, is more in line with the most recent Strasbourg jurisprudence on the manifestation/motivation requirement than the decision in *Playfoot*.

III. THE SPECIFIC SITUATION RULE

The third ‘filtering device’ may be styled the specific situation rule: it recognises that a person’s Article 9 rights may be influenced by the particular situation of the individual claiming that freedom. This principle is not of universal application: it only applies where someone voluntarily submitted to a particular regime. Strasbourg has recognised that the application of this rule in specific situations such as in relation to a detained person,⁷⁴ a person who voluntarily submits to military service,⁷⁵ a person who voluntarily enter into a contract of employment⁷⁶ and those who voluntarily enrol at a university.⁷⁷

71 Paragraph 23.

72 [2008] EWHC (Admin) 1865.

73 Paragraphs 56–57.

74 *X v. United Kingdom* (1974) 1 D&R at 41–42.

75 *Kalaç v. Turkey* (1997) 27 EHRR 552.

76 *Stedman v. United Kingdom* (1997) 5 EHRLR 544; *Ahmad v. United Kingdom* (1981) 4 EHRR 126.

77 *Karaduman v. Turkey* (1993) 74 DR 93.

However, in *Jewish Liturgical Association Cha'are Shalom Ve Tsedek v. France*⁷⁸ Strasbourg went a little further by imposing an 'impossibility test': the Court commented that an 'alternative means of accommodating religious beliefs had ... to be "impossible" before a claim of interference under Article 9 could succeed.' This broader approach has not been followed in subsequent Strasbourg cases.⁷⁹ For instance,⁸⁰ in *Thlimmenos v. Greece*⁸¹ the Court simply accepted that the 'set of facts' complained of fell 'within the ambit' of Article 9 since it was 'prompted' by the claimant's religion or belief.⁸² The Court noted that it did 'not find it necessary' to examine whether the facts 'amounted to interference with his rights under Article 9(1)'.⁸³ In *Sahin v. Turkey*,⁸⁴ concerning a university regulation banning a student from wearing a headscarf at enrolment, lectures and examinations, although the specific situation rule was referred to by the Court,⁸⁵ the Court proceeded 'on the assumption that the regulations in issue, which placed restrictions of place and manner on the right to wear the Islamic headscarf in universities, constituted an interference with the applicant's right to manifest her religion'.⁸⁶

The earlier decisions of the United Kingdom courts recognised the specific situation rule but echoed the latter Strasbourg jurisprudence in noting its limited scope and refrained from enthusiastically applying the rule. This was epitomised by the Court of Appeal decision in *Copsey v. WBB Devon Clays Ltd*⁸⁷ concerning an employee dismissed after he had refused to agree to the introduction of a rotating shift procedure which included some Sunday working. Although Court of Appeal dismissed the employee's appeal on the basis of domestic employment law, the

78 (2000) 9 BHRC 27.

79 S. Knights, *Freedom of Religion, Minorities and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 44; R. Sandberg, 'The Changing Position of Religious Minorities in English Law: The Legacy of *Begum*', in *Legal Practice and Cultural Diversity*, ed. R. Grillo et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 267.

80 The Court has not applied the specific situation rule in the case of a non-religious claimant who has voluntarily submitted to a religious situation. See *Lautsi v. Italy* [2009] ECtHR (Application No. 30814/06).

81 (2001) 31 EHRR 15.

82 Paragraph 42.

83 Paragraph 43.

84 (2005) 41 EHRR 8.

85 Paragraph 66.

86 Paragraph 71.

87 [2005] EWCA Civ 932.

judges were extremely critical of Article 9 and the Strasbourg specific situation rule questioning whether it enhanced the protection afforded by domestic law.

Mummery LJ declared that if there had been no authority on the specific situation rule, he would have thought it necessary to examine the arguments under Article 9(2). He made several criticisms of the specific situation rule noting that it amounted to ‘repeated assertions unsupported by the evidence or reasoning that would normally accompany a judicial ruling’ which ‘are difficult to square with the supposed fundamental character of the rights’ and noted that Strasbourg cases alleging breaches of other Articles and recent domestic cases on Article 9 had not followed it.⁸⁸ Similarly, Neuberger LJ described the ‘specific situation’ case law as ‘arguably surprising and the reasoning hard to follow’ and concluded that this meant that Article 9 did not take the matter further than domestic law.⁸⁹ Rix LJ also suggested that the English law on unfair dismissal was more generous than the rights granted by Strasbourg and even sought to distinguish the rule holding that held that the ‘specific situation’ rule did not extend to the situation where an employer sought to vary the employee’s working hours.⁹⁰ Although the employee’s case was dismissed, the Court of Appeal displayed considerable hostility towards the specific situation rule and sought to narrow its ambit.

The House of Lords decision in *Williamson* also recognised the existence of the specific situation rule, but did not apply it to the facts of the case. As Lord Nicholls noted, ‘What constitutes interference depends on all the circumstances of the case, including the extent to which in the circumstances an individual can reasonably expect to be at liberty to manifest his beliefs in practice’, meaning that an individual ‘may need to take his specific situation into account.’⁹¹ This rule did not apply on the facts since there was ‘no comparable special feature affecting the position of the claimant parents.’⁹² In particular, Lord Nicholls rejected the submission of the Secretary of State that there had been no interference since section 548 (which forbade corporal punishment) ‘left open to the parents several adequate, alternative courses of action’ such as home education,⁹³ as being unrealistic.⁹⁴

88 Paragraph 35.

89 Paragraph 91.

90 Paragraph 65.

91 At para. 38.

92 At para. 39.

93 At para. 40.

94 At para. 41.

The opposite approach has, however, been employed in the some subsequent domestic decisions on Article 9: in response to cases on religious dress, judges have relied upon the specific situation rule and have applied the rule outside its original contractual setting meaning that English law has now effectively adopted the ‘impossibility’ test elucidated in the *Jewish Liturgical* case.⁹⁵ In *R (on the application of Begum) v. Headteacher and Governors of Denbigh High School*⁹⁶ the claimant contended that her school’s ban on wearing a *jilbab* was a breach of her Article 9 rights. The House of Lords held unanimously that there was no such breach, with the majority (Lords Bingham of Cornhill, Hoffmann and Scott of Foscote) holding that there had been no interference with the applicant’s rights under Article 9(1) because of the specific situation rule. Lord Bingham stated that:

“The Strasbourg institutions have not been at all ready to find an interference with the right to manifest religious belief in practice or observance where a person has voluntarily accepted an employment or role which does not accommodate that practice or observance and there are other means open to the person to practise or observe his or her religion without undue hardship or inconvenience.”⁹⁷

He concluded that the Strasbourg case law indicated that ‘interference is not easily established’.⁹⁸ He then applied the ‘specific situation’ rule to the case without explanation as to why it ought to be applied to school pupils despite the lack of contractual relationship between school and pupil.

The new version of the specific situation rule as advanced in *Begum* was applied by the High Court in *R (on the application of X) v. Y School*.⁹⁹ Silber J considered the *Begum* precedent to be ‘an insuperable barrier’ to a claim for judicial review by a schoolgirl who wished to wear a *niqab* veil while she was being taught by male teachers or was likely to be seen by men. Quoting Lord Bingham, Silber J found no interference with the claimant’s rights under Article 9 and interpreted Lord Bingham’s elucidation of the specific situation rule in *Begum* as meaning that there would be no interference either where a person has voluntarily accepted an employment or role that does not accommodate that practice or observance or where there are other means open to practise or observe that religion without undue hardship or inconvenience.

95 See M. Hill & R. Sandberg, ‘Is Nothing Sacred? Clashing Symbols in a Secular World’ [2007] PL 488–506.

96 [2006] UKHL 15.

97 At para. 23.

98 At para. 24.

99 [2006] EWHC (Admin) 298.

Similarly in *Playfoot*, the judge noted that if he had found that the purity ring was a manifestation of religion then, there would have been no interference with Article 9 since the claimant had voluntarily accepted the school's uniform policy and there were other means open to her to practice her belief without undue hardship or inconvenience. The awaited decision of the Strasbourg case in *Eweida, Chaplin, Ladele and McFarlane* will consider whether they're a meaningful jurisprudential future for the specific situation rule.¹⁰⁰

IV. JUSTIFICATION

In Strasbourg jurisprudence the focus invariably shifts from the question of interference under Article 9(1) to the Article 9(2) qualifications, which are used to determine whether the interference (admitted or proved) by the State was justified. The same is also true of domestic decisions, though for the reasons discussed above, in most cases the consideration of Article 9(2) by a domestic court is often *obiter*, the Court having rejected the claim on the question of interference under Article 9(1). The vast majority of decisions address the three tests laid out in Article 9(2) applying them sequentially: to be justified the interference must be 'prescribed by law', have a 'legitimate aim' and be 'necessary in a democratic society'.

(a) Prescribed by Law

This first test requires that the interference must have some basis in domestic law. Strasbourg has defined 'law' broadly to include statutory law and 'written law' encompassing enactments of lower rank than statutes,¹⁰¹ regulatory measures taken by professional regulatory bodies under independent rule-making powers delegated to them by Parliament,¹⁰² as well as judge-made law and 'unwritten law'.¹⁰³ Implicit within this test is the requirement that the interference complies with European rule of law standards.¹⁰⁴ This test has not proved problematic for the domestic judiciary: for instance, the House of Lords has held that both a rule 'prescribed by primary

100 The judgment is due to be delivered on 15 January 2013 and can be viewed thereafter on the website of the European Court of Human Rights.

101 *De Wilde, Ooms and Versyp v. Belgium* (1979–80) 1 EHRR 373.

102 *Barthold v. Germany* (1985) 7 EHRR 383.

103 *The Sunday Times v. United Kingdom* (No.1) (1979–80) 2 EHRR 245.

104 C. Evans, *Freedom of Religion under the European Convention on Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 138.

legislation in clear terms¹⁰⁵ and a school uniform policy¹⁰⁶ was prescribed by law. In relation to the latter, emphasis was given to the fact that schools and their governors were permitted under statutory authority to make rules on uniform and those rules had been very clearly communicated to those affected by them.¹⁰⁷

(b) Legitimate Aim

The second test is that the interference fulfils one of the (sometimes-overlapping) aims listed in Article 9(2).¹⁰⁸ At Strasbourg, this requirement is often a formality: Taylor has noted that the margin of appreciation adopted by European institutions means that they ‘tend to accept rather than challenge the aim claimed by the State, and accordingly pass over this precondition with little detailed analysis.’¹⁰⁹ The same appears to be true of United Kingdom courts. Although in most cases the legitimate aim is protecting the rights and freedoms of others,¹¹⁰ a wide range of legitimate aims have been cited by courts. The question of how narrow a legitimate aim may be was addressed by the Court of Appeal in *R (on the Application of Swami Suryananda) v. Welsh Ministers*¹¹¹ concerning the decision by the Welsh Assembly Government to order the slaughter of Shambo, a bullock at the claimant’s Hindu temple, who had tested positive for the bacterium that causes bovine tuberculosis (TB).¹¹² The claimant applied for judicial review, contesting that, since the sacredness of life was a cornerstone of Hindu beliefs and bovines played an important part in Hinduism, the decision breached his rights under Article 9 ECHR. The High Court¹¹³ granted the application for judicial review and quashed the decision by the Welsh Ministers, holding that the Welsh Assembly Government had defined this legitimate object too narrowly to be a proper public interest objective for the purposes of Article 9(2): the

105 *R v. Secretary of State for Education and Employment and others ex parte Williamson* [2005] UKHL 15, [2005] 2 AC 246.

106 This was accepted by all of the appellate committee in *Begum*.

107 Lord Bingham at para. 26.

108 C. Evans, *Freedom of Religion under the European Convention on Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

109 P.M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 301–302.

110 See *Begum*, Lord Bingham at para. 26, Lord Hoffmann at 58 and Baroness Hale at 94.

111 [2007] EWCA Civ 893.

112 See R. Sandberg, ‘Controversial Recent Claims to Religious Liberty’, LQR 124 (2008): 213.

113 [2007] EWHC (Admin) 1736.

elimination of any risk of a particular animal transmitting TB may be appropriate in the pursuit of some wider public health objective but cannot be a public health objective in itself. The Court of Appeal unanimously allowed the appeal and on the question of the legitimate aim holding that although there is a risk that an objective may be framed so narrowly that it becomes coincident with the results sought; in the instant case the Welsh Ministers had a public health objective – the eradication or at least control of bovine tuberculosis and so the Minister was entitled to make the decision she did.

(c) Necessary in a democratic society

The third test has been the subject of clarification by Strasbourg. It is understood that the requirement that the interference be necessary in a democratic society requires two tests to be met: the interference must correspond to a ‘pressing social need’ and it must be ‘proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued’.¹¹⁴ This requires a ‘balancing exercise’ whereby the court asks ‘whether the interference with the right is more extensive than is justified by the legitimate aim’.¹¹⁵ Since ‘the notion of proportionality will always contain some subjective element and depend significantly on the context’,¹¹⁶ it is not surprising that different judges have taken differing approaches to this test. In *Begum*, for instance, the House of Lords conceptualised the question largely in terms of proportionality, giving scant attention to identifying a pressing social need.¹¹⁷ Lady Hale concluded that the school’s uniform policy was a thoughtful and proportionate response to reconciling the complexities of the situation. This is demonstrated by the fact that girls have subsequently expressed their concern that if the jilbab were to be allowed they would face pressure to adopt it even though they do not wish to do so.¹¹⁸

114 *Serif v. Greece* (2001) 31 EHRR 20.

115 D. Feldman, *Civil Liberties and Human Rights in England and Wales*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 57.

116 C. Evans, *Freedom of Religion under the European Convention on Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 145.

117 Lord Bingham para. 26, Lady Hale at para. 94.

118 Paragraph 98. Drawing upon *Sahin*, Lord Bingham concluded that that the interference with the Art. 9(1) right was proportionate since the school ‘had taken immense pains to devise a uniform policy which respected Muslim beliefs but did so in an inclusive, unthreatening and uncompetitive way’: para. 34.

V. NEW TRAJECTORIES

What movements can be discerned in more recent United Kingdom cases and are they consistent with Strasbourg jurisprudence? A significant High Court decision in *R on the Application of Bashir v The Independent Adjudicator and HMP Ryehull and the Secretary of State for Justice*.¹¹⁹ The case concerned a prisoner, was charged with failing to obey a lawful order contrary to Rule 51(22) of the Prison Rules 1999 when he failed to provide an adequate urine sample as part of the prison's mandatory drug testing policy. Although the claimant was a devout Muslim who was fasting as part of his religious preparation prior to a Court of Appeal appearance, the Independent Adjudicator had found the claimant guilty of failing to obey a lawful order. The Prison Service Order PSO 3601 on 'Mandatory Drug Testing' outlined different rules that could be applied in relation to the collection of urine samples during 'religious festivals, which involve total fasting' but these did not apply in the present case since it was not a religious festival. The Adjudicator concluded that although there is nothing to stop individuals fasting on other days, they must live with bear the consequences of so doing.¹²⁰

At the High court, this adjudication was challenged as being contrary to Article 9 and was quashed. The judge held that the circumstances required the Adjudicator to consider the applicability of Article 9, examining whether Article 9 was engaged, whether there was an interference with these rights and whether that interference had been justified under Article 9 (2). Simply considering applicability of the religious festival exception was 'a wrong approach'.¹²¹ The decision was quashed since it could not be demonstrated that a reasonable Adjudicator correctly directing himself would have necessarily come to a similar conclusion as that reached by the Adjudicator in this case. The judge held that Article 9 was engaged because there was 'no real doubt' that the claimant's fast was intimately linked to his religious belief.¹²²

“Although the Defendant relies on the fact that the fast being undertaken by the Claimant was not obligatory but voluntary, I reject that as a relevant consideration for present purposes. There is nothing within Article 9 that requires there to be a perceived, much less an objectively demonstrable, obligation for the manifestation of religious belief to be protectable. Lord Nicholls does not suggest that to be so in Paragraph 32 of his Opinion in

119 [2011] EWHC 1108 (Admin).

120 At para 6.

121 At para 16.

122 At para 20.

Williamson. Indeed, he says quite the opposite in paragraph 33. On the evidence before the Adjudicator the Claimant's fasting was a manifestation that was motivated or inspired by a religion and was not unreasonable and thus satisfied the relevant threshold requirements for Article 9 to be engaged.¹²³

This corrects the misinterpretation of *Williamson* in *Playfoot* (and also seems contrary to the spirit of *Eweida*). It also dismantles the distinction drawn in *Arrowsmith* between manifestations and motivations and seemingly introduces a new reasonableness test (which if applied objectively would be contrary to Lord Nicholl's insistence in *Williamson* that 'freedom of religion protects the subjective belief of an individual'.¹²⁴

The judge gave short shrift to the Adjudicator's argument that relied upon Lord Bingham's specific situation rule in *Begum* on the basis that:

"None of the authorities that are [sic] considered by Lord Bingham in that paragraph concern the position of prisoners. Although it was argued on behalf of the Defendant that the Claimant should be treated as having voluntarily accepted the restrictions implicit in a prison environment by committing the offences for which he had been convicted, I am not convinced that is a correct analysis."¹²⁵

123 At para 21.

124 *R v Secretary of State for Education and Employment and others, ex parte Williamson* [2005] UKHL 15, at para 22. The judge did not take a purely subjective approach. In reaching his conclusion that the fasting was a manifestation of his religion or belief, he placed weight upon the fact that the claimant had been advised by an Imam to embark on a three day fast and that the prison Imam had given evidence that 'personal fasting was a recognised tenet of Islam and there was an apparently objectively good reason for the Claimant wanting to undertake such a fast': as spiritual preparation for his impending appearance at the Court of Appeal (para 20). The judge's reliance on the views of the Imam, his reference to the need for an 'objectively good reason' for the manifestation of religion and his assumption of competency to assert what is and what is not 'a recognised tenet of Islam' are all questionable. The judge was seeking to determine the genuineness of Bashir's claim contrary to the principles laid out in *Williamson*, although there is some degree of contradiction since in paragraph 18 the judge held that 'The Officer's evidence is of no value in determining the genuineness of the claimant's belief as to whether the fast could be broken.'

125 Para 22.

He pointed out that ‘the only European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) authority cited by either party that concerned a prisoner was *Jakobski v Poland*¹²⁶. This may be the case but there are other clear examples of the specific situation rule being applied in the prison context, such as in *X v United Kingdom*¹²⁷. However, if the specific situation rule does not apply in a prison setting where the claimant has broken the social contract with society, it is arguable that it should not apply to other situations outside those regulated by a contract of employment. This seems to adopt a much narrower interpretation of the principle than is seen in the run of other cases. The judge adopted a much more generous general approach to the question of interference:

“In my judgment the question of whether there has been interference becomes essentially a factual one. Having accepted that for the Claimant to embark upon and maintain a three day fast which he genuinely believed could not be broken was a manifestation of his religious beliefs, it necessarily follows that to require him to provide a sample of urine which he was not able to provide without breaking his fast was an interference with the Claimant’s Article 9 rights. Thus, I conclude that the sole issue that arises in the circumstances of this case is ... whether the interference is prescribed by law, has one of the legitimate aims identified in Article 9(2) and is proportionate.”¹²⁸

This shifts the focus from the question of interference under Article 9(1) onto the question of justification under Article 9(2). The judge concluded that this interference was not justified under Article 9(2) in that although the drug testing policy was ‘prescribed by law’ and fulfilled at least one of the legitimate aims laid out in the Article, it was not proportionate.¹²⁹ There was no evidence before the Adjudicator concerning the cost or inconvenience of making appropriate adjustments in the particular circumstances that arose.¹³⁰ As the judge concluded: ‘There was no evidence before the Adjudicator which enabled him to conclude (as apparently he did) that it was proportionate to require all Muslim prisoners engaged in personal fasting to break that fast as and when required to do so for the purposes of providing a [sample] regardless of the circumstances.’¹³¹ He stressed that his judgment was not

126 Application Number: 18429/06 (7 December 2011).

127 (1974) 1 D& R 41.

128 At para 23.

129 At para 24.

130 At para 28.

131 At para 29.

intended to have any effect on the lawfulness of the drug testing policy and that his conclusions were ‘case specific and fact sensitive’.¹³²

This can be shown by the treatment of the specific situation rule in *National Secular Society v Bideford Town Council*¹³³. Although the Article 9 claim would have been unsuccessful (on the assumption that the saying of prayers at the commencement of a meeting of a local authority was lawful), Ouseley J stated that there had been no voluntary submission in this case:

“I do not accept Mr Dingemans’ argument that because Mr Bone had chosen to stand for election to a Council which had this practice, he had accepted the burden of its continuance until he could change it by democratic vote. ... This fails to recognise that becoming an elected representative is more than just a job for a politician; it is the fundamental right of the electorate to choose whom they wish to represent them in the body to which they have elected him. If it is an interference with the right not to hold religious views, or if it is an unnecessary or unjustifiable interference or act of discrimination, this cannot be treated as a case of voluntary submission.”¹³⁴

This would suggest that there remains some limits to the specific situation rule can be applied. This tendency not to rely on the notion of contracting-out can be further shown by recent litigation concerning the ‘Occupy Movement’, which formed a camp in St Paul’s Cathedral Churchyard, *The Mayor, Commonality and Citizens of London v Tammy Samede*.¹³⁵ One argument was that allowing the camp to remain breached the Article 9 rights of those concerned with St Paul’s Cathedral. Although the Cathedral was not a party to the case, this was one of the reasons put forward in the argument that the interference with the protestors’ Article 10 and 11 rights was not justified. In the High Court¹³⁶ Lindblom J held that the City had undoubtedly established that there was a pressing social need to not to permit the camp to remain at the Cathedral and that this was in part because of the effect the occupation had on the Article 9 rights of the Cathedral:

132 At para 34; further, ‘[i]n any subsequent case where lawfulness is challenged on Article 9 grounds, each of the three questions I have identified above will have to be asked. The answers that will be arrived at will depend entirely upon the evidence before the Adjudicator before whom the issue is raised.’

133 [2012] EWHC 175 (Admin).

134 Para 75.

135 [2012] EWHC 34 (QB); [2012] EWCA Civ 160.

136 [2012] EWHC 34 (QB).

“I am convinced that the effects of Occupy’s protest camp in St Paul’s churchyard have been such as to interfere seriously with the rights, under Article 9 of the Convention, of those who desire to worship in the cathedral. ... During the camp’s presence, and, in my view, largely if not totally as a result of its presence, there has been a drop of about two fifths in the numbers of those worshipping in the cathedral. About the same fraction has been lost in the number of visitors, an important source of funds for the upkeep of the building and for its ministry. Together, and without more, [this] would, in my view, justify the granting of relief. I have no hesitation in reaching that conclusion even though the Church is not itself a party in the City’s claim and has not issued proceedings of its own.”¹³⁷

Like in *Bashir*, the specific situation rule was held not to apply:

“To say that those who are put off attending services in the cathedral can go and worship elsewhere, with more than 450 other churches in the diocese of London to choose from, misses the point. It is to misunderstand the nature of the right in Article 9, which is not that one is entitled to worship only where the activities of others make it comfortable or convenient to do so, or where one is made to go by others in the exercise of their own Convention rights, but where one chooses to worship in accordance with the law.”¹³⁸

In the Court of Appeal,¹³⁹ the Master of the Rolls upheld the decision of the High Court, holding that there was ‘no chance that any of the criticisms raised by each of the defendants, or even all of those criticisms taken together, could persuade an appellate court that [the first instance judge’s] decision was wrong.’¹⁴⁰ In relation to the Article 9 point, the appellants contended that

“The Judge ought not to have found ... that there was any interference with the rights of those who wished to worship at St Paul’s Cathedral, given that (a) no worshipper gave evidence, and (b) the Occupy Movement stands for the same values as the Church of England.”¹⁴¹

The Master of the Rolls held that neither of these arguments were tenable because:

137 Para 162

138 Para 162

139 [2012] EWCA Civ 160.

140 Para 60.

141 Para 34.

“As to (a), the Judge was plainly entitled to reach the conclusion that he arrived at. He had figures, which showed a very significant reduction in worshippers at, and visitors to, the Cathedral since the Camp had arrived, and evidence of opinion from the Cathedral Registrar that the reduction was caused by the Camp. While there were some other possible explanations for the reduction, the Judge was, to put it at its lowest, entitled to reach the view that he did. As to point (b), it is true that some prominent members of the Church of England have expressed support for the Camp, but that is no answer to the Judge’s concern about the interference by the Camp with the access of people who wish to worship in the Cathedral.”¹⁴²

The cases of *Bashir*, *Bideford* and *Samede* therefore show a tendency not to rely on the notion of contracting-out to dismiss Article 9 claims. Although the Article 9 arguments were not successful in all these cases, the religious rights dimension seems to be considered in a much more mature and nuanced way. This is true of recent cases, which have relied upon the notion of contracting-out but have done so in the context of the Article 9(2) question of justification rather than the Article 9(1) question of interference. The decision in *National Secular Society v Bideford Town Council*¹⁴³ provides some evidence of this. Although, Ouseley J stated that there had been no voluntary submission, he nevertheless considered the notion of contracting-out but did so in the context of Article 9 generally.

“Mr Bone is free to stay or leave during prayers. It is in accordance with the law. It is not discriminatory, or to the extent that it is, it is justified. I cannot see that his freedom of religion, thought or conscience is infringed by the degree of embarrassment he feels, which is no more than is inherent in the exercise by the others of their freedom to manifest their religious beliefs, and his freedom to stay without participating or to leave. It is their freedom which would be infringed were he right.”¹⁴⁴

This conflation of interference and justification issues can also be found in two recent Court of Appeal decisions. The Court of Appeal decision in *Bull & Bull v Hall & Preddy*¹⁴⁵ concerned discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The religious actors, the Bulls, were the defendants not the claimants. They were hotel owners who preferred to let double accommodation to heterosexual married couples only’

142 Para 34.

143 [2012] EWHC 175 (Admin).

144 Para 72.

145 [2012] EWCA Civ 83. The Supreme Court has given permission for a further appeal in this matter which is likely to be heard in 2013.

and so turned away a homosexual couple who had entered into a civil partnership. Rafferty LJ held that this constituted direct discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation because a ‘homosexual couple cannot comply with the restriction because each party is of the same sex and therefore cannot marry’ meaning that ‘the criterion at the heart of the restriction, that the couple should be married, is necessarily linked to the characteristic of an heterosexual orientation’ and there was therefore less favourable treatment on grounds of sexual orientation.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, Rafferty LJ held that this conclusion was compatible with Article 9. At first instance, His Honour Judge Rutherford, held that the hotelier’s Article 9 rights had been affected.¹⁴⁷ However, this was justified under Article 9(2) because ‘in so far as the regulations [prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation] do affect this right they are ... a necessary and proportionate intervention by the state to protect the rights of others.’¹⁴⁸ At the very least, it can be said that the treatment of Article 9 here is a little cursory. The suggestion once again that the legal requirement not to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation will automatically justify religious discrimination claims.¹⁴⁹ However, there seems to be a welcome step away from the *Begum* precedent in that at least it was accepted that the religious rights were interfered with.

Rafferty LJ made reference to the Article 9 case law in her discussion of discrimination:

“The article did not protect hoteliers who claimed that their ‘religious beliefs justified their refusal to provide double beds to homosexual couples’ as ‘the provision of hotel rooms is legal and occurs nowhere other than in an hotel’; and the hoteliers could “manifest [their] beliefs in many ways outside the commercial sphere.”¹⁵⁰

This would seem to be an application of the contracting-out doctrine in the context of providing an answer to the question of justification under Article 9(2) (as opposed to its usual application in response to the question of interference under Article 9(1)). Whilst many objections concerning the contracting out doctrine continue to apply here, its relevance and applicability under Article 9(2) is preferable to that

146 Para 40.

147 Bristol County Court Case No 9BC02095/6 (4 January 2011).

148 [2012] EWCA Civ 83 at para 39.

149 See also the cases of *Ladele* and *Johns*, discussed elsewhere. In the former a judgment in the European Court of Human Rights is awaited following argument on 4 September 2012.

150 Para 48, quoting from *Pichon and Sajous v France* Application 49853/99 (2 October 2001) but substituting the facts of the instant case.

under Article 9(1). When the rule is applied under Article 9(1) then the finding is that there has been no interference with Article 9 and so the claim is automatically dismissed. In contrast, where the rule is applied under Article 9(2) then the finding is part of the wider question of justification, allowing the merits of the case to be examined. This would therefore appear to be a step in the right direction.

This approach was also followed in a ‘classic’ case of where the specific situation rule would be applied. The Court of Appeal in *Michael Peter Lyons v R*¹⁵¹ applied the specific situation rule in respect of a Medical Assistant to the Navy who appealed his conviction for intentionally disobeying a lawful command, *inter alia*, on the basis that the order contravened his Article 9 rights as a conscientious objector. Toulson LJ held that current arrangements considering conscientious objection had been followed and that this was not in breach of Article 9:

“A person who voluntarily enters military service undertakes serious responsibilities potentially involving the lives and safety of others. If he seeks to be discharged from further service on the ground of conscientious objection, it is right that there should be a proper process for deciding whether his claim is well founded. Until that has been established it is necessary and just that he should continue to be subject to the requirements of military service and military discipline. Otherwise he could immediately escape from the responsibilities which he had voluntarily accepted, regardless of the consequent risk to others and regardless of whether or not his claim was well founded.”¹⁵²

This is largely uncontroversial. If there is such a rule as the specific situation rule, then it clearly applies on these facts. However, interestingly, the part of the judgment, which examined the Article 9 claim, considered Article 9 as a whole and did not distinguish between the questions of interference and justification. Again, in this case, the specific situation rule appears to be applied as part of the analysis of the Article 9(2) question of justification rather than the Article 9(1) question of interference:

“The fact that a person has volunteered for military service, and so voluntarily accepted the responsibilities which go with such service, may be highly material when considering the balance to be struck between the individual’s conscience and the interest of public safety, the protection of

151 [2011] EWCA Civ 2808.

152 Para 31

public order and the protection of the rights of others, to which article 9.2 refers.”¹⁵³

This is to be welcomed. It represents a move towards focusing more on the question of justification under Article 9(2) rather than dismissing claims under the question of interference under Article 9(1). *Michael Peter Lyons* is in line with the Strasbourg jurisprudence; so, but to a lesser extent, are *Bull & Bull* and *Bideford*. The United Kingdom judiciary appear to be becoming more comfortable with Article 9(1) and are more willing to consider that Article 9(1) may be engaged. The trend, however, is not all one way. This is shown by the Court of Appeal decision in *President of the Methodist Conference v Preston*¹⁵⁴ the latest in a long line of cases concerning whether ministers of religion can be regarded as employees.¹⁵⁵ In *New Testament Church of God v Stewart*¹⁵⁶ the Church appealed against the finding of the Employment Tribunal that a minister of religion whose position as a pastor had been terminated was an employee arguing *inter alia*, that this decision infringed their Article 9 rights. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal but expressed some enthusiasm for the Article 9 claim. Pill LJ held that the law should not readily impose a legal relationship on members of a religious community, which would be contrary to their religious beliefs while Arden LJ held that:

“A religious organisation may, as one of its beliefs, consider that ministers should not have contracts of employment or that the state should not interfere in the way they conduct their organisation. If the state interferes with that belief, there may be an interference with the group’s article 9 right (though the interference will not constitute a violation of article 9 if the conditions in article 9(2) are satisfied).”¹⁵⁷

153 Para 28.

154 [2011] EWCA Civ 1581.

155 See also J Duddington, ‘God, Caesar and the Employment Rights of Ministers of Religion’ (2007) 159 *Law and Justice* 129–135; F Cranmer, ‘Clergy Employment, Judicial Review and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland’ (2010) 12(3) *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 355–360; and J Rivers, *The Law of Organized Religion* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010) chapter 4.

156 [2007] EWCA Civ 1004.

157 Para 61.

In *President of the Methodist Conference v Preston*¹⁵⁸, however, Maurice Kay LJ held that Article 9 was not material to the *ratio* of *Stewart*.¹⁵⁹ He held that the ‘potential role of Article 9 in cases such as this’ was ‘far more modest’¹⁶⁰ and referred to:

“The unattractiveness and moral poverty of the attempted invocation of Article 9 in this case.”¹⁶¹

VI. OTHER CONVENTION RIGHTS

Several other Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights affect religious individuals. These other Articles are relevant for two main reasons: first, because the ECHR is a living document, Articles must be interpreted in the spirit of the entire Convention. Second, religious claims may be advanced under Articles other than Article 9. Litigants invariably rely on other Articles in addition to Article 9. For instance, registration cases are sometimes argued primarily under Article 11 (peaceful assembly and association) rather than Article 9. In *Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v. Russia*¹⁶² the refusal to grant re-registration to the Moscow Salvation Army on the grounds, *inter alia*, that it was and ‘in essence ... a quasi-military religious organisation that has a rigid hierarchy of management’ was argued to be a breach of Article 11 read in the light of Article 9. It has been suggested that treating such claims as being primarily concerned with Article 11 is advantageous to Strasbourg since the Court ‘has tended to accord a greater degree of scrutiny to the application of restrictions under Article 11(2) than under Article 9(2)’.¹⁶³ In *Church of Scientology Moscow v. Russia*¹⁶⁴ the Court stressed that States ‘have only a limited margin of appreciation’ under Article 11(2).¹⁶⁵

158 [2011] EWCA Civ 1581.

159 Para 30.

160 Para 32. He cited Arden LJ and Lawrence Collins LH in *Stewart* to support this. However, although he claims that Arden LJ ‘took a less expansive approach’ than Pill LJ, he bases this on the general points outlined by Arden LJ in para 62 of his judgment about the limits of the position in para 61 whilst ignoring the enthusiasm found within para 61.

161 Para 34.

162 [2006] ECtHR (No.72881/01).

163 M.D. Evans, ‘Freedom of Religion and the European Convention on Human Rights: Approaches, Trends and Tensions’, in *Law and Religion in Theoretical and Historical Context*, ed. P. Cane et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 291, 310.

164 [2007] ECtHR (No. 18147/02).

165 At para. 86.

Further, the enjoyment of all Convention rights is subject to Article 14. While Article 9 may be said to be concerned with positive religious freedom (the liberty to believe and manifest one's belief) Article 14 is concerned with negative religious freedom (the liberty from coercion or discrimination on the grounds of belief).¹⁶⁶ Article 14 forbids discrimination on, *inter alia*, grounds of religion but only does so in regard to 'the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention'. Article 1 of Protocol 12 extends this to 'any right set forth by law' but this has not been ratified in the UK.

However, this does not mean that a 'violation of a substantive Article need to be established at all in cases involving discrimination' under Article 14.¹⁶⁷ Strasbourg has confirmed that 'a measure which in itself is in conformity with the requirements of the Article enshrining the right or freedom in question may however infringe this Article when read in conjunction with Article 14 for the reason that it is of a discriminatory nature',¹⁶⁸ that is, if the distinction has no objective and reasonable justification.¹⁶⁹ The Strasbourg court in the pending decision in *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v United Kingdom* will address this issue.¹⁷⁰ Other Articles will often interact with Article 9; for instance, where freedom of expression clashes with freedom of religion. Strasbourg has held that the freedom to manifest religion does not include a right to be exempt from all criticism¹⁷¹ and freedom of expression contains 'a duty to avoid expressions that are gratuitously offensive to others and profane'.¹⁷²

166 R. Ahdar & I. Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 100.

167 P.M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 182–183.

168 *Case Relating to Certain Aspects of the Laws on the Use of Languages in Education in Belgium* EHRR 1 (1979–80): 252 (at 282).

169 Infringement with Art. 14 may be justified if it pursues a 'legitimate aim' and if there is a 'reasonable relationship of proportionality between the means employed and the aim sought to be realised' (*Darby v. Sweden* (1991) 13 EHRR 774).

170 *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v United Kingdom* (App No 7552/09), European Court of Human Rights.

171 *İA v. Turkey* (Application no. 42571/98) 13 Sep. 2005, para. 28: 'Those who choose to exercise the freedom to manifest their religion, irrespective of whether they do so as members of a religious majority or a minority, cannot reasonably expect to be exempt from all criticism. They must tolerate and accept the denial by others of their religious beliefs and even the propagation by others of doctrines hostile to their faith.'

172 *İA v. Turkey* (Application no. 42571/98) 13 Sep. 2005, para. 24.

VII. COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

English law recognises and regulates collective religious freedom in a number of other ways. Religious groups enjoy a number of exceptions from general rules, including those in discrimination law. At first sight, section 13 of the Human Rights Act 1998 seems to accord a special protection for the religious freedom of religious organisations. It reads:

1. If a court's determination of any question arising under this Act might affect the exercise by a religious organisation (itself or its members collectively) of the Convention right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, it must have particular regard to the importance of that right.
2. In this section 'court' includes a tribunal.

Section 13 was the result of lobbying by religious groups during the passage of the Human Rights Bill through Parliament. The Roman Catholic Church, the Chief Rabbi, the Church of Scotland and the Plymouth Brethren joined Evangelical Christians.¹⁷³ Section 13 was therefore added as 'an attempt to reassure the Churches' about the impact of the Act.¹⁷⁴ The Government contending that religious groups would not generally be 'public authorities' (and thus susceptible to claims under the Act) with the exception of where they stood in the place of the State providing a public service.¹⁷⁵

While, by analogy, certain cases on a parallel provision on freedom of expression and the press have hinted that section 13 might give presumptive priority to religious freedom,¹⁷⁶ it has also been held that section 13 does not allow religious freedom to trump other rights such as Article 6.¹⁷⁷ In practice, it seems that the section is a dead letter: section 13 hardly features in higher court judgments concerning freedom

173 P. Cumper, 'Religious Organisations and the Human Rights Act 1998', in *Law and Religion in Contemporary Society*, ed. P.W. Edge & G. Harvey (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 72.

174 Jack Straw, then Home Secretary, Commons Hansard 20 May 1998: Column 1021.

175 *Ibid.*, Column 1017.

176 *Douglas v. Hello! Ltd* [2001] QB 967, *per* Sedley LJ; *Lakeside Homes Limited v. BBC* [2000] WL 1841602, *per* Creswell J.

177 *The Queen on the Application of Ullah v. Special Adjudicator* [2002] EWHC 1584 (Admin) *per* Harrison J.

of religion.¹⁷⁸ Commentators seem agreed that the section is ‘rather mild’,¹⁷⁹ largely symbolic¹⁸⁰ and ‘at best an articulation and codification’ of the pre-Human Rights Act position.¹⁸¹

Notwithstanding the limited effect of section 13, as the text of Article 9 makes clear, the right to manifest religion or belief may be exercised ‘either alone or in community with others and in public or private’. This means that religious groups enjoy the protections afforded by the Human Rights Act and may bring claims under the Act.

The Strasbourg Approach

Strasbourg has held that Article 9 permits religious autonomy and diversity in terms of the regulation of religious groups.¹⁸² Convention organs have accepted a variety of Church–State relations as being part of the contracting State’s margin of appreciation. Mild forms of State preference for one religion over another do not violate the ECHR. It was noted in *Darby v. Sweden*:

“A State Church system cannot in itself be considered to violate Article 9 of the Convention ... however, a State Church system must, in order to satisfy Article 9, include specific safeguards for the individual’s freedom of religion.”¹⁸³

The Grand Chamber in *Refah Partisi v. Turkey*¹⁸⁴ made it clear that States are required to facilitate religious freedom, noting that ‘the State’s role as the neutral and impartial organiser of the exercise of various religions, faiths and beliefs, . . . is conducive to public order, religious harmony and tolerance in a democratic society’.¹⁸⁵

178 M. Hill, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), para. 1.47.

179 R. Ahdar & I. Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 359.

180 P. Cumper, ‘The Protection of Religious Rights under Section 13 of the Human Rights Act 1998’ [2000] PL 265; J. Wadham & H. Mountfield, *Blackstone’s Guide to the Human Rights Act 1998* (London: Blackstone, 1998), 55.

181 M. Hill, ‘Judicial Approaches to Religious Disputes’, in *Law and Religion*, ed. R. O’Dair & A. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 419.

182 See R. Ahdar & I. Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 135–138.

183 EHRR 13 (1991): 774.

184 EHRR 37 (2003): 1.

185 Paragraph 91.

Strasbourg has also accepted claims by religious groups. Under Article 34, the two rules of standing are that the applicant must be a person, a non-governmental organisation or group of individuals and that the applicant must be a victim. While originally Strasbourg maintained a line that religious groups only enjoyed Convention rights as individual rights bestowed on members but not grounded in their own right,¹⁸⁶ it has since been accepted that this is an artificial distinction and that a religious group 'is capable of possessing and exercising the rights . . . in its own capacity as a representative of its members.'¹⁸⁷ It remains the case, however, that the religious group must be a non-governmental body. The fact that there may be a close affinity between the religious group and the State does not preclude the group from seeking redress in Strasbourg.¹⁸⁸

United Kingdom law

Domestic courts have followed Strasbourg in admitting claims by religious groups. In *Gallagher (Valuation Officer) v. Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints*¹⁸⁹ the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (often known as Mormons) appealed from the ruling of the Court of Appeal¹⁹⁰ which had held that the Temple and several associated buildings were not entitled to an exemption from non-domestic rates as a 'place of public worship' under paragraph 11 of Schedule 5 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 since it was open only to those 'Patrons' who had a 'recommend' from the bishop. The House of Lords had already decided in *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Henning (Valuation Officer)*¹⁹¹ that the words 'place of public religious worship' could not apply to a place from which the public was excluded. A human rights argument was raised for the first time at the House of Lords in *Gallagher*: it was contended that the exclusion from the Temple of all but Patrons was a manifestation of the Mormon faith and to deny the exemption was contrary to Articles 9 and 14. The haste in which the argument was rejected and the lack of sophistication has led to academic criticism.¹⁹²

186 *Church of X v. United Kingdom* (1968) 29 CD 70.

187 *X and the Church of Scientology v. Sweden* (1979) 16 DR 68.

188 *Holy Monasteries v. Greece* (1995) 20 EHRR 1.

189 [2008] UKHL 56.

190 [2006] EWCA Civ 1598.

191 [1964] AC 420.

192 R. Sandberg, 'Underrating Human Rights: *Gallagher v. Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Days Saints*', *Ecc LJ* 11 (2009): 75–80.

Lords Hoffmann and Hope held that there was no interference with Articles 9 and 14 since the requirement that in order to constitute discrimination on grounds of religion, the alleged discrimination must fall ‘within the ambit’ of Article 9 had not been met since there was no breach of Article 9. This rests on a misunderstanding. It is true that Article 14 is not a freestanding discrimination provision in that it only forbids discrimination in regard to ‘the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention’¹⁹³ (and that this may be styled as saying that the discrimination must ‘fall within the ambit’ of another substantive article). However, this does not mean that a ‘violation of a substantive Article needs to be established at all in cases involving discrimination’ under Article 14.¹⁹⁴ Strasbourg has confirmed that ‘a measure which in itself is in conformity with the requirements of the Article enshrining the right or freedom in question may however infringe this Article when read in conjunction with Article 14 for the reason that it is of a discriminatory nature’,¹⁹⁵ that is, if the distinction has no objective and reasonable justification. Infringement with Article 14 may be justified if it pursues a ‘legitimate aim’ and if there is a ‘reasonable relationship of proportionality between the means employed and the aim sought to be realised’.¹⁹⁶

The Strasbourg-compliant approach in *Gallagher* was therefore that taken by Lord Scott who held that there was an interference with Article 14 in conjunction with Article 9 because there did not need to be an actual breach of the substantive Article. However, Lord Scott held that this discrimination was justifiable: States were entitled to conclude that religion was capable of being divisive and since ‘secrecy in religious practices provides the soil in which suspicions and unfounded prejudices can take root and grow’ there was ‘every reason why a state should adopt a general policy under which fiscal relief for premises used for religious worship is available where the premises are open to the general public and is withheld where they are not’.¹⁹⁷

The Human Rights Act 1998 has the potential to be used against religious groups, particularly the established Church of England. If a religious group is regarded as a ‘public authority’ in the language of the Act then human rights expectations (and

193 Article 1 of Protocol 12 extends this to ‘any right set forth by law’ but this has not been ratified in the UK.

194 P.M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion* (2005, Cambridge University Press) 182–183.

195 *Case Relating to Certain Aspects of the Laws on the Use of Languages in Education in Belgium* EHRR 1 (1979–80): 252 (at 282).

196 *Darby v. Sweden* (1991) 13 EHRR 774.

197 Paragraph 51.

ultimately claims) may be levelled at it. *Aston Cantlow v. Wallbank*¹⁹⁸ concerned a Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Church of England which sought to enforce a liability under the Chancel Repairs Act 1932 against lay rectors to compel them to pay for chancel repairs. The lay rectors contended that the PCC was a ‘public authority’ for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998 and thus could not act in a way incompatible with the Convention rights and that by requiring them to pay interfered with their right to peaceful enjoyment of their possessions under Article 1 of the First Protocol.

The House of Lords held that the PCC was not acting as a public authority for this purpose. A public authority could either be a ‘core’ public authority that exercised functions that were broadly governmental so that they were all functions of a public nature or a ‘hybrid’ public authority, which exercised some functions of a public nature. The PCC was not a ‘core’ public authority since although the Church of England had special links with central government and performed certain public functions, the Church of England generally, and PCCs in particular, were essentially religious rather than governmental organisations. Even if the PCC was a ‘hybrid’ public authority, enforcement of chancel repair liability was not a function of a public nature; rather it was a private function. Moreover, in any case Article 1 of the First Protocol to the Convention did not protect the appellants, since a person’s right to peaceful enjoyment of their possessions does not extend to the grant of relief from liabilities incurred under the civil law. The appellants were not being deprived of their possessions but were merely being required to fulfil an obligation that they had voluntarily assumed.

The case is significant in that the House of Lords focused squarely on the public authority point. The decision means neither the Church of England (in some generic sense) nor its component institutions are ‘core’ public authorities.¹⁹⁹ From the decisions of the Law Lords it may be inferred that there is a possibility that human rights may be enforced against components of the Church of England if they are ‘hybrid’ public authorities fulfilling a public function and that this may occur in certain situations such as marriage. For the most part, however, the established Church and its organs will not be a public authority and it is unlikely that other religious groups and their institutions will be so regarded. Indeed, Lord Nicholls saw section 13 of the Human Rights Act 1998 as providing that religious organisations

198 [2003] UKHL 37.

199 Lord Nicholls held that to hold that PCCs are core public authorities and are not capable of being victims would be ‘an extraordinary conclusion’: para. 15.

enjoyed Article 9 rights and that it would be expected that the Church of England would enjoy this and other Convention rights as much as other religious bodies.

In the case of *Percy*,²⁰⁰ Lord President Rodger took a similar line, *obiter*, in relation to the Church of Scotland as was later adopted by the House of Lords for the Church of England.²⁰¹ He treated the Church of Scotland simply as a voluntary organisation, stating that although the laws of the Church and the procedures of the Church courts had much in common with Scots law generally, this merely revealed ‘the hand which those trained in Scots law have had in guiding such proceedings down the centuries’. Despite this, ‘the laws of the Church operate only within the Church and her courts adjudicate only on matters spiritual. In other words, the formality and indeed solemnity of all these transactions and proceedings does not disclose an intention to create relationships under the civil law; rather, it reflects the serious way in which the Church regulates the matters falling within the spiritual sphere.’²⁰²

For the purposes of the new legal landscape under the Human Rights Act 1998, consideration must be given as to which component part or parts, if any, of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland are to be classified ‘public authorities’ and thus under a duty to act in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. Two specific possibilities are the General Synod of the Church of England and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As to the former, the General Synod exercises a public function by way of its power to amend statute law: for example, the Worship and Doctrine Measure 1974 repealed what was left of the Act of Uniformity 1662. As to the latter, Lord President in *Percy* did not specifically address the constitutional status of the General Assembly itself. Given that the General Assembly exercises a separate jurisdiction²⁰³ in parallel with those of the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary, it is arguable that it is a public authority, even if those functions are nowadays somewhat attenuated. It

200 *Helen Percy v. An Order and Judgment of the Employment Appeal tribunal dated 22 Mar. 1999* 20 Mar. 2001 Inner House 057/17/99.

201 *Aston Cantlow v. Wallbank* [2003] UKHL 37.

202 At para. 14.

203 See, e.g., Lord Justice Clerk Moncreiff in *Wight v. Presbytery of Dunkeld* (1870) 8 M 921 at 925: ‘The jurisdiction of the Church courts, as recognised judicatories of this realm, rests on a similar statutory foundation to that under which we administer justice within these walls . . . Within their spiritual province the Church courts are as supreme as we are within the civil’ and Lord Osborne in *Logan v. Presbytery of Dumbarton* 1995 SLT 1228: ‘it seems to me that the situation of the courts of the Church of Scotland cannot be equiparated with any tribunal created or upon which a power has been conferred by Parliament’.

is possible, therefore, that both the General Synod and the General Assembly might reasonably be regarded as hybrid authorities: thus bound by Convention rights whenever exercising a public function.

In *R (Baiai and others) v. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and others*,²⁰⁴ the issue was whether a scheme under the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004, which prescribed that any person who was subject to immigration control and wished to enter into a civil marriage in the United Kingdom had to apply to the Secretary of State for a certificate of approval to marry, though lawful in concept, was implemented through overly rigid governmental guidance which breached the right to marry under Article 12 ECHR. A judge of the High Court²⁰⁵ had held that that the reference to ‘civil marriage’ under the Act was discriminatory since it exempted from the certificate of approval process those who married according to the rites of the Church of England. This, he concluded, violated Article 14 on the grounds that it was discriminatory. An appeal on this finding was not pursued by the Secretary of State in the Court of Appeal²⁰⁶ and did not fall for consideration in the House of Lords.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, certain Law Lords made some surprisingly ill-informed comment on the legal status of Anglican marriage.²⁰⁸ Although the Secretary of State had undertaken before the Court of Appeal to remove the discriminatory aspects of the Scheme, a government circular, issued on 13 November 2009, conceded that the United Kingdom Borders Agency could not find a workable system, which did not discriminate between civil and Anglican marriages.²⁰⁹ The legal landscape has changed further in recent years with the introduction of civil partnerships, their subsequent registration on religious premises, and the current Government proposals on same-sex marriage.

204 At first instance before Silber J, initially at [2006] EWHC 823 but with two subsequent first instance judgments, and in the House of Lords [2008] UKHL 53.

205 [2006] EWHC (Admin) 823.

206 [2007] EWCA Civ 478.

207 [2008] UKHL 53.

208 Discussed by M Hill in an Editorial comment in the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* at (2009) Ecc LJ 11.

209 GRO Circular 9/2009.

Human rights and globalisation – Are human rights a “Western” concept or a universalistic principle?^{1}*

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ABSTRACT

This paper represents an edited version of the authors’ STIAS lecture at the Stellenbosch University in 2014. It deals with the global human rights discourse, as the integrity of human persons all around the world is at stake, showing the necessity and the universality of human rights. Therefore the author explores two basic kinds of attitudes towards human rights, namely 1) forms of human rights optimism – e.g. the argument that globalisation as such leads to a universal acknowledgement of them – and 2) variants of human rights scepticism, in which the author sees those rights practically disregarded, the “Western” concept challenged, and a human rights exceptionalism spreading. Subsequently he asks for what kind of universality of human rights we may argue and how cosmopolitan ethics may support this universality.

1 STIAS Lecture at the University of Stellenbosch on February 17, 2014. I express my gratitude for the renewed hospitality of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) during the month of February 2014. And I express also my gratitude to Stellenbosch University for appointing me as Honorary Professor at the Faculty of Theology. – I thank many of the STIAS fellows and colleagues from Stellenbosch University for inspiring reactions to this text. I thank especially Carol Gilligan for her advice on the natural history of empathy and for her hints to the books of Frans de Waal, Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, and Jonathan Shay, and Dirkie Smit for his hint to the books of Jonathan Glover. – I developed another approach to the theme in a lecture on “Menschenrechte und Globalisierung” at Humboldt University Berlin on October 22, 2012 as introduction to a lecture series on “Religion and Human Rights” at the occasion of the German-South African Year of Science 2012/2013 (to be published in 2014).



1. INTRODUCTION

The first two pages of the Cape Times on a single day show how endangered human rights are in the present time. These two pages report among other news on the “unspeakable suffering of children” in Syria, the “mass torture of Iraqi women”, the “public lynching of a suspected ex-rebel by soldiers” in the Central African Republic, the drowning of seven illegal migrants “as they tried to swim to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta from a beach in neighbouring Morocco”, the conflict about the rights of parliament in the Ukraine, the investigation on an “alleged massacre of dozens of civilians by army troops” during the bloody civil war in El Salvador in 1981, and finally the violent protests in different parts of South Africa in 2014, that have “claimed nine lives, allegedly at the hands of police, in five weeks” (*Cape Times*, Friday, February 7, 2014, p. 1f.).

In all these cases, reported on one single day on the first two pages of a newspaper, basic human rights are at stake. When we receive those reports on torture, sexual abuse or recruitment of children for combat, the illegal detention of women for months or years, their ill-treatment and rape by security forces, the application of lynch law, the desperate ways of refugees to help themselves, the disregard of the status of non-combatants, the violent reaction of the police to violent excesses of protest – when we reflect these attacks on the integrity of human persons it becomes difficult to doubt the content, the necessity and the universality of human rights. Whenever elementary rights are bluntly violated these rights themselves gain evidence. Scepticism regarding these rights seems even to be cynical. It seems comparably cynical to ignore the extension and the intensity of human rights violations in our times.

However different kinds of attitudes characterise the human rights discourse in our days. On the one hand we observe different forms of human rights optimism guided by the conviction that globalisation, economic progress and legal measures foster human rights. On the other hand we observe also some variants of human rights scepticism, for instance regarding the amount of human rights violations, the weaknesses of traditional foundations of human rights or the pluralism of world cultures, which is seen as incompatible with the idea of universal human rights.

In the following I will briefly look on today’s human rights optimism and then move to the sceptical arguments. I will then ask more specifically for what kind of universality of human rights we may argue and how cosmopolitan ethics may support this universality.

Before we enter the avenue marked by these points we have to remember that human rights are not a passe-partout for all problems at hand. The most obvious limitation is

that human rights do not immediately describe our obligations and responsibilities to the fabric of a community. Neither the protection of civil and political rights nor the promotion of social, economic and cultural rights is sufficient for the coherence of society. Daniel E. Lee and Elizabeth J. Lee correctly state in using a quote of theologian Karl Barth that goes back more than half a century: “It is far easier to make rights claims of a confrontational nature than it is to weave the fabric of community, fabric that includes the bonds of obligations and responsibilities as well as affirmations of individual rights. The task of weaving the fabric of community is even more daunting in an era of globalization in which we have, to use the language of the theologian Karl Barth, both near neighbours and distant neighbours” (Lee/ Lee 2010:34). But in correctly trying to avoid an overestimation of the range of human rights, we should also avoid the other mistake – namely to underestimate them. They are the decisive protection-shield for the inalienable dignity of human persons. They express in an incomparably clear manner that no human person can only be seen as an instrument of a foreign will or as an object of foreign domination. Moreover every human person has to be seen as an end in itself and as the subject of her own life story.

Whether this understanding of the individual human person gifted with an inviolable dignity is appropriate and can be preserved under the conditions of globalisation is one of the crucial questions of our times. It is difficult to evade this question, but it is also difficult to find answers.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS OPTIMISM

In present times we find three major arguments in favour of the universal validity of human rights. The first argument says that globalisation as such leads to a universal acknowledgement of human rights. The second argument assumes that economic progress leads to democracy and human rights. The third argument refers to the legal character of human rights, proclaimed not only by single states, but as well by the United Nations, ratified by most countries, entering in the meantime the sphere of international customary law.

Let us briefly review these three kinds of arguments.

a) Globalisation includes the respect for human rights.

In an empirical study on the development in 106 selected countries between 1981 and 2004 three economists – Axel Dreher, Martin Gassebner and Lars-H.R. Siemers – ask whether the inclusion of a country in the process of globalisation and the extent of economic freedom influence the protection and the promotion of human rights

in the respective country. The answer can be summarized as follows: A relatively high degree of globalisation in its economic, social and political dimensions and an effective protection of individual property and economic freedom improve the human rights practice of the respective countries and increase significantly and robustly the protection of personal life and physical integrity. “Empowerment rights”, that means the rights to participate in political, social and economic processes are not comparably promoted (Dreher a.o. 2012).

If one looks deeper into the analysis given by the authors one observes that they are guided by the assumption that the international community has a clearer understanding of the basic character of rights relating to life and physical integrity (the so-called negative freedom rights) than of rights relating to political, social and economic participation. Therefore they assume that the global community is less effective in promoting empowerment rights than protection rights. Their argument is therefore not so much on the effects of economic globalisation but more on global communication. Without saying it they follow the idea of the philosopher Immanuel Kant more than two hundred years ago. He described his own present as a time in which the violation of rights at one place on the globe could be perceived at all other places. And he was convinced that in this moment in history the notion of a common law for all citizens on the globe, a truly “cosmopolitan law” (*Weltbürgerrecht*) would not longer be an exaggerated idea of some extravagant thinkers but a reality (Kant 1964:216f.). That conviction is applicable to our own present even more than to Kant’s times. Following this idea not economic globalisation and the exercise of economic freedom but rather the worldwide spreading of news on the violation of human rights nurtures the hope that these rights will step by step gain global recognition.

b) Economic progress leads to democracy and human rights

In 1992 American political scientist Francis Fukuyama proclaimed an “end of history” (Fukuyama 1992). His optimism was nurtured by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the division between East and West, between capitalism and communism, and not to forget by the concurrent events in South Africa, namely the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the liberation movements. Fukuyama expected that these events that changed our world so dramatically would inevitably lead to the global spread of free-market economies and immediately alleviate the establishment of democratic governments. On this way a final stage of human socio-cultural development and of global governance would be reached.

This kind of economic determinism anticipates an inevitable progress towards democratic government and respect for human rights as the result of economic

growth and welfare on the basis of free market economies. This expectation was often repeated in the years after 1990. But it became in many ways falsified over the last two decades. Economic progress is not stable at all, as recent crises demonstrate. Economic growth produces a social division that eventually endangers democratic commitment. And there is no automatic transition from free market economy to democracy, China being the most prominent example for that. Some may speculate on the question how long the coexistence of a capitalistic free market and an authoritarian one party-regime will endure in China. But even when this country eventually will move in later years to a democratic form of government it will be difficult to explain this move following the deterministic model of market economy inevitably leading to democracy and human rights.

In addition we have to remark at this point that human rights optimists work with a rather restricted concept of these rights. They concentrate in general on a part of civil and political rights, namely on the negative freedom rights. They see them mainly as rights that protect the individual against the misuse of state power. They concentrate on the rights of “possessive individualism” and the protection of the physical integrity of the individual person. The deterministic view of history as an economy-driven continuous progress is therefore combined with a restricted individualistic concept of human rights.

We may observe that such a kind of economic determinism exists also in an opposite sense. The counterpart to an optimistic picture of history as progress is the pessimistic picture of history as decline. This decline may even be described as inevitable as the progress. We all know intellectual paintings of today’s global realities of comparably deterministic character but of opposite content. They declare that globalisation irreversibly leads to the distortion of human rights. The central argument is the increase of social disparity, the marginalising of a trans-national precariat, the coincidence between the enormous wealth of a small minority and the depressing poverty of billions of people on our globe (Fraser 2011).

It is necessary to put these realities at the centre of our awareness. But that does not automatically mean that we interpret them in the scheme of an inverse progress theory, namely the conception of an inevitable history of decline. To the contrary: Whoever chooses this pattern of interpretation runs the risk to follow exactly the same structure of economic determinism which one wants to overcome, but merely in the opposite direction.

c) Human rights gain universal validity through law

Let us start with the South African example. The transition from a system of racism and inequality to a free and democratic state is most clearly symbolised by the way in which the South African Constitution of 1996 incorporates human rights as its most essential point of reference. This reference begins with the equal dignity of every human person. The basic duty not only of the state and its institutions, but of everybody is to recognise and to respect the dignity of the other. Human rights in this respect have not only to do with protection and the avoidance of the misuse of power, but they have basically to do with mutual recognition. They have to do with the insight that every human being cannot be reduced to a mere instrument obeying the will of another but is, to quote again Immanuel Kant, “an end in him- and herself” (Kant 1956:68). It was Laurie Ackermann, who inaugurated the HF Oppenheimer Chair of Human Rights Law at Stellenbosch University who most recently emphasised the relevance of such a concept of human dignity for the understanding of the South African Constitution (Ackermann 2012).

The term of human dignity stands for the conviction (to quote the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah), that “everybody matters” equally (Appiah 2006). Therefore Laurie Ackermann sees human dignity as the “lodestar for equality in South Africa”. Especially the value of equality has to be seen from the perspective of the “inherent human dignity” of every human person (s. 10 of the Constitution). Whenever you call for equality you have to ask: Equality in which respect? Human beings are different by nature, by life conditions, by societal circumstances, by personal biographies, by individual decisions. Under which perspective are they however to be seen as equal? This perspective is human dignity. Because the inherent dignity of every human being is equal, they have to have a comparable access to freedom, they have to be treated as equal before the law, they are entitled not to live in hunger and poverty, they have the right to equally participate in politics, society and economy, and therefore they have a right to basic education and emergency medical treatment and so on.

What I described in following Ackermann is not only the content of the South African Constitution. You find it elaborated in this country’s constitution in a very convincing way, but you find a comparable basic structure in other democratic constitutions as well. Finally you find this basic structure in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the series of covenants voted through by the United Nations Organisation and ratified in general by a great number of UN member states.

You could easily state that the universality of human rights is proven by the fact that they are formulated on the most universal platform imaginable, namely the “United

Nations” and ratified by an overwhelmingly large number of states. However we are confronted with a broad stream of human rights scepticism.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS SCEPTICISM

The validity of the law has always to be examined at least in three dimensions. These are legal validity, social validity and conceptual validity or justification. Even if we take the legal validity of human rights for granted, their social validity is under pressure. And their conceptual validity is highly debated. We start with the problem of social validity.

a) Human rights are practically disregarded

The new discipline of human rights geography shows enormous differences in the respect for and the advancement of human rights. In many countries of the global South, including South Africa, the debate concentrates often on social and economic rights (Liebenberg 2010). But the debate has also to take into account the aspects of civil and political rights, of cultural rights like the freedom of expression or the freedom of religion. Human rights geography is in fact “a geography of human rights abuses” (Selya 2012). This geography shows big differences between different regions on the globe in the rates of human rights abuses per million population (Selya 2012:tab.6).

In the year 2000 political leaders from around the globe vowed to “spare no effort to promote ... respect for all internationally recognized human rights”. In their Millennium Declaration they committed themselves to the eight Millennium Development Goals, among them the reduction of starvation by 50 %, but also to the reduction of maternal and child mortality. But in fact more than 800 million people on the globe are starving, over 350 000 women die every year from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes, over seven million children under the age of five die, most of them from preventable causes like starving, malnutrition, lack of clean water (Kuruvilla a.o. 2012). Religious bodies all over the world lament the extent to which religious freedom is violated and religions are politically exploited – often in a way that intensifies hatred and legitimizes violence (World Council of Churches 2013). Most recently, civil society organisations in South Africa including different religious organisations started a campaign to end violence against women and children. They hope that a rising awareness for this issue will contribute to a meaningful change (Omar 2014:13). These examples prove that human rights, seen from an empirical perspective and judged on the level of their social validity, are by no means “universal”.

How is the picture when we look on it from a conceptual perspective, from the perspective of justification?

b) The “Western” concept of human rights is challenged

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948 begins its preamble with the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”. Its first Article underlines the relationship between the inherent dignity of every human person and her rights in saying: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” On this basis the Universal Declaration is proclaimed “as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” determined “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom” (Brownlie/Goodwin-Gill 2006: 24).

Evidently the document justifies the universal validity and applicability of human rights with the inherent dignity of all human persons. The explication of this dignity says that human beings are “endowed with reason and conscience”. Some find in these words an allusion to the Christian concept of “conscience,” as well as to the thinking of the Enlightenment, that took the reasonableness of the human person as basis for her inherent dignity. When the declaration pleads for “brotherhood” one can see this as an allusion to the ideals of the French Revolution (*“liberté, égalité, fraternité”*).

Therefore the declaration was again and again criticised with the argument that it represented a conception of the human person that was developed in the Western tradition during the 18th century. That was indeed the time when the first declarations on human rights (the Virginia Bill of Rights of 1776 and the French “Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen” of 1789) were proclaimed. In the thinking of the European Enlightenment the autonomy of the person is based on her reasonableness.

During the 19th century exactly this kind of genealogy provoked a strong opposition among Christian churches against the idea of human rights. That changed only with the end of World War II in 1945. Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the opinion began to prevail that the ideas of the Enlightenment were a secularised transformation of the conception of the human person in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Theological interpretations now strengthened the religious dimension of the idea of an “inherent dignity”. To characterise human beings as equal in dignity irrespective of all their differences presupposes a self-transcendence of the human person that relates her to an instance conferring such an inherent

equal dignity to her. The term “image of God” became central for that approach. Taking into account that such an approach may not develop a convincing or even binding force for adherents of other religions or for persons without religion Jewish and Christian theologians felt obliged to offer the concept of the human person created in the image of God as a point of reference for the inherent equal dignity of all.

But there is a vast variety of interpretations proposed in newer theological literature for the meaning of the term “image of God”: the domination of humanity over the non-human nature (*dominium terrae*), the dialogical connection of human beings with God und their fellow human beings, the compassionate solidarity with all the other creatures, the calling to witness God’s revelation to the world, to name only some of them (Welker 2006:327). The variability of interpretations indicates a metaphorical richness of this tradition, but does not so easily lead to a clear and unambiguous concept of human dignity. Therefore some argue that religious references in general and especially the image of God-metaphor make human dignity an “empty formula” (Pöschl/Kondylis 1992: 637ff.). The sentences on human dignity and its inviolable and inalienable character are therefore seen by some as “program sentences” without any concrete impact for certain fields of application. Any clear contours of human dignity seem to disappear under such kind of critique. The consequences for problems of high relevance, for instance in the fields of life sciences and medicine, are enormous. A German legal expert commented already ten years ago: “Human dignity was inviolable” (Böckenförde 2003, my italics). Whoever is confronted with the big questions of bioethics has to deal again and again with the future of human dignity.

Discourses on the proper meaning of human dignity are important. But no single religious or philosophical interpretation can serve as the one and only foundation of human rights. We have rather to develop an “overlapping consensus” (Rawls 1986:133-172). People have to critically reflect their specific worldviews in a direction that strengthens not only their own religious or cultural identity but promotes at the same time shared values and mutually respected rights. Only through an overlapping consensus among different interpretations the idea of universal human rights can gain plausibility. By such a discourse the values inherent in different traditions can be generalised. They are not universal just from the beginning, but take part in a pluralism of values. It is mostly the experience of their violation what provokes the process of “value generalisation”, as Hans Joas, a well-known German sociologist, calls it (Joas 2008, cf. Joas 2000, 2013). For that purpose openness for different foundations is crucial for any idea of universal human rights. For anyone who is convinced that his or her reasons to accept universal human rights are the most

convincing it is difficult to develop such openness. However that seems to be the only way to overcome the exclusive dependency of the idea of human rights upon specific worldviews and conceptions of the human person.

c) Human rights exceptionalism is spreading

As long as the idea of human rights exists there is an on-going search for reasons to state certain exceptions. When the emigrants from Great Britain settled in North America and confessed in 1776 that all human beings are by nature free and independent, they did not worry about holding black people as slaves. When the French revolutionaries in 1789 proclaimed the equal rights of human persons and citizens, they addressed practically only the rights of men and ignored deliberately the rights of women (Reuter 2013:247). When the United States applauds the ideas of dignity and freedom they do it without drawing all the necessary consequences. They continue the practice of the death penalty and regard in every war on terror their own security as more important than the human rights of the adversary (Smit 2014).

But in our time a new kind of exceptionalism has emerged. This is cultural exceptionalism. Binding the idea of human rights exclusively to “Western” values has become a good argument for constructing exceptions on cultural grounds. The debate on “Asian values” was of specific importance in this respect. With growing intensity after 1990 Asian participants in the debate opposed the idea that human rights could really appeal for universal validity. They saw in them a one-sided emphasis on individual rights and freedoms to the detriment of family values and the rights of communities. They wanted to emphasise the role of local leaders replacing the autonomy of the individual. A collective decision on the participation in clinical trials for instance was not seen as a restriction of the informed consent of the single participant. Comparably representatives of Islam argued for the father’s right to decide on questions regarding his wife or his children, especially his daughters. Arranged marriages for instance were interpreted as not interfering with women’s rights. Ministers of Asian States declared in 1993 frankly that universal Human Rights should not restrict the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of the respective states. In addition they argued for greater emphasis on economic, social and political rights over civil and political ones. In fact they put in question the unity and indivisibility of human rights formally declared by the Human Rights Conference in Vienna the same year (Donnelly 2007; Pogge 2008:52-54; Freeman 2011:119-155). You have to address comparable problems when it comes to the inclusion of vernacular rights into the rule of law. As far as South Africa is concerned, President Jacob Zuma explicitly declared in November

2012 that African problems should be solved “the African way, not the white man’s way”. And he added: “Let us not be influenced by other cultures and try to think the lawyers are going to help. ... We are Africans. We cannot change to be something else” (SAPA, November 2, 2012, quoted by Smit 2014). Cultural relativism puts into question the universality as well as the indivisibility of human rights. Is there a way out?

4. WHAT KIND OF UNIVERSALITY?

a) Universality of suffering and compassion

Cultural relativism with regard to human rights emerges from two problematic narratives on the genesis of human rights, which I mentioned already. One narrative derives human rights from the Jewish-Christian tradition of the human person as the “image of God”, the other resorts to the Enlightenment concept of human autonomy based on human reasonableness. But as Hans Joas in his splendid book on the “sacredness of the person” demonstrates, none of these two narratives is valid (Joas 2013). Over centuries or even millennia the Jewish-Christian understanding of the human person did not lead to the formulation of universal human rights. It is only in retrospect that we identify an egalitarian universalism in the sources of Jewish and Christian faith. That retrospect finally induced Christian churches, reluctantly enough, to recognise this egalitarian universalism in its mundane form, namely as secular human rights. It took some decades until theologians explicitly formulated a theological interpretation of modern human rights (e.g. Huber/Tödt 1988). Something comparable is true with regard to the Enlightenment concept of human autonomy. For two hundred years it was applied only very selectively. Slavery, racism, sexism, ethnic cleansing, group-focused enmity and others hindered and still hinder a really universal acknowledgment of human rights. The impulse to transcend the boundaries given by these restrictions did not so much originate in theoretical reflections; it emerged much more from the concrete experiences of violence and humiliation, of disrespect and enslavement, of oppression and exploitation. Hans Joas uses in his “new genealogy of human rights” the examples of torture and slavery, the traumatising of people by such kinds of violence, the solidarity among them and the growing compassion of others as the way in which a feeling for the “sacredness” of the person emerged. It was necessary that in a process of self-transcendence people realized that they were more than the humiliated objects of despotic arbitrariness under which they had to suffer, often from day to day. In their revolt against their own dehumanization they realized what it means to be human: namely to have an equal dignity irrespective of gender and age, status

and wealth, colour and race, belief and conviction. They asked for a human right in the most elementary sense of the word, a right given with the human existence as such. They asked for the right to be treated as human beings, or, as Hannah Arendt expressed it so convincingly: “the right to have rights” (Arendt 1949:754-770; Arendt 1993:452ff.).

Arendt’s formulation refers not to the struggles of the 18th century, in which the first catalogues of human rights were formulated. She coined the formula of “the right to have rights” in the time in which the United Nations were founded and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed. Arendt refers to the experience of refugees from Nazi-Germany, the Soviet Union or other places, which had no rights in the country where they asked for refuge. What are the rights of a stateless refugee? Should he or she not at least have a right to have rights?

This experience coincided with the traumatic events of the 20th century leading to the mass murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and to genocidal actions also in other parts of the world since the Herero-unrest in 1904 or the Armenian catastrophe of 1915. Once again the suffering of people and the compassion with their destiny made obvious that we cannot speak about rights without applying them to every human person. It is not pure contingency that the first convention on a specific aspect of human rights was proclaimed by the United Nations the day before the vote on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of December 9, 1948 (Brownlie/Goodwin-Gill 2006:284-287). The next convention that followed in 1951 was the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 (Brownlie/Goodwin-Gill 2006:288-303). It is true that the idea of universal human rights emerged from the abysses of the “moral history of the twentieth century” (Glober 2001). It is this history that gives Jonathan Shay’s statement its severe evidence: “The understanding of trauma can form a solid basis for a science of human rights” (Shay 1994:209).

It may not be too difficult to develop an understanding for this kind of “new genealogy of human rights” in a South African context. The suffering of the majority of South Africans under the Apartheid regime, the solidarity with its victims, the growing revolt against this deprivation of rights and the compassion of people and groups around the world attributed to human rights their specific weight for the new South Africa. Therefore it has to be remembered that the universality of human rights is in the first instance due to suffering and compassion.

There are strong reasons to support this approach to the universality of human rights from a theological perspective. A Christian understanding of the human person takes especially into account the vulnerability of humans and looks on the status

of a society from the perspective of the most vulnerable members of this society (Koopman 2007). It considers the inviolability of human dignity with the eyes of those whose dignity is endangered by hunger and illness, poverty and loneliness, refuge und migration, violence and war. The preferential option for the vulnerable and their suffering is mandatory for a Christian perspective on human dignity and human rights.

b) Universality of recognition and communicative freedom

In 2011 Seyla Benhabib, professor of political science and philosophy at Yale University, published a series of essays on human rights (Benhabib 2011). Her starting point is Hannah Arendt's formula of the "right to have rights". And she brings Arendt into dialogue with Raphael Lemkin who was the father of the UN Genocide Convention. Whereas Hannah Arendt understands the "right to have rights" primarily as a "right to membership in a political community" Benhabib conceives this basic right as "the claim of each human person to be recognized as a moral being worthy of equal concern and equally entitled to be protected as a legal personality by his or her own polity, as well as the world community" (Benhabib 2011:62). And she endorses a statement of Rainer Forst, who writes: "Human rights secure the equal standing of persons in the political and social world, based on a fundamental moral demand of respect" (Forst 2010:718).

For the universality of human rights it is not sufficient to refer to the legal status of these rights and to state that they belong since some decades to the international customary law. There has to be some justification for that status. The legal universality of human rights has to rest on a moral universalism. Benhabib finds this moral universalism in the "equal respect for the other as a being capable of communicative freedom" (Benhabib 2011:64). Communicative freedom means the capacity to accept or reject reasons for the possible validity of a commonly accepted norm. Communicative freedom in this sense is presupposed whenever we enter with another person in a discourse. Communicative freedom is a precondition of communication and an a priori for every human community of communication (Apel 1973).

Respect for the other in Benhabib's sense implies two dimensions. It refers to the generalized other and to the concrete other. "The standpoint of the 'generalized' other requires us to view each and every individual as a being entitled to the same rights and duties we would want to ascribe to ourselves" (Benhabib 2011:69). In the language of Christian ethics the standpoint of the "generalized other" follows the "Golden Rule" to treat others the same way we want to be treated by them. The relation to the "generalized other" is guided by the norms of equal respect and

reciprocity. “The standpoint of the ‘concrete other’ ... requires us to view each and every being as an individual with an affective-emotional constitution, concrete history, and individual as well as collective identity” (Benhabib 2011:69). The concrete other needs our compassion and solidarity; our relation to him follows the rule to love your neighbour, even your enemy. The relation to the “concrete other” is guided by the norms of empathy and solidarity.

A justification of human rights on the basis of mutual recognition of communicative freedom is preferable not only on philosophical but also on theological grounds. It takes the egalitarian universalism seriously that binds philosophical and theological ethics together. It concentrates on one “principle of rights” that is universalistic, namely the right to have rights. It distinguishes from this principle the “schedule of rights” that substantiates this principle with respect to different dimensions and regarding specific contexts (Benhabib 2011:73-75, 79-82). The codification of human rights on global, regional and national levels and the work on their protection and implementation are good examples for this difference between the principle of rights and the schedule of rights. So I should not say that human rights are universalistic principles but that they rest on a universalistic principle of rights. I call this principle universalistic because it is a principle of moral justification and not simply of legal validity.

It is evident that this approach transcends a purely individualistic justification of human rights. This justification is rather grounded in a relational understanding of the human person entering dialogues with others and cooperating with them on common grounds. It includes an element of self-transcendence insofar the communicative freedom of the other is respected independently of the extent to which the other is able or willing to make use of this communicative freedom.

For a last remark I return to the way in which Seyla Benhabib makes reference to Hannah Arendt and Raphael Lemkin. Arendt learned from her analysis of totalitarian regimes what Lemkin learned from his confrontation with the genocide: Whoever wipes plurality off our life-world destroys this world itself. This means that our perception of the world depends on the plurality of perspectives. In extinguishing one of those perspectives we destroy the world. As much as we have to mourn the victims of violence brought to death by tyranny or war, we also have to lament that we lost a perspective on the world, a part of the world as such. Therefore we have to defend the plurality of perspectives on the world represented by people in their individual diversity as well as in the variety of their cultures and religions. Equality therefore means the equality of the different. The inherent dignity of every human person provokes our recognition of the different (Huber 2011).

c) Universality supported by cosmopolitan ethics

A long-standing tradition emphasises that human rights are entitlements towards the state. Therefore the importance of human rights for the legislation, the governance and the adjudication are often at the centre of human rights research. But human rights need advocacy. They are therefore an important topic for civil society. In addition human rights have to be applied to global realities. Therefore they need a global or cosmopolitan awareness. Trans-national actors in civil society, among them the ecumenical bodies of Christianity may and should act as advocates of human rights.

The struggle against Apartheid included in my understanding this element of cosmopolitan advocacy that transcended the borders of states and continents. Nowadays we find many examples for the urgency and the relevance of initiatives emerging from civil society in favour of human rights. Each of those initiatives deserves detailed analysis and interpretation. But that is a separate task for another occasion. Today I will only mention three of them. I have in mind the campaigns against child labour that brought trans-national corporations – at least some of them – to more respect for children’s rights, the Treatment Action Campaign, that changed the South African Government’s attitude towards antiretroviral medication completely, and the on-going campaigns in different parts of the world in favour of non-citizen’s rights.

- *Child labour*

For a long time trans-national corporations argued that they have only to respect the existing law in the place where they invest. Therefore they used child labour especially in sports and textile industry whenever it was not forbidden in the respective country. Only after public campaigns, partly related to international sport events and to the public interest they attracted, trans-national corporations restricted child labour not only for themselves but also for their suppliers. For instance the Global Sullivan Principles of Social Responsibility state that the signatories “refrain completely from use of child labour. We define child labour as being below the minimum legal working age according to local law, or under the age of fourteen, whichever is greater” (Lee/Lee 2010:72).

- *Sufficient health care*

The South African Constitution attributes in its Bill of Rights to everyone the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care (s. 27). However under President Thabo Mbeki a big conflict arose on the use of antiretroviral drugs against the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. Only through the actions and court cases filed by the Treatment Action Campaign (TAV) the question was

brought into motion and finally became decided by the South African Constitutional Court in 2002. Nowadays South Africa has the largest publicly provided AIDS treatment programme in the world – a tremendous example of the possible effect of cosmopolitan human rights campaigns emerging from civil society (Wolff 2011; Cameron 2014:139-200).

- *The rights of “non-citizens”*

Finally we return to Hannah Arendt’s and Seyla Benhabib’s insight that the core of human rights is the right to have rights. A central issue with respect to human rights is nowadays the question which rights could and should be given to non-citizens, among whom we have to distinguish a lot of different groups: stateless persons, asylum seekers, rejected asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and trafficked persons, to name the most important of them (Weissbrodt 2008). The degree to which a society accepts and respects the rights of those groups depends to a high degree not only on their legal status in the respective country, but also on the willingness of civil society to take care of them.

The globalisation of our days puts cosmopolitan ethics (or, as some prefer to say: global ethics) at the centre of ethical reflection. The core of cosmopolitan ethics is empathy. For a long time empathy like altruism, compassion and solidarity were seen as abstract and unrealistic expectations with regard to human behaviour. But in this respect we experience a paradigm shift in the scientific debate. Empathy is deeply rooted in the evolution of humankind (de Waal 2009). The capacity for mutual understanding develops early in childhood (Hrdy 2009). The question is not how such a capacity can emerge but what makes it to disappear. The painful question, as Carol Gilligan poses it, is how we lose the capacity to love (Gilligan 2014). Theology has to take this reversal of the question very seriously, because theological anthropology begins with the insight that the human person is relational in essence. The relational character of the human person stays therefore at the centre of the theological understanding of human rights (Botman 2006) and is the starting point for a theological reflection on cosmopolitan ethics. Therefore cosmopolitan ethics does not ignore the more narrow forms of community, because for the relational character of the human person the experience of belonging is of central importance (De Villiers 2014). But it overcomes all kinds of exclusivism that emphasises the value of the narrow communities at the expense of those who do not belong to them. It takes seriously what Martin Luther King observed already in his Letter from Birmingham Jail half a century ago: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What affects one directly affects all indirectly“ (quoted by Gilligan 2011).

Cosmopolitan ethics has to make this paradigm shift its point of departure. But it has also to take into account that for all ethics “the ought implies the can” (Lee/Lee 2010:76f.). Nobody can take care of all distant neighbours at the same time. Cosmopolitanism is, however, a necessary critical principle in avoiding an exclusivism that also in our days often takes totalitarian forms denying the rights of disrespected people (Benhabib 2011:8-19). Cosmopolitanism takes seriously that everybody matters equally and that human persons have a right to have rights not only as citizens of their respective states but “in virtue of their humanity” (Benhabib 2011:13).

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*Om as familie in Suid-Afrika te leef: Interkulturele
Bybelstudie as transformatiewe krag in die
samelewing*

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ABSTRACT

Living as a family in South Africa: Intercultural Bible study as a transformational power in society

This contribution describes a research project in empirical hermeneutics which departed from the hypothesis that a development of hermeneutical skills among Christian communities for reading the Bible together with “the Other” could contribute significantly towards the fostering of interculturality in the broader South African society.¹ Additionally, it was hypothesized that the studying of the dynamics of intercultural Bible reading could provide us with better insight into the dynamics of a shift from multiculturalism to interculturality.² The present article reports on the results achieved in the investigation. It has been established that fear for and a lack of knowledge of “the Other” are important reasons for the lack of interculturality in society. It has also been confirmed that the Bible – as liminal “meeting place” for people from different cultures – can foster a sense of family and hospitality in the South African nation.

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- 1 Die projek is befonds deur die Nasionale Navorsingstigting (NNS). Dank word hiermee uitgespreek vir die fondse wat beskikbaar gestel is. Sienings wat hier uitgespreek word, bly egter die verantwoordelikheid van die outeur.
 - 2 Sien vorige publikasies hieroor waarin die uitgangspunte van die projek beskryf is: Jonker (2006 en 2007).



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1. INLEIDING

Die nuwe politieke bedeling in Suid-Afrika wat met die vrylating van Nelson Mandela uit die gevangenis in Februarie 1990 ingelui is, het 'n nuwe erkenning van die diversiteit van kulture, tale en godsdienste in die land meegebring. Die berugte sukses van die apartheidsideologie as 'n proses van sosiale ingenieurswese het veral gelê in die miskenning van kulturele verskeidenheid. Die interaksie in die samelewing is gereguleer in terme van vier "rassegroepe", naamlik wit, swart, kleurling en Indiërs. Sedert die koms van die nuwe bedeling het die situasie verander. Die erkenning van die diversiteit van kulture, tale en godsdienste het een van die boustene van die nuwe demokrasie geword. As in die algemeen geoordeel word, het Suid-Afrika reeds enorme vordering gemaak sedert 1990 met die aanvaarding van die multikulturaliteit van die samelewing.³

In 'n empiries-hermeneutiese navorsingsprojek wat in die afgelope jare in die Wes-Kaapprovinsie van Suid-Afrika onderneem is, is egter geargumenteer dat 'n beweging na interkulturaliteit nie noodwendig in dieselfde tydperk plaasgevind het nie. Hoewel daar voorbeelde op kleinskaal sal wees wat enige veralgemening sal ondermyn, kan dit met vertroue beweer word dat die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie hulself nie as 'n "familie" beskou nie (om Desmond Tutu se woorde te gebruik).⁴

In 'n kleinskaalse navorsingsprojek deur navorsers aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch is gepoog om 'n bydrae met betrekking tot hierdie situasie te maak. Die teoretiese uiteensetting wat in 'n vorige publikasie voorsien is, word nie hier herhaal nie.⁵ Die bedoeling van hierdie bydrae is eerder om 'n beskrywing te gee van die proses wat gevolg is in die empiriese studie, en om aan te dui watter resultate in die ondersoek behaal is.⁶ Die bydrae sal afsluit met 'n aantal waarnemings oor hoe interkulturele Bybelleespraktyke as 'n alternatiewe krag tot verandering 'n bydrae kan maak om interkulturaliteit in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing te fasiliteer.

3 Die term "multikulturaliteit" verwys na die vreedsame of nie-vreedsame naasbestaan van verskillende kultuurgroepe in een samelewing, met min of geen interaksie tussen die kultuurgroepe. "Interkulturaliteit" veronderstel egter 'n doelbewuste poging om verryk te word deur interaksie tussen kultuurgroepe, op weg na 'n samelewing wat die kulturele verskeidenheid as bate ervaar en benut.

4 Sien Tutu (2004).

5 Sien Jonker (2007).

6 Hierdie artikel wil ook 'n bydrae lewer deur die wyse van verslagdoening tot die ontwikkeling van die relatief nuwe veld van empiriese hermeneutiek. Die veld word veral deur prof. Dr. Hans de Wit van die Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam gepropageer. Sien, tesame met ander publikasies van De Wit, sy opsomming in De Wit (2004:477-492).

2. 'n KLEINSKAALSE WAARNEMING

2.1 Die deelnemende groepe

Die empiriese studie in hierdie navorsingsprojek is as 'n geval-georiënteerde kwalitatiewe data-analise ingerig. Babbie (2004:370) beskryf kwalitatiewe data-analise as “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships.” 'n Geval-georiënteerde analise het dus ten doel om 'n grondige verstaan van die rol van veranderlikes in 'n beperkte aantal gevalle te bekom.

Agt groepe is geïdentifiseer wat gedurende 2008-2009 aan die empiriese fase deelgeneem het. Hoewel die keuse van groepe in 'n kwalitatiewe studie nie noodwendig gedoen word met die bedoeling om verteenwoordigend van die kulturele diversiteit in Suid-Afrika te wees nie, is die groepe so gekies dat minstens drie verskillende soorte kulturele interaksie wat in die Wes-Kaap voorkom, waargeneem kon word. Die volgende “kulturele pare” is in die studie betrek:

2.1.1 Xhosa – Wit Afrikaans⁷

Twee pare (Groepe 1 en 2, en Groepe 3 en 4) het in hierdie kategorie deelgeneem. Die volgende biografiese inligting vir elke groep⁸ is in die rekenaaranalise ingesluit:

9

7 'n Onderskeid word gemaak tussen “Wit Afrikaans” en “Bruin Afrikaans”. Hierdie onderskeiding wat steeds die rassegeskiedenis van hierdie land weerspieël, dui die verskille of variasies wat binne kulture van “Wit Afrikaans” en sogenaamd “Bruin/Kleurling Afrikaans” bestaan, aan. Hoewel die meerderheid deelnemers vanuit hierdie twee groepe 'n gemeenskaplike moedertaal het, het die apartheidverlede sosiale verskille tussen hierdie groepe bewerkstellig wat tot vandag toe bestaan. Hierdie werklikheid is daarom in die seleksie van groepe in ag geneem.

8 Om aan die etiese afspraak tussen die ondersoeker en deelnemers te voldoen om nie die identiteit van groepe of individue bekend te maak nie, word daardie inligting nie in hierdie verslag vermeld nie.

9 Die kwalitatiewe analise van die empiriese data is met die rekenaarsagteware Atlas.TI, Weergawe 5.0.66 gedoen. Vir meer inligting oor hierdie sagteware wat spesiaal

Groep 1:	
Kulturele groep:	Xhosa
Taal:	isiXhosa
Groepgrootte:	> 15 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Hoofsaaklik manlik
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Meerderheid 30-50 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	< 5 jaar
Rede vir bestaan:	Benodig opleiding (almal is lekepastore in hul kerke)
Self-identifisering van groep:	Plek van onderrig/opleiding; Bybelstudiegroep; Plek van opleiding vir sending
Ontmoetingsplek:	Skool in buurt
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Gemeng: Meerderheid behoort aan Afrika Onafhanklike Kerke – enkeles behoort aan Metodiste of Pinksterkerke
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen primêre en sekondêre skoolvlak

Groep 2:	
Kulturele groep:	Wit Afrikaans
Taal:	Afrikaans
Groepgrootte:	6-10 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik en manlik (gelyke verdeling)
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Meerderheid > 50 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	Nuut gestig
Rede vir bestaan:	Vir die doel van die projek
Self-identifisering van groep:	Wil grense oorskry na ander gelowiges
Ontmoetingsplek:	Huis van deelnemer
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Almal lede van die NG Kerk
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tersiêre vlak

Groep 3:	
Kulturele groep:	Xhosa
Taal:	isiXhosa
Groepgrootte:	6-10 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Meerderheid tussen 20-40 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	> 10 jaar
Rede vir bestaan:	Vrouevereniging in die gemeente
Self-identifisering van groep:	Vereniging in gemeente; Plek van opleiding/opvoeding
Ontmoetingsplek:	In die kerk van die gemeente
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Almal lede van die VGK
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen primêre en sekondêre skoolvlak

ontwikkel is vir die doel van kwalitatiewe analises, sien www.atlasti.com.

Groep 4:	
Kulturele groep:	Wit Afrikaans
Taal:	Afrikaans
Groepgrootte:	6-10 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik en manlik (meerderheid vroulik)
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Gemiddeld < 30 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	Nuut gestig
Rede vir bestaan:	'n Vorige groep het ontbind, en sommige lede het 'n nuwe groep gestig
Self-identifisering van groep:	Pastorale ondersteuningsgroep vir mekaar
Ontmoetingsplek:	Huis van een van die deelnemers
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Meerderheid lede van die NG Kerk
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen sekondêre en tersiêre skoolvlak

2.1.2 Wit Afrikaans – Bruin Afrikaans

Een paar (Groepe 5 en 6) het in hierdie kategorie deelgeneem:

Groep 5:	
Kulturele groep:	Wit Afrikaans
Taal:	Afrikaans
Groepgrootte:	6-10 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Gemiddeld tussen 40-60 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	Groep is reeds meer as 20 jaar gelede gestig; hoewel lede gewissel het, is die oorspronklike kern van die groep steeds teenwoordig
Rede vir bestaan:	Bybesludie
Self-identifisering van groep:	Bybelstudiegroep; Plek van onderrig/opvoeding; Pastorale ondersteuningsgroep vir mekaar; Uitreik na gemeenskap
Ontmoetingsplek:	Huis van 'n deelnemers
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Meerderheid lede van die NG Kerk
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tersiêre vlak

Groep 6:	
Kulturele groep:	Bruin Afrikaans
Taal:	Afrikaans
Groepgrootte:	11-15 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik en manlik (meerderheid vroulik)
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Gemiddeld tussen 40-60 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	< 5 jaar
Rede vir bestaan:	Inisiatief van gemeente om geestelike ondersteuning in moeilike tye te verskaf
Self-identifisering van groep:	Pastorale ondersteuningsgroep; Gebedsgroep; Uitreik na gemeenskap
Ontmoetingsplek:	In die kerkgebou
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Meerderheid behoort aan die VGK
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen primêre en sekondêre skoolvlak

2.1.3 Xhosa – Bruin Afrikaans

Een paar (Groepe 7 en 8) het in hierdie kategorie deelgeneem:

Groep 7:	
Kulturele groep:	Xhosa
Taal:	isiXhosa
Groepgrootte:	11-15 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik en manlik (meerderheid vroulik)
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Gemiddeld > 55 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	< 5 jaar
Rede vir bestaan:	Behoefte aan opleiding/opvoeding; Inisiatief van kerk
Self-identifisering van groep:	Plek van opleiding/opvoeding; Bybelstudiegroep
Ontmoetingsplek:	Publieke saal
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Gemeng, maar meestal van Afrika Onafhanklike Kerke
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen primêre en sekondêre skoolvlak

Groep 8:	
Kulturele groep:	Bruin Afrikaans
Taal:	Afrikaans
Groepgrootte:	6-10 lede
Gender-verspreiding:	Vroulik en manlik (gelyke verdeling)
Ouderdomsverspreiding:	Gemiddeld > 55 jaar
Groepgeskiedenis:	> 10 jaar
Rede vir bestaan:	Het ontstaan na geestelike ervaring tydens Pinksterdienste
Self-identifisering van groep:	Gebedsgroep; Pastorale ondersteuningsgroep; Uitreik in die gemeenskap
Ontmoetingsplek:	In kerkgebou
Denominasionele affiliasie:	Gemeng, maar meestal van die Protestantse tradisie
Geletterdheidsvlak:	Gemiddeld tussen primêre en sekondêre skoolvlak

Die agt groepe het individueel in drie van die vier fases van die empiriese studie gefunksioneer (sien verduideliking onder). 'n Interkulturele ervaring is egter in fase 3 ingebou toe die groepe met hul “partner”-groepe moes ontmoet vir 'n bespreking van die Bybelteks wat in die vorige fase individueel bestudeer is.

2.2 Prosedure

2.2.1 Aanvanklike ontmoeting met groepleiers

Om eienaarskap en deelname by die verskillende groepe te verseker, is die groepleiers na 'n aanvanklike byeenkoms genooi waar die doelwitte van die projek verduidelik is. Dit is aan die groepleiers verduidelik dat die doel van die empiriese studie nie sou wees om die dinamika van interkulturele Bybellees as sodanig te ondersoek nie, maar om te probeer vasstel of interkulturele Bybelstudie bydra tot die ontwikkeling en fasilitering van daardie voorveronderstellings wat suksesvolle interkulturele interaksie in die hand werk.

Hoewel die breë buitelyne van die prosedure aan hulle gekommunikeer is deur die projekteier, het die groepleiers die geleentheid gehad om inspraak te hê in die ontwikkeling van die fyner detail daarvan, en is hulle ook betrek in die finale keuse van 'n Bybelteks wat deur die verskillende groepe bestudeer sou word. Nadat die projekteier vyf moontlike tekste uit die Ou en Nuwe Testament gesuggereer het – tekste wat veral saamhang met die konsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” (sien bespreking hieronder) – het die groepleiers gekies vir Lukas 11:1-13. Die groepleiers het dit fassinerend gevind dat Jesus se gelykenisse oor die vriend om middernag en die vader wat aan sy seun voorsien, in die evangelie van Lukas met die sogenaamde “Ons Vader”-gebed verbind word. Hulle het aangedui dat hulle daaraan gewoond is om die “Ons Vader” in isolasie van die gelykenisse te lees, en dat die gehele teks tot stimulerende gesprekke in die verskillende groepe sou kon aanleiding gee. Hierdie aanvanklike reaksie van die groepleiers is later ook in byna al die groepe bevestig.

'n Ander belangrike aspek wat by die aanvanklike ontmoeting met die groepleiers aandag geniet het, was die etiese aspekte van die navorsing. Die groepleiers het hul groepe se instemming tot die navorsing bevestig. Die projekteier het ook 'n ooreenkoms met die groepleiers gemaak dat geen individu of groep in die rapportering van die resultate geïdentifiseer sal word nie. Groepleiers is ook daarvan verseker dat alle groeplede na 'n afsluitingsbyeenkoms genooi sou word waar die voorlopige resultate aan hulle gekommunikeer sou word voordat dit gepubliseer word. Die afsluitingsbyeenkoms sou ook die geleentheid bied om hul interkulturaliteit met mekaar te vier.

2.2.2 Opleiding van navorsingsassistent

Om vergelykbare resultate te kon kry, is drie navorsingsassistent opgelei om die projekteier met semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en verslagdoening te help. Die assistente het die vraelyste vir die onderhoude saam met die projekteier gefinaliseer, en het ingestem tot 'n protokol vir rapportering oor die groepsessies (sien verduideliking oor fases 1 en 4 hieronder). Daar is ook besluit dat die projekteier alleen verantwoordelikheid sou neem vir die kodering van die verslae in Atlas.TI om homogeniteit in die koderingstrategie te verseker.

2.2.3 Fase 1: Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude

Soos dit in 'n vorige publikasie in aanloop tot die projek verduidelik is, sou twee konsepte die spilpunte wees waarrondom die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude ontwerp sou word.¹⁰ Die konsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” is om die volgende redes gekies: (i) hulle word dikwels metafories verbind met kernaspekte van die Christelike geloof, (ii) die konsepte is welbekend in al drie kulturele groepe wat in die projek betrokke is, en (iii) hulle kan op verskillende lewensfere toegepas word, vanaf die persoonlike tot kerklike en publieke sfere.

Die eerste semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud met elke groep is deur 'n navorsingsassistent (of projekteier) gelei en het plaasgevind in die lokaal waarin die groepe normaalweg ontmoet.¹¹ Die volgende struktuur is gebruik:

INLEIDING / BIOGRAFIE / SELF-IDENTIFISERING

Skop af deur iets oor julle groep te deel. Wie is julle? En hoe sien julle juisself?

“FAMILIE”

Wat verstaan julle onder die term “familie”?

Hoe funksioneer 'n “familie”?

Sou julle jul onderskeie kerke as 'n “familie” beskou?

Sou julle die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie as 'n “familie” beskou? (met verwysing na Tutu se uitspraak in hierdie verband)

“GASVRYHEID”

Wat is “gasvryheid”?

Meen julle dat jul groep/kerk “gasvryheid” moet betoon?

Meen julle dat “gasvryheid” 'n kenmerk is van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie?

¹⁰ sien weer Jonker (2007).

¹¹ In enkele gevalle het groepe besluit om fases 1 en 2 gedurende een verlengde sessie te doen.

Die besprekings het plaasgevind in die moedertaal van die groeplede (Afrikaans of isiXhosa). Twee van die assistente kon isiXhosa praat (een as moedertaalspreker, en die ander as vlotspreker as tweede taal), en hulle is dus gevra om die sessies met die drie Xhosa-sprekende groepe te fasiliteer.

Die betrokke navorsingsassistent (of projekteier) het daarna die reaksies opgesom volgens die ooreengekome riglyne wat gedurende die opleidingsessie aangespreek is. Sleutelwoord en/of -frases is neergeskryf en 'n ryk beskrywing ("thick description") van die groeplede se reaksies is verskaf. Hierdie verslae is toe voorberei vir insluiting in die Atlas.TI databasis as 'n eerste stel primêre dokumente, maar is nie (weens etiese redes) met die "partner"-groepe gedeel nie. Die twee Xhosa-sprekende assistente het die verslae van die drie isiXhosa-groepe in of Engels of Afrikaans vertaal sodat dit ook toeganklik kan wees vir ander navorsers.

2.2.4 Fase 2: Bybelstudie van Lukas 11:1-13

Die groepe is versoek om 'n tweede geleentheid te reël waar hulle Lukas 11:1-13 sou bestudeer op die wyse wat hulle gewoonlik hul byeenkomste inrig. In die geval van nuutgestigte groepe is hulle versoek om aan die begin 'n kort bespreking te hê waarin hulle ooreenkom oor hoe hulle hul ontmoeting gaan struktureer, en hoe hulle met die Bybelteks kan omgaan. Groepe is ook toestemming gevra om video-opnames van die groepsessies te maak sodat hul "partner"-groepe in fase 3 aan die dinamika van hul ontmoeting blootgestel kon word. Alle groepe het hul toestemming daartoe verleen.

'n Ryke verskeidenheid modusse van hantering en interpretasie van die Bybelteks het na vore gekom in die groepsessies. Dit was merkwaardig om waar te neem hoe die modus van besigwees met die teks goed gekorreleer het met die biografiese self-beskrywings wat deur elke groep voorsien is. Daardie groepe wie se fokus op Bybelstudie as sodanig is, het verskillende maniere van teksanalise gebruik en het van verskillende vertalings, kommentare, ensovoort gebruik gemaak. Groepe wat hulself primêr as gebedsgroepe sien, het die teks as afskopplek vir hul eie gebede en intrede gebruik. Versorgingsgroepe het die teks gefynkam om suggesties te vind oor hoe hulle mekaar kan ondersteun, en hoe hulle na die gemeenskap kan uitreik.

Hoewel daardie lesings en/of interpretasies van die Bybelteks opsigself baie interessante resultate opgelewer het (soos in die video-opnames gedokumenteer), het dit nie die fokus van die analise van die huidige projek gevorm nie (soos reeds hierbo en in 'n vorige publikasie verduidelik is),¹² en transkripsies van die interpretasies is dus nie in die Atlas.TI-databasis ingesluit nie.

12 Sien weer Jonker (2007).

2.2.5 Fase 3: Interkulturele ontmoeting met die “partner”-groep

Die groepe is in hierdie fase aan mekaar gekoppel om sekere “kulturele pare” te vorm (soos reeds hierbo verduidelik is). Hulle is versoek om by die huis (of gewone ontmoetingsplek) van die een groep te vergader, byvoorbeeld, die een Wit Afrikaanse groep het hul Xhosa “partner”-groep by laasgenoemde se ontmoetingsplek besoek, terwyl die ’n ander Wit Afrikaanse groep hul Xhosa “partner”-groep by hul eie ontmoetingsplek ontvang het. Die derde Wit Afrikaanse groep het hul Bruin Afrikaanse “partner”-groep by laasgenoemde besoek, terwyl die tweede Bruin Afrikaanse groep hul Xhosa “partner”-groep by laasgenoemde ontmoet het. Op hierdie manier is alle groepe aan mekaar se kulturele omgewing blootgestel, en het hulle die geleentheid gehad om die gasvryheid van die ander groep te beleef. Hierdie pare is op so ’n wyse uitgewerk dat alle kulturele groepe as gashere/gasvroue of as gaste opgetree het. Die gashere/gasvroue is versoek om hul gaste op so ’n wyse te ontvang as wat hulle normaalweg gaste sou ontvang.

Die ontmoeting het soos volg verloop: Elke groep het eers die geleentheid gehad om hul biografie en inligting oor self-identifisering te deel. Daarna het hulle hul lees/interpretasie van die Bybelteks mondeling met mekaar gedeel, met ’n aantal grepe uit die video-opnames wat die assistent (of projekteer) ter toeligting vertoon het. In die geval van isiXhosa-Afrikaanse pare, het die gesprek in ’n gemeenskaplike taal, naamlik Engels, plaasgevind, of ’n konsektiewe tolk het gehelp om die taalgrens te oorbrug. Twee van die vier ontmoetings het na die tyd ’n sosialiseringmoment ingesluit.

2.2.6 Fase 4: Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud

In die vierde fase is nog ’n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud met elke groep volgens die volgende proforma gevoer (met die aspekte wat getoets is wat tussen hakies vermeld word):

1. Vertel iets oor jul ervaring van die gesamentlike byeenkoms. Meen julle dit was suksesvol? Of nie? Wat bedoel julle daarmee as julle sê dit was suksesvol of nie? (*Ervaring van interkulturaliteit*)
2. In watter opsigte is julle eenders en/of anders as die ander groep? (*Ervaring van kontinuïteit en/of diskontinuïteit*)
3. Het julle kennis van en insig in die ander groep verander deur die kontak? Indien wel, hoe en waarom? (*Verandering in kennis en/of insig*)
4. Het jul gesindheid teenoor die ander groep verander gedurende die kontak? Indien wel, hoe en waarom? (*Verandering in gesindheid*)

5. Het julle gasvryheid tydens die ontmoeting beleef? Indien wel, beskryf dit?
(*Verandering in die verstaan van gasvryheid*)
6. Meen julle dat julle tot dieselfde “familie” behoort as die ander groep?
(*Veranderings in die verstaan van familie*)
7. Wat was julle ervaring van die hele proses wat in die projek gevolg is?
(*Evaluering van deelname in die projek*)

Die verslae is weer eens deur die assistente opgestel op soortgelyke wyse as in fase 1, en dit is daarna as ’n tweede stel data in die Atlas.TI-databasis ingesluit.

2.2.7 Afsluiting in plenum

Nadat die analise gedoen is en die resultate georden is, is ’n finale plenumbyeenkoms vir alle deelnemers by die Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit Stellenbosch, gehou. Vervoer is verskaf vir daardie groeplede wat dit nie self kon voorsien nie. Ongeveer 70% van die individuele deelnemers het die afsluitingsbyeenkoms bygewoon. Slegs een groep was glad nie verteenwoordig nie.

Die plenumbyeenkoms het drie doelwitte gehad: (i) om die interkulturele ervaring wat deur die projekbyeenkomste gefasiliteer is, te vier deur ’n kort oordenking en samesang in die verskillende tale en style van die kultuurgroepe teenwoordig; (ii) om die groeplede in te lig oor die resultate wat behaal is deur die analise van die onderhoudsverslae, en (iii) om gesamentlik te sosialiseer waartydens verversings bedien is.

Oor die algemeen is die laaste byeenkoms baie positief beleef deur alle deelnemers, en ’n hele aantal versoeke is gerig dat groepe moet voortgaan om kontak te maak met mekaar op verskillende vlakke.¹³

2.3 Kodering van verslae

2.3.1 Koderingstrategie

Gebaseer op ondervinding in ’n soortgelyke navorsingsprojek,¹⁴ is besluit om met ’n deduktiewe en induktiewe benadering te werk. Die hoofkategorieë van kodes, sowel as die eers subvlak, is vooraf gekonseptualiseer volgens die navorsingsontwerp

¹³ Ongelukkig was dit nie moontlik om ’n opvolgondersoek te doen oor of verdere kontak oor kulturele grense heen inderdaad hieruit voortgespruit het nie. In ’n aantal informele persoonlike gesprekke met ’n sommige deelnemers het dit duidelik geword dat individue wat mekaar later weer in die dorp of in inkoopentrums raakgehoop het, ’n band tussen hulle gevoel het as gevolg van hul gedeelde ervaring.

¹⁴ Sien De Wit in De Wit *et al.* (2004:395-434).

van die empiriese studie. Die kodes wat egter in elke kategorie gebruik is, is eers geformuleer gedurende die koderingsproses. Die rykheid van die materiaal het daarom die heuristiese proses op interaktiewe wyse geïnformeer.

Sestien verslae (twee stelle van agt elk) is geanaliseer. 'n Vergelyking binne elke groep het interessante kontinuïteite en diskontinuïteite tussen groepe na vore gebring. Die doel was egter om die verslae van die eerste stel (onderhoud voor die interkulturele ontmoeting) te vergelyk met die tweede stel (onderhoud na die interkulturele ontmoeting). Gebaseer op die teoretiese bespreking wat in 'n vorige publikasie aangebied is, is die volgende “voor/daarna”-patrone as betekenisvol vir die ondersoek beskou: (i) 'n verandering in kennis van die ander; (ii) 'n verandering in motivering om grense te oorskry; (iii) 'n verandering in vaardigheid om oor grense heen te kommunikeer; (iv) 'n verandering in gesindheid teenoor die ander; en (v) prominente en herhalende temas.

2.3.2 Kodes en kodefamilies

Die volgende hoofkode-families is onderskei:

01 BIOGRAFIESE DATA

02 VERSTAAN VAN “FAMILIE”

03 VERSTAAN VAN “GASVRYHEID”

04 ROL GEDURENDE INTERKULTURELE ONTMOETING (FASE 3)

05 ERVARING VAN INTERKULTURELE ONTMOETING (FASE 3)

06 (DIS)KONTINUÏTEIT MET “PARTNER”-GROEP

07 KENNIS VAN DIE ANDER

08 GESINDHEID TEENoor DIE ANDER

09 ERVARING VAN GASVRYHEID

10 ERVARING VAN FAMILIE

11 ALGEMENE EVALUERING VAN DEELNAME AAN DIE PROJEK

Die response wat deur families 01, 02 en 03 gekodeer is, is ingewin deur die eerste semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud wat met elke groep voor die interkulturele blootstelling gehou is, terwyl families 05 tot 10 die resultaat was van die tweede semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud na die interkulturele blootstelling. Behalwe die twee sleutelkonsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” is die voorwaardes vir interkulturele kommunikasie wat in die teoretiese refleksie in die projek beklemtoon is, as heuristiese sleutels gebruik vir die analise van die mate van transformasie wat plaasgevind het (sien veral kodefamilies 07 en 08). Kodefamilies 05 en 06 wat die reaksie op die interkulturele ontmoeting gedokumenteer het, is gekruiskontroleer teen die rol van die groep (sien kodefamilie 04 – as gasheer/-vrou of as gas) om vas

te stel of die konteks waarin die ontmoeting plaasgevind het, ’n invloed uitgeoefen het op die ervaring.

2.3.3 Kruistabulering

Die biografiese data is nie gekruistabuleer met die ander reaksies nie, omdat die huidige kwalitatiewe analise nie ten doel gehad het om daardie korrelasies te maak nie, en aangesien die steekproef te klein was om betekenisvolle afleidings te maak. Die interpretasie van die data het daarom nie die pretensie om tipiese ervarings en/of reaksies van die verskillende kultuurgroepe te identifiseer of voorspel nie.

3. OPSOMMING VAN WAARNEMINGS

Die kwalitatiewe analise van die data het baie interessante en ryk resultate opgelewer. Die empiriese oefening het weer beklemtoon dat ’n kleinskaal kwalitatiewe studie nie noodwendig verteenwoordigende data van enige aard oplewer nie, maar dat dit ’n dieper verstaan van gemeenskapsinteraksie kan fasiliteer. Voordat die bevindings in die volgende afdeling aangebied word, word enkele prominente waarnemings hier bespreek.

3.1 Prominente en herhalende temas

Die analise van die verslae van die eerste semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude het ’n baie ryk verstaan van die konsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” na vore laat tree. ’n Totaal van 32 verskillende kodes is gebruik om die groepe se verstaan van “familie” te beskryf, en die meerderheid van hierdie kodes het meer as een keer voorgekom. Die definisie van “familie” wat die meeste voorgekom het, was die volgende:

- Plek waar onderlinge ondersteuning geld (5 response);
- Plek waar probleme gedeel kan word (5 response);
- Plek waar verskeidenheid sieninge moontlik is (5 response);
- Verhouding gebou op inagnam van mekaar (5 response);
- Verhouding gebou op liefde (5 response);
- Bloedband (4 response).

Hoewel slegs twaalf kodes nodig was om die groepe se verstaan van “gasvryheid” te dokumenteer, kan ’n prominente herhaling van temas waargeneem word. Die volgende is die prominentste voorbeelde:

- Sorgdra vir mekaar (8 response);
- Maak ruimte vir mekaar (8 response);

- Bereidheid om van jousef te gee (7 response);
- Verwant aan aanvaarding en liefde (7 response);
- Vertroue tussen mense nodig (4 response).

Hierdie response uit die eerste onderhoude het aan die ondersoekspan bevestig dat die sleutelkonsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” goedgekose was vir die doel van die empiriese studie. Deelnemers kon goed assosieer met hierdie konsepte, en hulle was nuttige heuristiese gereedskap waarmee die deelnemers se ervaring van interkulturaliteit in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing ondersoek kon word. Die volgende subafdeling voorsien ’n beskrywing van hoe die analise van die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie in terme van hierdie konsepte plaasgevind het.

3.2 Ervaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie in terme van “familie” en “gasvryheid” (voorafgaande aan interkulturele ontmoeting)

Toe die deelnemers in die eerste semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud (d.w.s. voor die interkulturele blootstelling) gevra is of hulle die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie as ’n familie sien, het die oorgrote meerderheid negatief daarop gereageer. Slegs drie kodes was nodig om enkele positiewe response te dokumenteer. Vyf response (dwarsoor die spektrum van biografiese profiele) het aangedui dat die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie wel ’n familie is, omdat die gedeelde Christelike geloof verdeeldheid en grense oorbrug. Een persoon het aangedui dat ons ’n familie is op grond van ons gedeelde ervaring in die land, terwyl ’n ander geïsoleerde respons aangedui het dat ons ’n familie is, omdat ons verwelkomend teenoor vreemdelinge en buitestaanders is. Twee verdere positiewe kodes was nodig om twee individuele response te dokumenteer waarin die droom dat Suid-Afrika ’n familie kan wees, tot uitdrukking gebring is (“dit behoort ’n ideaal vir die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie te wees om soos ’n familie te wees”; “gebed kan versoening bring”). Die oorweldigende gees van al die besprekings oor hierdie onderwerp was egter taamlik negatief. Tien verdere kodes was nodig om uitdrukking te gee aan die feit dat die meeste nie die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie as ’n familie ervaar nie:

- SA nasie nie altyd familie nie (5 response);
- Apartheidsverlede bring nog skeuring (4 response);
- Kulturele verskille bring steeds skeiding (3 response);
- Interne verhoudings moet verbeter (3 response);
- Onder huidige regering ontwikkel weer skeiding (2 response);
- Denke in terme van velkleur bring nog skeiding (1 respons);

- Vertrouensbreuk teenoor swartmense (1 respons);
- Kopskuiwe nog nodig (1 respons);
- Nie genoeg gemeenskaplikhede (1 respons);
- Gebrek aan kennis vanmekaar (1 respons).

Dieselfde patroon het na vore getree uit die bespreking of die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie wel gasvry is. 'n Minderheid kodes het positiewe response uitgedruk (“toeriste ervaar Suid-Afrikaners normaalweg as gasvry”; “daar is voorbeelde van gasvryheid te midde van arm toestande”; “om mekaar te ken, verdryf vrees”; “om bereid te wees om mekaar te help, verdryf vrees”). Van hierdie positiewe response het selfs ook na vrees verwys (sien die bespreking hieronder). Die negatiewe response op hierdie vraag is deur die volgende gekodeer:

- Vrees belemmer gasvryheid (10 response);
- Wantroue belemmer gasvryheid (10 response);
- Gebrek aan ubuntu¹⁵ belemmer gasvryheid (3 response);
- Mense wil nie uitgedaag wees nie (2 response);
- Individualisme belemmer gasvryheid (2 response);
- Gasvryheid moet perke hê! (2 response);
- Gasvryheid gaan nie oor tot dade (2 response);
- Gebrek belemmer gasvryheid (2 response);
- Sosio-ekonomiese verskille belemmer gasvryheid (1 respons);
- Politiek belemmer gasvryheid (1 respons);
- Gasvryheid slegs binne eie kultuurgroep (1 respons).

15 Die term *ubuntu* weerspieël die Suider-Afrikaanse etiek of humanistiese filosofie. Die term word dikwels met die Nguni-spreuk “umuntu ngumuntu ngabatu” (betekenis: ’n persoon is ’n persoon deur ander persone) in verband gebring. Daar is baie verskillende definisies wat vir die term aangebied word, en verskillende weergawes van die ontstaan daarvan, word aangebied. Vgl. die goeie opsommings in Gade (2011 en 2012). Desmond Tutu het *ubuntu* eenkeer soos volg beskryf: “One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can’t exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can’t be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity” [vgl. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_(philosophy))].

Die bostaande voorbeelde het getoon hoe prominent die rol van vrees in die response van deelnemers was. Die volgende aanhalings weerspieël die besordheid van mense oor hierdie kwessie:

- Vrees hou mense dikwels nog apart;
- Iemand vertel van die voorval toe 'n vrou naby die “Bantoe-buurt” Khayelitsha met haar kar gaan staan het. Sy was baie bang. Almal het by haar verbygery totdat 'n kar met twee swart mans by haar gestop het;
- Groeplede gesels 'n ruk oor die vrees vir swartmense wat nog by baie bruinmense bestaan;
- Iemand noem dat dit ook lyk of vrees in die wit gemeenskap leef, omdat omtrent almal deesdae vir hulself hoë mure om hul huise bou;
- Gasvryheid in die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie sal beteken dat ons hierdie vrese moet afbreek en mekaar moet leer vertrou;
- There are also incidents of xenophobia, which is unfortunate;
- Ons vrees eerder ons medemens as om om te gee;
- Vlugteling kom na ons weens slegte omstandighede maar ons hanteer hulle ook meestal sleg omdat ons bang is hulle vat ons werk;
- Baie meer mense is sekuriteitsbewus en hoe hoë heinings skei mense van mekaar;
- Om welwillendheid en gasvryheid in ons land te beoefen is op die huidige tydstep moeilik, dis 'n risiko om iemand op te laai of in jou huis toe te laat.

Die onderhoude wat voorafgaande aan die interkulturele ervaring gevoer is, het dus 'n hoë vlak van multikulturele bewustheid vertoon, maar lae vlakke van interkulturele waardering. Die prominensie van vrees en wantroue het ons hipotese bevestig dat Suid-Afrikaners reeds ver gevorder het sedert 1994 in die erkenning van die multikulturaliteit van die samelewing. Die aanvaarding van multikulturaliteit as 'n bate, en die bevordering van interkulturaliteit laat egter nog veel te wense oor. Die verlede is steeds met ons, en kulturele verskille veroorsaak steeds verdeling in die samelewing.

3.3 Ervaring van interkulturele ontmoeting

Die interkulturele blootstelling was die volgende aspek wat aandag gekry het. Blootstelling het op drie vlakke geskied: (i) blootstelling aan mekaar; (ii) blootstelling aan mekaar se lees/interpretasie van Lukas 11; en (iii) blootstelling aan mekaar se

leefkonteks (vier van die agt groepe moes grense oorsteek om in hul “partner”-groepe se leefkontekste gehuisves te word). Hoewel sommige gasgroeplede negatief gereageer het op die blootstelling – wat gewissel het van aanvanklike huiwering tot die wegbly van die blootstellingsbyeenkoms¹⁶ – het die meerderheid (selfs sommige van diegene wat aanvanklik huiwerig was) baie positief gereageer toe hulle agterna (in fase 4) oor hul ervaring uitgevra is. ’n Ryke verskeidenheid redes vir die positiewe ervaring is verskaf. Die kodes hieronder som hul motiverings op:

- Spontaniteit;
- Is verruim deur die andersheid;
- Kon ander gaan besoek;
- Liefde en toegeneentheid;
- Eenheid/geloof/liefde oor grense heen;
- Feit dat hulle ons besoek het;
- Ongeruimdheid van ander groep;
- Kon belangstellings/leuens deel;
- Ontmoetingsgeleentheid;
- Gemeenskap het ontstaan;
- Respek vir ander groep se Christelike getuienis;
- Kon bid vir mekaar;
- Wedersydse vertroue;
- Bemoedig/versterk/gelukkig gemaak;
- Openlike gesprek;
- Het ander as gelykwaardiges ontmoet;
- Lekker gesprek gevoer;
- Kon mekaar leer ken;
- Kon baie leer by ander;
- Gees was tussen ons.

16 Hoewel lede wat gekant was teen die interkulturele blootstelling, en veral teen die idee om hul “partner”-groep in laasgenoemde se konteks te besoek, nie hul gesindheid en reaksie teenoor die navorsingspan verduidelik het nie, het persoonlike onderhoude met die groepleiers sommige van die motiewe waarom party gekies het om weg te bly, onthul. Die kwessie van vrees het sterk hierin gefigureer.

Wat merkwaardig was van hierdie response is dat hulle oor die kulturele spektrum van deelnemende groepe voorgekom het, ongeag van die rol wat die groep vervul het (as gaste of gasvroue/gashere).

3.4 (Dis)kontinuiteite waargeneem

Die groepe is gevra om hul eie positiewe ervarings in terme van die ooreenkomste en verskille tussen hulself en die ander groep te analiseer. Die volgende kontinuiteite tussen hulself en hul “partner”-groepe is genoem:

- Kan aansluiting vind bymekaar;
- Almal lief vir die Here;
- Erns met Gods Woord;
- Ywer vir die Here;
- Liefde vir mekaar;
- Gemeenskaplike gebedsbetrokkenheid by nood;
- Praat oor dieselfde inhoud;
- Gedeelde humorsin;
- Afrikaans ’n samebindende faktor.¹⁷

Die lys van verskille wat deur deelnemers opgemerk is, is lank:

- Verskillende (sosio-ekonomiese) omstandighede;
- Verskillende benaderings;
- Verskillende engagement met ervaringswêreld;
- Verskillende plekke van samekoms;
- Verskillende maniere van sit;¹⁸
- Verskil in spontaniteit;
- Verskil in kinderlike oorgawe;
- Verskil in selfverstaan as groep;

17 Laa genoemde respons kom spesifiek van iemand wat in die kulturele paar “Bruin Afrikaans – Wit Afrikaans” deelgeneem het.

18 Hierdie opmerking het na vore gekom vanuit die “partner”-groep van ’n groep waar mans en vroue apart sit tydens byeenkomste.

- Verskillende sangkultuur;
- Verskillende kleredrag;
- Verskillende samestelling in terme van geslag;
- Verskil in ras;
- Verskille in lyftaal;
- Taalverskille;
- Verskillende familiesamestelling;
- Gebed speel verskillende rolle.

Wat nie in hierdie gekodeerde response waargeneem kan word nie, is egter die waardering vir, en self fassinering met die verskille wat weerspieël is in die liggaamstaal en toon van groepe tydens die terugvoersessies. Verskille is erken en gelys, maar met waardering en respek vir “die Ander”.

3.5 Veranderings waargeneem

Die tweede semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud het die groepe getoets vir enige veranderings wat waargeneem is. Twee vrae is gevra om terugvoer hieroor te bekom. Die vrae was:

- Het julle kennis van en insig in die ander groep verander deur die kontak?
Indien wel, hoe en waarom? (*Verandering in kennis en/of insig*)
- Het jul gesindheid teenoor die ander groep verander gedurende die kontak?
Indien wel, hoe en waarom? (*Verandering in gesindheid*)

Die vrae hou verband met die aanduidings in die literatuur dat interkulturele kommunikasie deur hierdie faktore gefasiliteer word. Kool (2004) het byvoorbeeld sekere omstandighede wat verandering van perspektief in interkulturele kommunikasie veroorsaak, geïdentifiseer in haar analise van leesverslae wat in die internasionale interkulturele Bybelleesprojek “Through the Eyes of Another” (geïnisieer by die Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam) opgestel is. Die eerste faktor wat sy noem, is “Attitude toward the partner group”. Sy maak die volgende stelling: “The most important condition for successful intercultural communication is the attitude people have when they enter the process. This attitude can make or break the process ...” (2004:363). De Wit (2004:506-507) bied ook ’n kort samevatting aan van die basiese voorwaardes wat moet geld om suksesvolle interkulturele Bybelstudie te kan fasiliteer:

Attitude: Successful interaction requires a basic attitude of openness, trust, vulnerability, and willingness to criticize oneself and to see one's own faith insights as relative. This attitude applies to the reading process of the group itself as well as to the interaction with the partner group. Confrontation is allowed, but it must be based on trust. Not every type of motivation is productive. Motivation especially focused on acquiring new knowledge, focused on challenges, turns out to be enriching

Knowledge: The group needs basic knowledge of how cultures operate. Differences between groups soon become apparent, but it requires knowledge to see how these cultural differences can be identified and understood

Insight: Insight into the group's own reading attitude and interpretation method is also important. This insight enables participants to discover the connection between the method and the results of their interpretation and that of the partner group ...

Alle groepe het oorweldigend positief gereageer op die twee vrae oor veranderings wat bemerk is. In terme van "gesindheid" is die volgende kodes gebruik om uitdrukking te gee aan die rykheid van die response:

- Waardering verhoog;
- Besef van ooreenkomste met hulle;
- Bybel verander gesindheid;
- Bring groter spontaniteit en openheid;
- Besef van nabyheid;
- Wanbeelde van ander verander;
- Groter vertrouwe;
- Bring ook besef van verskille;
- Kan by die ander leer.

Die veranderings in kennis en insig is op die volgende maniere beskryf:

- Vooroordele verdwyn (8 response);
- Leer ken mekaar se manier van doen (5 response);
- Toename in respek vir toewyding van die ander (4 response);
- Kennis van ander se leefwêreld;
- Ontdek gemeenskaplike (geestelike) behoeftes;

- Groter insig in ander se geloof/aanbidding;
- Meer tyd/blootstelling nodig;
- Toename in waardering vir die ander se integriteit;
- Kennis bring groter vrymoedigheid;
- Ontdekking van mekaar as mense;
- Kan nou met die ander kommunikeer.

Die kode wat die meeste response verteenwoordig het, was die een waarin groeplede se erkenning dat hul vooroordele teenoor hul “partner”-groep(lede) verdwyn het. Die volgende aanhalings reflekteer die rykheid van die data hieroor:

- Hulle het nou besef dat, hoewel sommige gedink het dat die witmense hul sal slimmer hou, hulle eintlik gemaklik met hulle kon kommunikeer;
- Die blootstelling aan die witmense het gehelp om hul eie vooroordele af te breek;
- We always think of crime when we think about townships, but there are good people as well;
- They did not show over self-confidence which can be intimidating. We expected them to be overly self-confident;
- They seemed to be a bit shy to talk during reporting while we thought they will be saying a lot of things that we should learn;
- Ons het nooit regtig geweet hoe blankes oor God en oor geloof dink nie. Ons het altyd gedink dat hulle baie anders as ons is en allerhande goed doen en glo wat ons nie het nie;
- Ons het hulle as opreg leer ken en hulle het nie maar net voorgegee in hulle houding teenoor ons nie, hulle was nie “whitewashed” nie;
- Almal sit met stereotipes van ander mense; vir die X-groep was hulle kennis, en dus verwagting, van die groep grootliks gestempel deur hul verhouding met swartmense in hoofsaaklik werkverband.¹⁹ Al sou hul ook daar gelykes wees, is afstand tog altyd ervaar. Die moeite wat die groep gedoen het om op ’n Sondagmiddag te kom en die manier waarop hulle aangetrek was, het heeltemal ’n ander indruk gebring.

19 Die persoon het hiermee verwys na die konteks waarin huishulpe (hoofsaaklik vanuit die swart gemeenskappe) vir witmense in hul huise werk.

3.6 Ervaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie in terme van “familie” en “gasvryheid” (na afloop van die interkulturele ontmoeting)

Na afloop van die interkulturele ontmoeting, in die tweede semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud, is die groepe weer eens oor hul ervaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie in terme van die konsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” getoets. Dit was baie interessant om waar te neem dat ’n betekenisvolle skuif plaasgevind het vanaf hul aanvanklike verstaan van en response op hierdie konsepte.

Die volgende kodes druk die ervarings van gasvryheid uit na afloop van die interkulturele ontmoeting:

- Het liefde en vriendelikheid ervaar (8 response);
- Skep openheid (8 response);
- Gemeenskaplike geloof skep gasvryheid (4 response);
- Ander het hul wêreld vir hulle oopgestel (4 response);
- Skep gevoel van inpas;
- Ontdek gemeenskaplikhede.

In reaksie op die vraag waarom hulle ’n gevoel van “familie” saam met die ander gehad het, het die volgende kodes na vore getree:

- Deel Christus met mekaar (8 response);
- Saam medewerkers van Christus;
- Ontmoeting versterk gevoel van familie;
- Kerklike bande maak ons familie;
- Ooreenkomste meer as verskille;
- Is almal beelddraers van God.

Die baie positiewe response het dramaties gekontrasteer met die redelik negatiewe verstaan van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie in terme van “familie” en “gasvryheid” wat waargeneem is in die eerste semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud voor die interkulturele blootstelling. Hoewel die projek slegs ’n eenmalige interkulturele Bybelstudie-ontmoeting ingesluit het, kan ’n mens met vertroue vanuit die bogenoemde data aandui dat betekenisvolle transformasie in alle groepe plaasgevind het, asook in individuele groeplede, met betrekking tot hul openheid teenoor en begrip van “die Ander”.

4. OPSOMMING VAN BEVINDINGS

4.1 'n Gebrek aan interkulturaliteit in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing

Die hipotese wat in hierdie navorsing getoets is, is duidelik bevestig. Hoewel daar 'n bewustheid en selfs aanvaarding van multikulturaliteit in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing is, ontbreek interkulturaliteit nog. Daar is geargumenteer dat die konsepte van “familie” en “gasvryheid” as toetsinstrumente vir die verstaan en beleving van interkulturaliteit in die samelewing gebruik kan word. Hoewel all deelnemende groepe 'n baie ryk verstaan van hierdie konsepte gehad het en die waardes van familie en gasvryheid hoog geag het in hul private sfere, het hulle 'n inkongruensie beleef tussen hierdie begrippe en hul beleving van die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie. Die data wat hierbo beskryf is, het getoon dat die beleving van deelnemers voorafgaande aan die interkultureel ontmoeting gedomineer is deur vrees en 'n gebrek aan kennis van “die Ander”. Die ryke aanhalings oor hierdie kwessies het aangedui dat vrees in al die deelnemende kulturele groepe manifesteer, hoewel in verskillende vorme. Vrees dat vreemdelinge hul werk sal afvat, vrees dat jou eiendom gesteel kan word, vrees dat ander jou lewe in gevaar kan stel, vrees dat jy verneder mag word: hierdie is almal verskyningsvorme van 'n dominante faktor wat interkulturaliteit in die samelewing belemmer. Dit het verder duidelik geword dat vrees dikwels verband hou met 'n gebrek aan kennis van “die Ander”. Vele wanopvattinge oor “die Ander” het na vore getree tydens die proses van interkulturele blootstelling. Dit is vasgestel dat blootstelling aan “die Ander” op die basis van 'n gemeenskaplike Bybelstudie, asook 'n uitbreiding van kennis van “die Ander” bydra om vrees af te breek. Die afbreek van vrees fasiliteer weer die ervaring van interkulturaliteit.

4.2 'n Gemeenskaplike faktor

Die gemeenskaplike Bybelstudie moenie in die proses onderskat word nie. Die oefening is nie bloot as ondersoekinstrument in die empiriese studie gebruik nie. Dit het eerder as instrument gefunksioneer wat die gemeenskaplike deler van die Christelike geloof beklemtoon het.²⁰ In die konseptualisering van die projek is die waarde en potensiaal van hierdie gemeenskaplike deler tussen al die verskillende kulturele en rasse-groepe in Suid-Afrika besef. Die deel van die groepe se lees/

20 Volgens die 2001 sensus bely 79.7% van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking dat hulle Christene is. 'n Mens sou kon aanneem dat dieselfde potensiaal vir interkulturaliteit ook in ander geloofstradisies in Suid-Afrika bestaan. Islam (met 1.5%) en Hindoeïsme (met 1.3%) het egter hul steun binne spesifieke kultuurgroepe, en hulle sny dus nie oor kulturele grense in dieselfde mate as die Christendom nie.

interpretasies van Lukas 11 met mekaar is daarom met opset in die interkulturele blootstelling ingesluit. 'n Mens moet dus erkenning gee aan die feit dat die ontdekking deur deelnemers van hul gedeelde geloof die gunstige omstandighede geskep het waarin die interkulturele ontmoeting gefasiliteer kon word. Sonder hierdie gemeenskaplike deler sou die ervaring van interkulturele blootstelling waarskynlik heeltemal anders gewees het. Hierdie punt beklemtoon dus hoe belangrik dit is om te besef dat die Bybel as Skriftuur van die Christelike gemeenskap 'n kragtige transformatiewe instrument in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing kan wees. Interkulturele Bybelstudie-oefeninge moet dus oorweeg word as alternatiewe wyses waarop interkulturaliteit in Suid-Afrika gefasiliteer kan word.

4.3 'n Inklusiewe hermeneutiek

Die groepe is by die eerste sessie ingelig dat hulle die geleentheid sou hê om Lukas 11 te lees/interpreteer soos hulle gewoon is om te doen in hul groep, maar dat hulle dan ook gevra gaan word om hul lees/interpretasie met hul "partner"-groep by 'n georganiseerde ontmoeting te deel. Hierdie strategie is doelbewus gekies om interaksie te bewerkstellig tussen wat Kessler (2004:452-459) bipolêre en multipolêre verstaan genoem het. Die lees binne die eie groep het volgens eie konvensies, maar ook eie teologiese oortuigings, plaasgevind. Die interkulturele ontmoeting het egter die geleentheid geskep om hul lees van die teks in 'n interkulturele omgewing te deel, en daarvoor in te staan. Die hermeneutiese dinamika wat deur hierdie interaksie geskep is, het onmiddellik die binne- of eksklusiewe hermeneutiek van elke groep verander tot 'n inklusiewe hermeneutiek. Die groeplede moes reageer in terme van die kontinuïteite en diskontinuïteite van hul onderskeie interpretasies van die teks. Maar, dit het alles gebeur binne die konteks van die gemeenskaplike Christelike geloofsoortuiging. Interkulturele interaksie binne die konteks van 'n gemene deler het die ruimte geskep waarbinne 'n inklusiewe hermeneutiese verstaan kon begin ontwikkel, en waarbinne 'n beweging van 'n bipolêre na 'n multipolêre verstaan kon plaasvind.²¹

4.4 Die belang van grensoorskryding

In die bogenoemde punt het die belang van die kwessie van grensoorskryding reeds na vore gekom. Grensoorskryding is nie net bewerkstellig deur die multikulturele paring van Bybelstudiegroepe nie, maar ook deur die fisiese grensoorskryding van een groep wat 'n ander in laasgenoemde se konteks gaan besoek het. Dit was 'n betekenisvolle strategie, gegewe die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks waar, hoewel nie meer

21 Sien ook Jonker (2001, 2005, 2008).

politieke oorwegings nie, maar ekonomiese werklikhede mense steeds apart hou. Mense, selfs nie Christine nie, ken nie mekaar se fisiese leefwêreld nie. Hierbo is aangedui hoe belangrike faktor vrees was in die daad van grensoorskryding. In een geval het slegs drie lede van die gasgroep opgedaag om saam met die projekspan na die “partner”-groep se konteks in een van die swart “townships” te gaan. Interkulturaliteit het ook fisiese dimensies. Die impak van die interkulturele ervaring was soveel groter vir diegene wat grense oorskry het en hul eie veilige ruimtes verlaat het om die leefwêreld van “die Ander” binne te gaan. ’n Toename in kennis van “die Ander” asook veranderings in gesindheid teenoor die ander is geweldig aangehelp deur die fisiese grensoorskryding wat deel gevorm het van die empiriese studie.²²

4.5 Om ’n familie te word

Die metafoor wat ’n leidende rol in die navorsing gespeel het, was die ryke verstaan van “familie” en “gasvryheid” wat by die groeplede bevind is. Dit was merkwaardig om in die projek te beleef hoe groepe by die eerste onderhoud meer as gewillig was om hul persoonlike sferes en die lewe van die kerk/gemeente in terme van hierdie begrippe te beskryf, maar weerstand gehad het om dieselfde te doen met betrekking tot die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Die oorweldigende negatiewe respons hieroor was tekenend van die gebrek aan interkulturaliteit in die samelewing. Die veranderings in kennis van “die Ander” en gesindheid teenoor “die Ander” wat in die projek gefasiliteer is, het ten minste by deelnemers die perspektief laat ontstaan dat die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie ook inderdaad tekens toon van familiewees. Die gemene deler van Christelike gemeenskap, die besef dat vele van hul vrese onwerklik en irrasioneel is, en hul besef van ’n gedeelde lot, het die bewustheid dat die Suid-Afrikaanse nasie ’n familie kan wees, laat groei.

5. KONKLUSIE

Hoewel hierdie projek data-inwinning vanuit ’n kleinskaalse waarneming in ’n beperkte aantal Bybelstudiegroepe gedoen het en ander beïnvloedende faktore nie in ag geneem is nie, het die kwalitatiewe analise van die ryke terugvoer vanuit die twee semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude die navorsers in staat gestel om daardie diep gevoelens en houdings te peil wat deelnemers se ervaring van interkulturaliteit weerspieël. Met die hulp van die twee konsepte “familie” en “gasvryheid” – konsepte waarvan die verstaan oor kulturele grense sny, en wat vanaf die familiesfeer na die kerk en samelewing uitgebrei kan word – kon die navorsingspan die “voor-daarna” patrone met betrekking tot kennis en insig van, en gesindheid teenoor “die Ander”

²² Sien ook Riches (2004).

peil. Hoewel daar 'n prominente bewussyn van die multikulturaliteit van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing voor die interkulturele intervensie van die navorsingsprojek was, is hierdie multikulturaliteit hoofsaaklik beleef in terme van verskille met “die Ander”. Die interkulturele ontmoeting op basis van 'n gedeelde Bybelstudie het betekenisvolle veranderings teweeggebring. Die veranderings wat waargeneem is, het nie net beklemtoon hoe belangrik interkulturele blootstelling is nie, maar ook hoe waardevol dit in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing is dat die Christelike geloof dwarsoor kulturele en rassegrense strek.²³

Die projek het geen pretensie dat die samelewing daardeur betekenisvol verander is nie. Slegs 'n klein aantal mense is betrek en geen opvolgbyeenkomste is gereël nie (behalwe die afsluiting in plenum). 'n Mens kan selfs twyfel uitspreek of die transformasie wat deur die projek bewerkstellig is, volhoubaar gemaak kan word. Die projek het egter wel duidelik die instrument van interkulturele Bybelstudie as transformatiewe krag in die samelewing bevestig. Dit het ook die belang van 'n stelling wat reeds in die teoretiese fase van die projek gemaak is, beklemtoon: “Interculturality is ... a personally driven strategy to overcome ‘othering’” (vgl. Jonker 2007:483). Kerke, maar ook regerings- en nie-regeringsorganisasies, sou goed doen om van hierdie waardevolle instrument kennis te neem wat kan bydra daartoe om die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing in 'n “familie” te verander.

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TREFWOORDE

Empiriese Hermeneutiek
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JONKER, LOUIS

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Transforming a fragmented South African society through a spirituality of koinonia coram Deo

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ABSTRACT

Spirituality is a way of living. It is described as that which touches the core of human existence, namely “our relationship to the Absolute”, whatever the definition of the latter may be. In this paper, we deal with the importance of our relationship with the Trinitarian God as revealed in Scripture and determined by Christ. The world experiences a revolution in secular spirituality, rejecting a dualistic supernaturalism. This paper will not try to cover the whole debate and spectrum of spirituality, but will focus mainly on the most obvious spiritualities in the South African society, namely Biblical, post-modern and African spirituality. It is the argument of this paper that transforming and liberating spirituality will have to take the influence of sin on our koinonia with God and with our neighbour seriously. The importance of the different dimensions of koinonia as inner dynamics of the process of transformation and liberation will help dispel the myth that Christian spirituality has no relevance in a socio-political situation.



1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2012 was one of the most destabilising years for South Africa since 1994, with riots and strikes against poor service delivery by government, as well as riots and strikes by many labour sectors (such as transport, mine, and farm workers) against low wages.

Three farmworkers have died in clashes with police during stop-start strikes since November (2012) that have also led to hundreds of arrests. The unrest comes as South Africa's economy recovers from a violent two-month strike in the mining sector in which 50 people died last year. In further civil unrest this week, four people died in Sasolburg, in the Free State, as unemployed residents rioted in protest at a municipal demarcation move, which they believe will affect their job prospects. (Smith 2013.)

Counting the 241 391 strikers involved and the number of days that the strikes lasted, South Africa lost nearly 3,3 million working days in 2012, which resulted in workers losing R6,6 billion in wages (City Press 2013). The mining industry lost about R10,1 billion and the farming industry about R300 million, while more than 50 lives were also lost in these strikes. In addition to the strikes, South Africa was also shocked by brutal facts concerning rape (especially the rape of children) and murder, which are increasing every year, as well as riots in townships because of poor service delivery. Related questions that this paper intends to answer are the following: What is the role of (different) spiritualities in our South African society? What role can (different) spiritualities play in developing a more stabilised and peaceful society? Are (different) spiritualities dividing society? The central theoretical argument of this paper is that spirituality is incorporated in and has a direct influence on our everyday lives and experiences. Van der Merwe (2013:3) indicates it in the following remark: "The books of the NT do not only reflect certain early Christian spiritualities, but also evoke certain lived experiences amongst the readers. Their lived experiences cast the process and project of life integration [...]."

It is not spirituality alone that affects people; Gardener (2011:9) affirms the importance of recognising the influence of history and social context, as well as its impact on individuals and communities. In a time in which we experience a spiritual revolution (cf Tacey 2004; Van der Merwe 2006:165-166), one cannot but ask about the spirituality that functions in the South African society. Furthermore, it is important to identify the reason/s for these different spiritualities in a country

in which more than 75% of the population call themselves Christians.¹ The literature that was studied indicates that there is a revived interest in spirituality in general, not only in South Africa, but also all over the world. What will also become clear in this article is that spirituality means different things to different people. The premise of the article is that spirituality as *koinonia*² relates to Christian spiritualities, but also differs from other spiritualities such as post-modern and African spiritualities (which will be discussed in this paper). To describe what is meant by ‘*koinonia*’, the first letter of John will be considered. Since spirituality touches the core of human existence, namely “our relationship to the Absolute” (Waaïjman 2002:1), the author accepts that spirituality takes place *coram Deo* (in the presence of God). In the presence of the Trinitarian God, people are always confronted with the crucified Christ and as such become aware of their humanness and the influence of sin in their lives.

2. SPIRITUALITY

Schneiders (2005:15) distinguishes ‘spirituality’ as an academic field of both theology and religious studies. Waaïjman (2002:1) defines ‘spirituality’ as that which touches the core of human existence, namely “our relationship to the Absolute”, whatever the definition of the latter may be. It is the definition of the Absolute that causes people to understand spirituality differently. Kourie (2010:19) remarks that, in its wider sense, everyone embodies a spirituality of some kind, which refers to the ultimate meaning of our existence. Spirituality, then, is the meaning and values to which we subscribe, whether these are religious or not; it is thus possible to speak of ‘atheist’ spirituality as well. In the book *Critical Spirituality*, Gardener (2011) concentrates on spirituality as that which gives life meaning. She refers to a way in which the inner sense of meaning is connecting with a sense of something greater: “For some people this will clearly be a religious faith with its own traditions and rituals, for

1 “The country has an area of 470,693 square miles and a population of 47.9 million. The 2001 religious demography census estimated that 80 percent of the population is Christian. Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and adherents of traditional African beliefs constitute 4 percent of the population. Approximately 15 percent of the population indicated that it belongs to no particular religion or declined to indicate an affiliation.” (International Religious Freedom Report 2008.)

2 The noun *koinōnia* and related words – with the root meaning “(have in) common, communal; have a share or part (in something); go partners in” – occur around 119 times in the Bible. The background of this word lies in secular Greek, where it meant, for example, “(business) partner” (Luke 5:10) or “possessions held in common” (see Acts 2:44-45; 4:32) (The Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol. 3:134).

others it might be a sense of wonder from the natural world of joy in relationships. Such a broad definition of spirituality encourages an inclusive approach.” (Gardener 2011:9.) Tacey (2004:3-4) describes spirituality as a revolution from below – a people’s revolution. Bosch (1994:9) concludes that most people identify spirituality almost exclusively with their “devotional life”.

Firstly, with reference to the above, this article does not take an academic approach to spirituality, but a pragmatic one, recognising that spirituality is closely linked to theology, religious studies and understanding. This study is concerned with the qualitative and quantitative expansion of spiritual knowledge in order to make a positive contribution to the South African society.

Secondly, this article does not approach spirituality in a docetic³ way in the sense that spirituality would mean otherworldliness, as if we are saved from this world. We are saved from our sin to live differently in this world and therefore spirituality “can never be something that can be isolated from the rest of our existence” (Bosch 1994:13), but must enhance our earthly existence. In the Bible, flesh and spirit do not refer to two segments of our lives, one outwardly and worldly and the other inwardly and otherworldly, but rather to two modes of existence, two life orientations. According to Bosch (1994:13), being spiritual means being in Christ and this includes every part of our lives. In this regard, the article will approach spirituality as koinonia.

With spirituality being defined as koinonia, the following elected spiritualities that influence the South African society will be discussed: Biblical spirituality, in order to show that the Bible recognises the fact that there are different spiritualities; post-modern spirituality, since we live in a post-modern paradigm; and African traditional spirituality, since a large part of the South African population are practitioners of African spirituality, and since both Christianity and African Traditional religion function from a traditional paradigm.

2.1 Biblical spirituality

Schneiders (2002) describes Biblical spirituality in the following way: Firstly, Biblical spiritualities refer to spiritualities that come to expression in the Bible. These include dialogical spirituality (Deuteronomistic tradition), Christocentric spirituality (Paul), contemplative Jesus spirituality (John) and ecclesiastic spirituality (Pastoral Letters).

3 Docetism (as in the early Christian Church) is a heresy, claiming that the humanity of Christ, his sufferings and death were apparent rather than real. Docetism is the typical Greek contrast between spirit and matter; for example, they believed that, since matter was ipso facto evil, God could not come into direct contact with the phenomenal world in Christ (Ladd 1974:610). For this reason, the incarnation of Christ was dismissed.

Secondly, Biblical spirituality designates a 'pattern of Christian life' that is imbued with the different spiritualities in the Bible and may be called 'Christian spirituality'.⁴ Thirdly, Biblical spirituality is a "transformative process of personal and communal engagement with the text" (Schneiders 2002:134-136). For this engagement with the text to be a transformative covenant, the communion of believers and the kingdom of God must be stressed (cf. Van der Walt 2008:28).

If we acknowledge the different spiritualities, the danger exists that we might work with different hermeneutical methods.⁵ For transformative Biblical spirituality, the Bible must be read with the same hermeneutical key. The most appropriate hermeneutical key to work with is a missional hermeneutic as described by Wright (2006:33-47): "[...] since a missional hermeneutic must include at least this recognition – the multiplicity of perspectives and contexts from which and within which people read the biblical text." (Wright 2006:39.)

Christian spirituality is understood as a "self-transcending faith in which union with God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit⁶ expresses itself in service of the neighbour and participation in the realization of the reign of God in this world. Christian spirituality, thus understood, is necessarily Biblical and it is adequate only to the degree that it is rooted in and informed by the Word of God" (Schneiders 2002:134).

It must also be pointed out that Biblical spirituality is contextual and not something that is distant from our world and society; it equips us to live in (a specific) society. Thus the fourth way, in which Biblical spirituality is realised, is by engaging in transformative actions in this world (Schneiders 2002:139). It is our involvement with transformative actions in this world (to improve the lives of those who are denied full participation) that "should lead to a deepening of our relationship with and dependence on God" (Bosch 1994:13). As our relationship with God is deepening, this relationship should lead to increasing engagement (*koinonia*) and involvement (*diakonia*) in the world, which will eventually lead to thanksgiving

4 "By Christian spirituality I mean the lived experience of Christian faith. To be more explicit, Christian spirituality casts the process and project of life-integration in terms of the ultimate horizon and basic coordinates of Christian faith. The ultimate horizon of faith is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ, into whose divine life we are incorporated by the gift (grace) of the Spirit." (Schneiders 2002:134.)

5 Van der Walt (2008:27-32) describes eight popular and scientific hermeneutic methods and four important hermeneutical keys. It is not in the scope of this paper to have a discussion on hermeneutics, but it is essential to take note of the importance of hermeneutics.

6 It is this union with God that defines *koinonia*, as discussed in this paper.

(leitourgia) (2 Cor. 4:15). As we love God, we will love our neighbour (1 John 4:7-10), because it is not possible to love God more than we love our neighbour.

People with different worldviews think differently about (Biblical) spirituality.⁷ Traditionally, spirituality is linked to religious thinking, specifically the idea that religion must provide the answers to life's questions. Spirituality is also seen as a "shared and public experience" and individuals are not expected to develop their own answers (Gardener 2011:19). According to Nurnberger (2007:9), traditionalism does not distinguish between religion, worldview and culture, but views it as one concept; therefore a person's role and status in a (traditional) African society are defined by age, gender and seniority, because "[in] compound societies, the spiritual order reflects the social order, indicating that it is an order of power and authority" (Nurnberger 2007:23).

It may also be argued that Biblical spirituality was institutionalised in traditional thinking. In the modern era, the influence and power of religious institutions and traditions have deteriorated, as individuals and communities have gained knowledge and have started to believe that life's questions may be answered from a scientific perspective. Biblical spirituality has been moved to the background and humanism valued for people's ability to bring about change. Since we live in a world with a post-modern worldview, post-modern spirituality will now be discussed in more detail. However, it is important to bear in mind that the three different approaches to spirituality are functioning simultaneously, rather than separately, at specific times.

2.2 Post-modern spirituality

Post-modern spirituality intends to deconstruct.⁸ These rational deconstructive pursuits of many traditional spiritual practices "dissolve" the ego-constructs in the history of Christian and Oriental spiritual practices (Schreiber 2012:2). Gardener (2011:20) mentions "history shows how spirituality in the form of religion was used to validate violence in the form of war and oppression of many kinds". The value of post-modern spirituality is that it makes provision for difference. Post-

7 Most of us have more than one worldview, emphasising a specific one in a given situation.

8 "Deconstruction delivers us to the recognition of historicised falsehood within; the presence of a *false-self*. Deconstruction seems then to be a deeply emancipative impulse, the necessary prerequisite to enlightenment. Krishnamurti's (1954) 'watching the watcher, watching the ego' describes how we can cognitively participate in a spiritual practice of ego-deconstruction for the moral and spiritual purpose of deconstructing narcissism." (Schreiber 2012:4.)

modern spirituality can be seen “as an epistemological⁹ possibility, authentically in line with an existential and phenomenological reclamation of traditional spiritual doctrine removed from theology” (Schreiber 2012:6), with a modern view of the importance of the individual (Gardener 2011:20). It is, however, vulnerable in terms of its regressive and narcissistic elements, and seems empty, as it is most radically a religion of immanence and individualism: “The anthropological interrogative ‘who am I?’” in post-modernism “is unfathomable, but palpable at every turn” (Schreiber 2012:7) and “the individuals then seek their own ‘truth’ from their own internal search for meaning and their experience of the spiritual” (Gardener 2011:20). Post-modern spirituality is also described as a proto-spirituality, which makes us aware of “time transcending witness” and is also trans-traditional (Schreiber 2012:7). This new kind of spirituality is described as “a spending spree in the religious shopping mall” (Nurnberger 2007:12). It is no longer the religious or scientific truth that demands one’s respect and commitment, but the quest for enjoyment.

The current concern about the presence and increase in fundamentalism in various religious traditions, with an active promotion of intolerance, suggests a revival of interest in the ‘traditional’ approach in post-modern times. Fundamentalism believes in a fixed truth, “rather than expecting that [...] the experience of spirituality will change in response to culture and history as it always has” (Gardener 2011:21). In this sense, fundamentalism denies that the context has any influence on spirituality. This brings us to the South African context and African spirituality as a traditional spirituality.

2.3 African spirituality

It is generally recognised that native African people are greatly influenced by the spiritual world. Reality is believed to be determined by ‘animistic’ or ‘dynamistic’ power. In dynamistic communities such as in Southern Africa, power flows can be channelled into beneficial directions through rituals that are conducted by authorised leaders, or detrimental directions through magical means that are used by sorcerers and witches (Nurnberger 2007:9). Within this “flow of forces”, the concept of ‘ubuntu’ (human solidarity) plays an important role. Ubuntu differs from

9 “However, the point is this: complexity in the world of epistemology is par for the course (of post-modern sensitivity) and we need the insights of as many specialised epistemologies as possible, for two reasons: 1. Spirituality must offer some promise to broaden and ‘fill out’ our understanding of being and anthropology. For me, academic spirituality ought to earn its stripes as a human story in a world of science. 2. Following then, academic spirituality requires an epistemology larger than purely those of the Humanities.” (Schreiber 2012:5.)

koinonia,¹⁰ since the focus of ubuntu is on the inside of closely-knit communities such as the extended family or clan. Ubuntu also assumes that people have evil intentions and hidden resources at their disposal; therefore one cannot let one's defences down or have enemies. Nurnberger (2007:195) points out that "this again may lead to overt demonstrations of goodwill and solidarity, while grudges are suppressed and suspicions remain secret". The influence of the spiritual world on Africa is also noted in Mbiti's (1990:29) quote of an Ashanti proverb: "No one shows a child the Supreme Being." Thus, everybody knows about the Supreme Being as creator and is related to him. Many Africans also believe in Jesus, although, in many instances, as one of the ancestors, and they also believe in the work of the Spirit. Although all three Persons of the Trinity are part of their notion of God, they don't view them as one God. The following question may then be posed: Do Africans believe in a tritheism? The Supreme Being, as understood in Africa, is not the same as the Triune God as He reveals himself in the Bible.

In his discussion of African spirituality, Edwards (2012:50) refers to "the experience of spirit as distinct from 'religion,' which is generally concerned with systematized forms of spirituality". He defines spirituality as a multidimensional, universally experienced phenomenon, involving four interrelated domains, namely (a) higher or universal power; (b) self-discovery; (c) relationships; and (d) eco-awareness (Edwards 2012:52). Nurnberger (2007:9) makes it clear that Edwards's distinction between "the experience of spirit" and "religion" is a false distinction, since in traditionalism such as African Traditional Religion (ATR); there is no distinction between religion, worldview and culture. It is also important to realise that self-discovery in Africa happens in relation to other people in the spirit of ubuntu and not in relation to who a person is before God, as in Christianity. Given the current situation in South Africa, it is clear that we need to focus on Africa's spirituality as in ATR and the influence thereof on our society, since the larger portion of the labour force grow up in the context of ATR. The important influence of African spirituality is illustrated in situations such as the mineworkers' strike at Marikana, during which 45 lives were lost and in which the striking workers consulted a sangoma.

2.4 Spirituality and the labour market

Gardener (2011:4) observes "there is movement in Western culture towards recognising that spirituality is part of life and so part of work". In this regard,

10 Although ubuntu is an important aspect of African spirituality, it is not within the scope of this article to unpack the influence thereof. For the differences between ubuntu and koinonia, see Marumo (2012).

Gardener refers to books and articles in the fields of social work, palliative care, education and organisational management. The following reasons are suggested for this interest in spirituality (Gardener 2011:4-9):

- Interest in a more holistic way of working in professional practice
- A desire for practice with greater integrity and integration with professional values
- A desire for inclusive spiritual practices in an increasingly diverse world
- Concern for the environment
- Questioning of materialism
- Demonstrated relationship between spirituality and health
- Less of a split between religion or spirituality and other spheres of life
- Social recognition of spirituality

Among others, this paper intends to explore the influence of spirituality in the vocational (un-schooled) labour market in South Africa, for example mining and farming. The author believes that most of the reasons that have been identified by Gardener are applicable to the issue that is discussed in this paper, namely the influence of spirituality on the South African society.

It is important to identify the interfaces between Biblical, post-modern and African spirituality if such interfaces exist. Furthermore, the influence of spirituality on society needs to be determined. Nurnberger (2007:224-225) discusses (African) traditionalism in a post-modern context and makes the following remarks:

Firstly, the perception that post-modernity reinstalls the dignity, social acceptability and validity of traditionalism is deceptive. Post-modernity will tolerate the belief systems, but it cannot, for example, shut a factory down because the ancestors disapprove of its mechanisms. The following question remains: What positive role can ATR spirituality play in unrest situations like these, where “sin is not a direct offence against God, or a transgression of some moral law or virtue, but a breakdown of the complex structure of human relationships within the community, including the ancestors” (Nurnberger 2007:27)? There are definite questions about the influence of ATR in the strikes at Marikana, especially since a sangoma was involved and taken into account that many of the workers are from the Eastern Cape, where ATR is general practice.

Secondly, the possibility exists that those who have half-heartedly and with uncertainty ventured into modernity will revert to pre-modern assumptions and

will legitimise assumptions like these. Such traditionalists may continue their way of life on post-modernist assumptions, bypassing the tests of modernity such as empirical evidence, efficiency, productivity and reliability.

Thirdly, post-modern people who want to include traditionalist spirituality as one of their choices may suddenly assume a power they have never suspected to be possible. Since convictions and assumptions are not all that innocent, post-modernity is quite naïve concerning alternative spiritualities, spiritual powers and their consequences. It may then be asked whether spirituality of koinonia will indeed make a difference.

3. SPIRITUALITY OF KOINONIA ACCORDING TO THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN¹¹

Spirituality of koinonia is all about the relationship, but also the transformational impact, of the Trinitatis Dei on life as revealed in Scripture. For the purpose of this article, the author will focus on the revelation of God in the First Letter of John and the implications of koinonia for life. Describing some of the aspects of the Trinitatis Dei's revelation in 1 John, it is the role and function of Jesus in legitimising fellowship between God and (these) believers that need to be pointed out. Koinonia amongst believers and with God is founded in the unique relationship between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. This is portrayed by the chiasmic pattern that is built by Van der Merwe (2006) around the noun 'koinonia' in 1 John 1:3-7: "The function of the chiasmic structure here is to emphasise the interrelatedness and interdependence of the fellowship among believers and their corporate fellowship with God. The one kind of fellowship demands and constitutes the other." (Van der Merwe 2006:173.) Jesus was incarnated into the world so that people may come to know God through him (Van der Merwe 2006:176) and may become, with other believers, familia Dei¹² through the work of the Spirit (Van der Merwe 2006:165). This letter of John portrays Christian life as koinonia with the Trinitatis Dei (Van der Merwe 2006:182). One of the reasons for writing this letter is to urge the readers to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (4:1), because of the heresies that led to different spiritualities and, in the end, to schisms. One of the most dangerous heresies of

11 After searching for references on spirituality in 1 John, the author came to the same conclusion as Van der Merwe (2006:166): "Unfortunately, in the above search, nothing could be found on "spirituality" in 1 John."

12 "[In] the family terms of the New Testament, old and new structures come together. [...] What we see in the New Testament is not an egalitarian community that is being replaced by patriarchal structures; the brotherhood-like nature of the Christian fellowship is in the making, embedded in household structures." (Sandnes 1997:156.)

the first two centuries of Christianity was Gnosticism. The central teaching of Gnosticism was that spirit is entirely good and matter (the physical body) entirely evil. This teaching led to the denial of the Incarnation of Jesus by some believers in the Johannine community:

From the point of view of their “experience of fellowship with God”, we can conclude that the Elder wants to *warn* his adherents that this false teaching, the denial of Jesus’ Incarnation, would lead to an existence without experiencing fellowship with God and God’s Son (Van der Merwe 2006:169).

In the secular and consumerist context of today, many Christians still make a distinction between what is spiritual (belonging to religion or religious institutions and is practiced at specific days on specific times in specific places) and our everyday lives, especially in the working place. The question remains whether our spirituality has an influence on our everyday life of work and survival. Is there any recognition of spirituality in the industrial environment? Aspects of Gnostic teaching, as described in the first letter of John, is largely applicable to the South African society, as described in this paper, because it involves a context in which different dogmas and views of spirituality divide society.

The traditional African perspective¹³ can be compared to the Christians from Jewish background of this Johannine congregation who had professed their commitment to Jesus, but still felt a loyalty to Judaism, with the result that “[t]his section of the community may have found it difficult to accept the *messiahship* of Jesus, but its members would have given an exalted place to the Jewish law” (Smalley 1984:xxiii). In the same way, many Africans have professed their commitment to Jesus, but still feel a loyalty to the African Traditional Religious beliefs,¹⁴ which leads to syncretism. From a more post-modern worldview, some people in Africa act like the Hellenistic Christians who depend more on a dualistic (Gnostic) background, or Docetism (the belief in a “phantom” Christ). In Docetism, the physical body (matter) was considered evil, but not the breaking of God’s law (1 John 3:4); breaking his law was of no moral consequence. In this regard, the *koinonia* between God and the familia

13 Most of the workers who are relevant to this discussion are from Africa and most of them have grown up in the ATR environment.

14 Such African Traditional Religious beliefs include, for example, animism (personal manifestations of power/spirits), dynamism (impersonal power/spirits), ubuntu and ancestral worship (Nurnberger 2007:22).

Dei is broken because of the different views on the role and function of Christ.¹⁵ It is true that within both African Traditionalism and post-modern spirituality there are those who believe that true spirituality is only found in ubuntu or in the self and in enjoyment, regardless of the moral consequences for the broader society. In the First Letter of John, the theology is a “balanced understanding of the person of Jesus: that is, He is both one with man and (in some sense) one with God” (Smalley 1984:xxiii). It is the understanding from the Johannine letter that true spirituality is found in *koinonia* and that this *koinonia* between God and man, and man and fellow man, leads to joy.¹⁶ It is from this perspective that the spirituality of *koinonia* will be discussed, namely as relationship with God and relationship with one’s neighbour.

Koinonia (Christian fellowship) is not the sentimental or superficial attachment of a random collection of individuals, but the mutual relationship of those who remain “in Christ” and therefore belong to each other (1 John 3:23-24). Our relationship with God determines our relationship with each other;¹⁷ this is totally different from communalism as described in ubuntu. The intensity of *koinonia* (fellowship) is indicated when the author uses the phrase *κοινωνιαν εχητε* (“to have fellowship”) and not the verb *κοινωνειν* “to fellowship”. This expresses not only the fact of fellowship in Christ, but also the conscious enjoyment of this fellowship.

Koinonia is also a specific or qualified fellowship (*μεθ ημων*, “with us”). “Us” is further qualified, as it is not a fellowship involving “us” as Jews or Greeks, but as Christian believers (*και η κοινωνια δε η ημετερα μετα του πατρος και μετα του υιου αυτου ιησου χριστου* “and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ”). Therefore the fellowship to which we are called in 1 John is both Christian and apostolic. John’s use of the full title, “his Son Jesus Christ”, points to the human as well as the divine status of Jesus to counter the Docetism (Smalley 1984:12-13). A spirituality of *koinonia* is founded in Jesus Christ, who is both human and divine, and thus links the spiritual and physical, so that spirituality of *koinonia* can never be an outer-worldly experience which distances us from the reality of the world we are living in. Spirituality of *koinonia* can never separate us from the Trinitarian God

15 In ATR, Christ is not seen as the Redeemer, but as one of the ancestors (Beyers, J. & Mphahlele, D.N. 2009).

16 In 1:4, the noun “joy” (*χαρη*) is not a purpose in itself as in the case of the *ἵνα* clause in verse 3, but it depends on the establishment of fellowship, stated in verse 3 (Van der Merwe 2013:2).

17 Van der Merwe (2006:176): “Moreover, the knowledge of God, revealed through the Incarnation of Jesus (cf. John 17:3), is the common basis for both ideas of “fellowship” described in this verse, the human and divine.”

as revealed in the Bible. Since we have *koinonia* with him, we are part of the *missio Dei*, the saving acts of God, and therefore take part in his concern and love for his cosmos; we live in *koinonia* with it and all those living in it (Ps 24:1; John 3:16).

This Johannine letter urges the readers to test “the spirits” (1 John 4:1) in order to “measure the charismatic utterances of all so-called prophets by the norm of the sound Christian tradition, at the centre of which is the real incarnation of Christ (1 John 4:2-3)” (Ladd 1974:610). The incarnation of Christ has to do with his identification with this world¹⁸ as the Saviour of the world (1 John 4:14). If spirituality is then understood as “our relationship to the Absolute” (Waaiman 2002:1), we may conclude that Christian and/or Biblical spirituality only takes place in *koinonia* with God in Jesus, as the Saviour of this world, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The world that is described in 1 John could just as well have been our society, “addicted to the pursuit of the satisfaction of gross sensual pleasures (which John characterises as the ‘lust of the flesh’), to the materialistic view of life and values (‘the lust of the eyes’), and of self-glorification (‘the pride of life’) (1 John 2:16)” (Ladd 1974:612). Christ inaugurated a new order, since not everything in this world is from God (1 John 2:16). Christians are not to love this world (1 John 2:15), but this cannot mean a denial of love for the people of the world, since Christ has come to save this world (1 John 4:14) and in *koinonia* with Christ and the Father, as *familia Dei*, we participate in this saving act as part of the *missio Dei*: “And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:4-5.) There is also reference to the spirituality of the “antichristos” (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3) as the adversary of Christ, either opposing him or replacing him: “We may conclude that the spirit of the antichrist manifests itself everywhere in heretical, schismatic teachers.” (Ladd 1974:613.) Abiding in Christ may also mean remaining in true Christian tradition (1 John 2:24); in this regard, false teachings rupture the fellowship of God’s people, which also implies rupture with God and with Christ.

According to 1 John, spirituality of *koinonia* will be characterised by unconditional love for all people, in contrast with the “fearful love” of ubuntu. The verb “to love” (ἀγαπάω) occurs at least 28 times in 1 John. Ladd (1974:616) points thus out that “[t]he totality of Christian life is summed up in shunning love for the world (1 John 2:15), in loving God (1 John 2:16), and expressing this love for God by loving the

18 “The world in 1 John, as in the Gospel, is not creation, but the world of men, seen in their rebellion and hostility to God.” (Ladd 1974:612.)

brethren (1 John 4:20)”. This love and spirituality are not human achievements, but only the human response to the love of God (1 John 4:10-11, 19, 21).

As children of God we must remember that we are all sinners and responsible for what happens in society: 1 John 1:8 reminds us that “[if] we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”. We will only achieve perfection when we become like Christ in his presence (παρουσία) (1 John 3:2), but the Gospel of John (John 16:13) also reminds us “when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all truth”. Therefore, the Spirit does not give us any excuse to live as we wish, thinking only of ourselves and our own enjoyment; He guides us in truth to stand coram Deo at the cross. It is only coram Deo that we can deal with sin in an honest and liberating way.

4. A VIEW ON SIN

Van der Merwe (2013:4) describes spirituality as follows:

[Spirituality is] the lived experience through spiritual senses. It is only when people have encountered Jesus Christ physically or through the hearing of the Gospel and consequently perceive the otherness and identity of this person (to be the Son of God or the Word of life) that a new and different lived experience emerges. Christian spirituality is not simply to encounter an amorphous personal God, but represents more specifically the revelation of God, manifested in Jesus Christ (1:2, ἐφανερώθη) through the Spirit.

Such a new lived experience encounter is only possible when the Trinitatis Dei is met at the foot of the cross. It is in front of the cross that people are reminded of the reason for the Incarnation and the crucifixion of Jesus, namely sin. It is only via the cross that we can live in koinonia with God.

In a post-modern society in which people live according to their own values, and where consumerism and the individualistic self are prioritised, the concept of sin is vague and has lost much of its credibility in the discussion of spirituality. In many instances, especially in the labour market, relationships are not a priority; materialism and capitalism are prominent and contributing to the deterioration of families and societies. Spirituality is first and foremost relational – with the Trinitarian God or a Supreme Being, with fellow-humans and with creation. Spirituality as such is the opposite of sin, as expressed in the concept *incurvatus in se* (curved in on oneself or concerned only with oneself). It can be argued that Africa also regards the deterioration of relationships as a sin by viewing sin as “inherently the destruction of the group’s solidarity, so that a person sins, not against God, but against others” (Nurnberger 2007:44). In the context of post-modernism and post-colonialism,

some attention must be given to sin as *incurvatus in se*. In his book, *The gravity of sin*, Jenson (2006) provides an analysis of sin, which helps us to understand our different lifestyles in theological terms. A key concept in his analysis is *relationships*. Jenson (2006:5, 130-131) argues that the image of being “curved in on oneself” is the best paradigm for understanding sin relationally.

A spirituality of *koinonia* is founded in the Trinitarian relationship and will take a Christological starting point for its anthropology and its views on sin. A Christological anthropology is thoroughly relational: We exist only because we exist in (relation to) Jesus Christ. The *real man* is Jesus and we are in him. The actual man is the man of sin (1 John 1:8); we cannot exist independently first and then enter into a relationship with Christ, we only have real existence because of the *missio Dei*: Christ’s relationship with us as revealed on the cross (1 John 2:1-2). This reality cannot be done away with by sin; sin remains a secondary reality. We find hope in this insight that human reality is first and foremost constituted by Christ and not by sin. Man did not establish the covenant and it is not for him to dissolve it (Jenson 2006:161).

African anthropology and sin, in contrast, are not defined so much by one’s individual personality traits as by one’s location in communal hierarchy and the impact of this “status” on other spheres of people’s lives: A person is a person through persons (Nurnberger 2007:31). It is important, though, to recognise that this network of relationships is not limited to the human community, but also extends to the living dead.

Sin, though, can also be described in a potent, phenomenological manner, when the three primary forms of sin are identified as pride, sloth and falsehood. All three forms are important for our understanding of the influence of spirituality in society, since they “are characterized first and foremost by broken relationships in which people live for themselves rather than for God and others” (Jenson 2006:131). According to Jenson, it means that, in this approach, “one might recognize different forms of sin and yet still speak meaningfully of an over-arching structure in all human sinning”.

The following examples will illustrate how relations in the context of this article are central to our understanding of sin:

Firstly, many labourers (vocational workers) believe that the sin of *pride*, for instance, cannot have the same meaning in the different economic contexts. Different contexts are shaped by different factors: race and ethnicity, class, culture, geography et cetera (cf. Jenson 2006:130).

Secondly, the sin of *sloth* is illustrated in the refusal to live for God and for others, but this sin is contextualised as ignorance about God (e.g. the atheist); the philanthropist

who commits himself to an abstract cause and so escapes being with his neighbour; the downtrodden labourer who escapes conflict and allows his company to abuse him in the name of service; a big company who is very busy in developing the community – perhaps a homeless shelter – but nevertheless misses any real encounter with the people; or the mother who serves her family in a way that denies mutuality and their subjectivity and responsibility (cf. Jenson 2006:174-175).

Thirdly, the sin of *falsehood* involves our counter-movement against Christ's prophetic office. Wanting to present our own truth, we do not accept the truth of Christ. Job's friends did not say anything wrong, but presented a good doctrine. Yet, they were false, because they wanted to speak for God and they spoke in 'unhistorical' terms. While Job was in a despairing struggle for the knowledge of God, they presented timeless truths: "They seek to evade an encounter with the living God by constructing closed systems which, for all their orthodoxy, give place to neither God nor humanity in their freedom." (Jenson 2006:165.) They did not enter into a relationship with either God or Job, or with what was happening between God and Job.

The view of sin as it is presented above opens up a broad spectrum of concepts and relations, which are especially important for understanding spirituality in the South African (labour) context. The economic society must learn to be attentive to the way in which the practice of spirituality of workers and companies affects each other and the society (environment). There is a need in the South African society to look at spirituality and sin, not as moralists who want to induce guilt, but like doctors who want to promote healing and life. Healing and life are possible when attention is given to a spirituality of *koinonia*. When sin is understood as broken relations, its gravity will be recognised, not merely because it is morally wrong, but because it is harmful and dangerous, like an illness that destroys our bodies. To be saved from sin is to be healed from a relationship that is a danger to us and to others (Van Niekerk 2013:16). A private salvation is no salvation at all. Salvation from sin as *incurvatus in se* implies peace with God, society and the self, and this is only possible in a spirituality of *koinonia*, and then in *koinonia* as an experienced reality.

5. CONCLUSION

If spirituality is described as that which touches the core of human existence, namely "our relationship to the Absolute", whatever the definition of the latter may be, it is clear that spirituality is closely linked to self-understanding or identity. From the Biblical, post-modern and African spiritualities, as discussed, it can be seen that each one gives attention to the identity question, although from different perspectives or departures. It is clear from the above that one cannot answer the questions, *Who am*

I? and *What am I to do?* without first answering the following question: *Of which story or stories am I a part?*

Firstly, all three mentioned spiritualities give attention to the relations, but all with a different emphasis; this emphasis does not exclude the other mentioned dimensions. Biblical spirituality puts emphasis on the relation with the Trinitarian God and his new faith community, focused on the not-yet part of this new community (koinonia); post-modern spirituality puts the emphasis on the relation with the self and how the community can help me (individualism); and African spirituality puts the emphasis on the relation within the community of origin, as well as this community's efforts to keep peace with the living dead (ubuntu). It is in a spirituality of koinonia, though, where the different emphases are equally important, as is clear (for example) from the chiasmic structure in 1 John 1:3-7. It has been argued before that there can be no real koinonia with God without koinonia with my fellowman and vice versa, and there can be no koinonia without knowing and loving the self.

Secondly, the three mentioned spiritualities have developed from different contexts and find them now within the (one) context of South Africa. It is in this instance that spirituality of koinonia helps us to understand that we are all partners in the same context. As a society, we are all equally responsible for, and part of, the story within the context of South Africa and Africa. Africa's story is our story; it is in our DNA.

In the economic world, it is important that industries and employers engage in identifying and stating the spirituality that determine their own (company's) values as well as the (different) spiritualities within their workforce. Understanding the spiritualities and the values of the different spiritualities might enhance dialogue and relationships. Everyone must realise that although people's history and context influence their identity, it is not in the first place their context that determines what they do, but their spirituality. It needs to be pointed out that the history and context of Africa, namely colonialism and post-colonialism, the different worldviews and the newly found democracy are an inseparable part of the current unrest in South Africa. From this history, it can be asked whether the vocational (unschooled) labour market, mostly the disadvantaged from (South) Africa's history, "skipped" the modern era and went directly from a pre-modern to a post-modern era via technology. If this is true, it might have resulted in traditionalism on the one hand and "internal truth", relativism and enjoyment on the other hand, without access to the "tests" of modernity such as empirical evidence, efficiency, productivity and reliability. This may help to understand the anger and destruction that accompanies the strikes, since it is the only way to veto the power structures in the labour market.

If this is indeed the situation, we need to identify ways to bridge the gap. The first tangible way to do it is through education and development. The question is, though, education and development to what end? (cf. Bruwer 2001:19-38.) Education alone will not change a traditional society with its own education system, or the society of a post-modern world; what is needed is the acknowledgement that spirituality is the core influence in our lives. People need to be assisted in turning back to the core of their lives, namely their relationship with the Absolute. In a spirituality of *koinonia*, such as is proposed here, this Absolute is defined as the Trinitarian God as revealed in the Bible. It is only from *koinonia* with him that we can live in *koinonia* (as ἀγάπῳ, unconditional love) with our fellow man and the self, and it is only with this unconditional love (1 John 3:16) that the South African society will change. *Koinonia* with the Trinitarian God places us in relationship with God and society, and makes us accountable to him and the community. In a young post-modern society with a newly found democracy, experience shows that people are mostly looking out for themselves, because they are “curved in on themselves” and therefore, as argued above, guilty of sin against God and the community. The only way to deal with this sin is through *koinonia* with God and the community, in the presence of God, as He dealt with our sins at the cross.

Koinonia is living *coram Deo*, and therefore *koinonia* with society can only be understood in the context of the cross of Jesus Christ. It was at the cross that Jesus identified himself in totality with this world and society, but it was also at the cross that Jesus distanced himself in totality from this world and society. It was at the cross that all people were forgiven and the possibility of a new life was created. Spirituality of *koinonia* is living this new life *coram Deo* in a broken society, taking up our cross every day (Luke 9:23-24).

A spirituality of *koinonia* has the following implications for the Church who, according to the Bible, is the elected to participate in the *missio Dei*, building and rebuilding a society through a spirituality of *koinonia*. This might create a society with more social capital to address differences in a more constructive way. Firstly, the Church will have to confess its own brokenness and sin regarding *koinonia*, not only to God, but to the communities which were failed in so many instances, for example at Marikana and in the farming communities. Secondly, the Church needs to listen to the different communities in the presence of the Trinitarian God, discerning what God is doing. It then has to start participating in his actions, exposing others to the possibility of a life with Christ and trusting the Holy Spirit to do the rest.

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Beyond realism and non-realism: Religious language-games and reality

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to take up Wittgenstein's challenge "Not empiricism and yet realism" (1991:vi 23). Language deals with reality. But we are also aware of the importance of the context with its own rules for the use of language. In trying to do justice to both sides, theology and philosophy of religion have been going back and forth between realism and non-realism. Two recent appraisals of the Wittgensteinian approach in philosophy of religion by Labron and Burley suggest that there is a way to avoid this dynamic. After analysing Labron and Burley's suggestions and their own failures to live up to the task they set themselves, this article presents an interpretation of D.Z. Phillips's concept of 'ordinary realism' to help us to stay clear from the deadlock between realism and non-realism. Our different perspectives should be regarded as viewpoints within the same reality. Taken up in our many different and diverse language-games are our primitive dealings with reality.



The way we talk about God depends upon where we were born, the people we have met, and other circumstances. Someone may come to embrace the Christian faith as an adult free agent and he may have made it truly his own through a deliberate and independent act. However, if he is born in Lusaka or Pretoria, we cannot escape the suspicion that it all would have been very different had he been born in Riyadh or Beijing. This post-modern awareness of the importance of the context with its particular language and rules has haunted philosophy of religion and theology in the twentieth century. The awareness of the relativity of our beliefs led to what came to be known as the linguistic turn, and to approaches such as non-realism: what we regard as true or false depends upon the rules that we quite arbitrarily adhere to.

After the linguistic turn, however, in the twenty-first century there seems to be a turn towards realism. This trend is visible in the 'ontological turn' in anthropology, and in the movement of 'new sincerity' in arts, but also in philosophy or religion and so-called 'theological realism'.¹ The cogency of the argument for realism derives to a large extent from the desire to avoid the problems of non-realism, such as the incapability provide answers to challenges in our current globalized society. To avoid the relativism of post-modernity, philosophers and theologians alike turn towards realism. However understandable the desire to avoid relativism may be, this seems to gloss over and outright ignore the awareness of the relativity of our beliefs. People born in Lusaka generally look differently at the world from those born in Riyadh. Now, is realism the only alternative to non-realism?

In recent years two books exploring the Wittgensteinian approach in the philosophy of religion appeared, which suggest otherwise: *Wittgenstein and Theology* by the Canadian philosopher Tim Labron (2009) and *Contemplating Religious Forms of Life. Wittgenstein and D.Z. Phillips* by the British philosopher Mikel Burley (2012). Both Labron and Burley use Wittgenstein's metaphor of the fly-bottle.² Philosophers often are like flies in a fly-bottle: their questions lead to other questions and to yet other questions, and once they are stuck with these they cannot find their way out of the myriad of questions that confront them. Regarding the debate mentioned above, it does not help to simply return to realism after the demise of non-realism. We should acknowledge both that our language is relative to the context in which we find ourselves, and that our language deals with reality. Wittgenstein emphasized that, rather than going back and forth between realism and non-realism, the only

1 See for the 'ontological turn' in anthropology Pedersen (2012); for 'new sincerity' in arts Cohn & Russell (2012); for realism in philosophy Alston (2002); and for 'theological realism' Moore & Scott (2007).

2 See Labron (2009:42) & Burley (2012:3), referring to Wittgenstein (1958:309).

way out is to trace the way back, step by step. Wittgenstein (1991:vi 23) challenges us, saying: “Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing.” But how did so many philosophers of religion get trapped in the fly-bottle of realism and non-realism in the first place? The beginning of an answer we find in how Labron traces the history of our problem.

1 CHALCEDONIAN REALISM?

The temptation of realism originates according to Labron (2009:24-30) with the philosophical meditations of René Descartes. Descartes (1985:114-115, quoted by Labron 2009:24) noticed that in philosophy after all those centuries “there is still no point in it which is not disputed and hence doubtful.” So, how can we ever be sure about a connection between our ideas and the external world? How can we be sure that our language is about reality? However, by phrasing the difficulty thus, already the important decisions have been made: “the problematic Cartesian separation between our ideas and the physical world” as Labron (2009:33) phrases it. It is assumed that language has meaning apart from the world, and that one can compare language and the world as two separate entities.

John Locke (1985:104, quoted by Labron 2009:31) continues in the line of Descartes and argues that the world through empirical experiences makes impressions on our empty mind, which are subsequently expressed in language, stating: “There is nothing in the intellect that wasn’t previously in the senses.” Our language is a representation of the world. This is philosophical realism. George Berkeley uses the same Cartesian framework the other way around and argues that our mind creates the world, that what we call ‘the world’ is in fact a projection of our mind and language. Labron (2009:41) summarizes: “Berkeley reduces matter to ideas since the so-called physical object is actually an idea.” This is philosophical idealism or non-realism. However, both approaches, realism and non-realism, share the Cartesian assumption that we need to find a link between the separate entities of language and reality.

Labron (2009:33-39) continues to describe how Ludwig Wittgenstein in his early philosophy was attracted to realism and wondered how our language mirrors reality. Later on he realized that in doing so he turned language into an empty shell. He realized that language does not have any meaning apart from the lives of people, however tempting it may be to investigate the connection between language and reality apart from those messy, concrete lives.

Having followed this philosophical trace, Labron (2009:65-79) draws an interesting parallel to discussions within theology. Here the tempting question is not how to connect language to reality, but how to connect our human imagination to the

divine reality. Some theologians – Nestorians – opted for a solution similar to realism: God impresses himself on our empty imagination; others – Eutychians – went the other way arguing that all we assume to know about God in the end is just projection. At the Council of Chalcedon both Nestorians and Eutychians were declared to be heretic.³ They had attempted to answer the wrong question. They should not have separated God and man in the first place. God and man are neither separable nor mixed, as is stated in the famous Christological dogma of Chalcedon. And, according to Labron (2009:68&115), “Wittgenstein’s philosophy is analogical [...] to Chalcedonian Christology,” both object to the quest for connections between respectively ideas and the external world, and the human and the divine. Labron (2009:95) summarizes: “the language-games mediate our contact with reality as Christ mediates our contact with God.” However, in religion a dogma may simply be announced, but in philosophical or theological reflection the work still needs to be done.

Labron attacks the frame of realism versus non-realism, but, in fact, by doing so he only reaffirms its hold. As George Lakoff (2004:3-5) famously showed in his *Don’t Think of an Elephant!* once you get your opponent to attack your position in your terms, you have already won. By writing a book urging us to resist the debate between realism and non-realism – however noble this cause indeed is – Labron in fact makes it harder to resist it: even when you state that the concepts are confused, you confirm that they have meaning. Labron leaves us with the puzzle *how* to resist the entire frame of realism versus non-realism. Labron fails to provide an answer, and there are even indications that he himself – despite his own warnings – is separating language and reality.

When Labron (2009:63) hints at how he would account for the ordinary realism of the Wittgensteinian approach in the philosophy of religion, he states that: “the language-game of Christianity is tied directly to the language-games of death, birth, marriage, sin, etc.” This statement is problematic in two important ways: first, there is not one language-game of Christianity, but there are many different language-games, which could be called ‘Christian’. Wittgenstein did not intend that ‘language-game’ would become a technical term – in fact, part of his reason to introduce it was to cut through our technical philosophical jargon. It is clear though that he did not intend it to be used for an entity as big and complex as Christianity. To talk about language-games makes sense when we can assume that they refer to limited, specific and to some extent separate uses of language with their own distinctive rules. So we should not talk about ‘the Christian language-game’ or ‘the religious language-

³ See Labron (2009:76-77).

game, but we should talk for example about the language-games of praying, vocation or reincarnation.⁴

Second, religious language-games do not first of all relate to the *language-games of death, birth etc.*, but to the reality of death, birth, etc. The way Labron is phrasing it suggests that there is a realm of language-games separate from reality. Our language-games, however, are embedded in reality; they deal with reality, not just with other language-games. By his historical analysis Labron has shown us that to avoid the philosophical fly-bottle of going back and forth between realism and non-realism we need to avoid the Cartesian separation of language and reality altogether. By relating religious language-games only to other language-games, he failed this task himself. Before we investigate whether another approach is possible, let us look at Burley's analysis of the fly-bottle of realism and non-realism in which philosophers and theologians have trapped themselves.

2. LOGICALLY PRIOR TO REALISM?

Burley analyses both the works of Wittgenstein himself and D.Z. Phillips who most famously applied Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy of religion. Burley (2012:4) notes that many philosophers try to fit Wittgenstein and D.Z. Phillips into the debate between realism and non-realism within the philosophy of religion. Burley (2012:91) argues against "the strategy of framing Phillips' position as an instance of non-realism." Wittgenstein and Phillips stress that we should pay attention to the actual ordinary use of language. Instead of discussing language in general, philosophers should contemplate how language plays a role in ordinary contexts.

Burley (2012:7) states: "the sorts of questions around which Wittgensteinian investigations are oriented are logically prior to any question concerning the reality or unreality of the objects of religious beliefs. What both Wittgenstein and Phillips are chiefly interested in are the *meanings* of these beliefs."⁵ They investigate the meaning of language about God by analysing how the concept of 'God' is used in different contexts. Questions like 'Does God exist?' or 'Does a metaphysically real God exist?' are meaningless without their context in day-to-day lives in Lusaka or Riyadh or wherever you may find yourself. Therefore Wittgenstein and Phillips want "to examine how language is used within religious contexts" before they deal with the

4 This is a mistake that is often made in the literature about the Wittgensteinian approach. For example Oppy & Trakakis (2007:118) even mix talking about "religious beliefs as forming distinctive 'language games'" and "belief as a distinctive language game" on one single page.

5 See as well Burley (2012:167-169).

existence of God, says Burley (2012:86). Wittgenstein and Phillips refuse to answer the question whether God really exists, and are therefore labelled automatically as non-realists.

Burley rightfully defends the Wittgensteinian approach against being framed in terms of the debate between realism and non-realism. However, by Burley's repeated claim that the philosophical investigations of Wittgenstein and Phillips are *logically prior*, he is suggesting that after listening to Wittgenstein and Phillips, we *can* in a meaningful way debate whether a metaphysically real God exists. Then we would be back within the frame of realism versus non-realism again, which Burley himself has urged us to avoid.

Now, D.Z. Phillips himself often used the phrase "logically prior" as well, but in a slightly different way. Phillips (2001:294) for example stated that his inquiries were "logically prior to particular assertions of belief or non-belief." Here Phillips is talking about assertions of belief and non-belief, that is: in ordinary every-day life – which is something completely different from philosophical realism and non-realism. Contrary to what Burley is suggesting, Phillips holds that both philosophical realism and non-realism are confused and will never make sense even after countless Wittgensteinian investigations have taken place.

Burley discusses an example of an instance where according to him Phillips himself flies into the fly-bottle of realism and non-realism. Phillips points out some logical problems concerning the concept of 'reincarnation'. Burley notes that in our ordinary world many millions of people believe in reincarnation and they must have some criteria to deal with these logical problems.⁶ Phillips, Burley argues, should concentrate on those practices rather than in the abstract pointing out philosophical problems with reincarnation.

However, Burley (2012:114) is making the same mistake here, that he – quite correctly – ascribes to Phillips, when he refers to "[c]ultures in which a belief in reincarnation is prevalent." It is not the case that reincarnation does not exist, but neither is it the case that those many millions of people Burley refers to, believe that reincarnation does exist. These millions of people do not hold a belief in reincarnation, they live in a world with reincarnation – and that is something different. Look for example at the Bollywood-movie *Agneepath* in which a son is searching for the approval by his mother for all his life.⁷ Just before his death his mother tells him: "I will ask the

6 See Burley (2012:113-115).

7 Malhotra (2012).

Lord to be your mother again in the next life.” These two people live in a world with reincarnation.⁸

Both Labron and Burley convincingly argue that all language is dependent upon the lives of the people speaking that language. Statements are not true or false independent of these lives, as philosophical realists presuppose. We need to avoid questions such as whether God or reincarnation exist, but investigate what people mean when they use these concepts. On the other hand, in their language people deal with an external reality, contra the ideas of non-realists. Avoiding the Cartesian separation of language and reality does not imply doing away with reality, on the contrary: in our religious language-games we are dealing with reality. How can we avoid going back and forth between realism and non-realism, recognizing both our awareness of the importance of the context with its own language and rules, and the fact that in our language we are dealing with reality? Labron and Burley point in the right direction, but fail to come up with an answer. Taking our lead from D.Z. Phillips’s idea of ‘ordinary realism’, however, we will argue that a way out of the fly-bottle of realism and non-realism is possible.

3. VIEWPOINTS IN THE SAME REALITY

Many of his colleagues reckon that D.Z. Phillips “never quite succeeds in being a realist”, as philosopher Andrew Moore (2003:91) puts it.⁹ On the other hand Phillips (2000b:36) explicitly denies being a non-realist: “I am not propounding any form of non-realism.” He (1999:76) holds that “[t]he real need, however, is to cut through the realism/nonrealism debate. We need to appreciate that our philosophical choice is not between realism and a mere plumping for some perspective.”¹⁰ And then, according to Phillips (2000b:36), “[a]fter their demise, we simply have ordinary realism.” Now, can we make sense of Phillips’s claim to ‘ordinary realism’ in philosophy of religion, and is this a viable alternative to both non-realism and realism in philosophy and theology?

I take my lead here from what Phillips (2001:322) wrote referring to an article by Winch: “I take Winch’s point that moral differences, where the conceptual gap between them is great, are not perspectives on a *common* reality. I think it is rather

8 Although I personally would not say something like this, I think I can understand it. I can admire this statement, and I think I take mother and son serious in doing so – without answering the question whether reincarnation does or does not exist in reality.

9 See for some other recent accusations that Phillips is a non-realist: Byrne (2003: 8); Oppy & Trakakis (2007:106); and Hilberg (2009:83).

10 See as well Labron (2009:23&52) & Burley (2012:4&87).

different if one says they are viewpoints *in* the same reality, by which I mean that they cut across and impinge on each other in countless ways in the hubbub of voices in our own and other cultures.” This interpretation of language-games differs from that of other interpreters of Wittgenstein, who regard language-games as presupposing a picture of reality – either conventional or realistic.¹¹ Phillips holds that language-games express viewpoints within one and the same real reality, shared by all speakers of language, religious and non-religious. Language-games are not based on particular descriptions of reality, but are viewpoints within a given reality. Taking this point of departure, which was never further elaborated by Phillips himself, I will now attempt to show how this may provide a perspective that avoids the problematic dynamic of realism and non-realism that Labron and Burley detected.

There are many different language-games; someone who is born in Lusaka learns to participate in different language-games than someone who is born in Riyadh. The language-games themselves are not true or false; rather, the rules of the language-game determine what we call true and false. It is our human agreement that determines when something should be called true and when false. However, truth can still correspond to what we usually think of as making it correct to say ‘is true’ of a statement, that is: the statement corresponds to the way things are in reality. Recognizing the importance of language-games, rules and human agreement does not exclude that. To show this, let me first use actual games as example.

In soccer there are rules for when something is really a goal: the ball should be pushed over the line of the goal, not by hand, not from an offside position, etc. Humans have agreed that those are the rules. This does not mean that it is human agreement that decides whether team A or team B has scored a goal. Humans have agreed on the rules, but the ball should be across the line in reality. Whether it is or not, is something we check in the world, not something we decide upon. In the rules that humans have agreed upon it is determined which aspect of reality is relevant in this respect. When we play indoor soccer, a basketball ring may be above the playing field. Accidentally the ball may go through this ring. In soccer this is irrelevant. In basketball you would look closely to see whether or not the ball really went through the ring, in a game of soccer that does not matter. Everyone may agree that the football really did go through the ring, but that is irrelevant. Human agreement made up the rules for what is truly a goal in soccer, but that does not mean that

11 See Ellenbogen (2003) who argues that Wittgenstein’s conception of truth implies that what we call ‘true’ is based upon our human conventions and cannot transcend our current capacity for knowledge; and Brümmer (2006) who argues that language-games are constituted by tacit presuppositions about reality.

reality is out of the picture – far from it: in the rules we have decided, agreed upon, what aspects of reality are important to consider.

Just like in ordinary games, in language-games the rules of the language-games are made up by human beings, but in these rules we refer to reality. In the rules of the language-game it is decided which part of reality is relevant to us and in what way. For someone who considers a dangerous journey, it may be important whether or not a chicken that has been administered a sacramental poison survives.¹² I would be able to see whether the chicken really does or does not survive, but to me that would not be relevant. To this man who participates in the language-game of consulting an oracle, it is. For me the survival of the chicken would be just like the ball going through the basketball ring during indoor soccer: it really happened, but it does not matter.

Human agreement in our different language-games settled the rules for what in reality is important. This may be something very different from one language-game to the next, just like the rules for what is really a goal differ from soccer to basketball. This does not mean that all these language-games are isolated islands. They do bear on each other. And we may gain insights from people who play different language-games than we do. For me it would be hard to see how the chicken's survival was relevant, but perhaps in this man's practice the hazard of our personal decisions is better accounted for than in my own. Looking at the language-games of others may enrich our understanding of the world we share.

Our language-games determine how we live within reality, what aspects of reality are important to us. This is not denying the existence of truth in the sense of 'that what is in accordance with reality.' Understanding our language-games with 'believe' would imply finding out the rules for what is important in reality within these language-games. This interpretation of language-games avoids the Cartesian separation of language and reality, without doing away with reality: in our language-games we are dealing with reality. The language-game determines which aspect of reality is important, where we bump into reality. Now, do we bump into reality in our religious language-games as well? This seems to be a slightly different case.

4. BUMPING INTO REALITY

What do we look for in reality when we are participating in religious language-games? Where might we bump into reality in religion? Let us take three students who try to convince their churches of their vocation to become a minister: one tells

¹² Example adapted from Evans-Pritchard (1937).

the committee that he wanted to study law, but when he was turned down by law school again and again, he realized that God was telling him to follow this different path; the second one had been told by people that he should become a minister for many years now; and the third had always felt such a strong inner conviction that he should become a minister that he could not be swayed by anyone not to go on this path. Three very different stories, but all of these students have been contemplating 'outside' confirmation, they have bumped into reality: either by being rejected at law school, by what people were telling, or by the conviction that the third one found in his own heart. The way you bump into reality and the way you look for 'outside' confirmation may be different in religion from what it is in the empirical sciences, but this does not mean that it is not there. Being able to bump into reality is just as much part of the concept of 'reality' in religion as it is of the concept of 'reality' in many other areas.

Now imagine that you know you can say 'I am called' according to the rules of the language-game in which you participate, but you still do not know whether you should actually say that you are called. Is there somewhere in reality where you can look? In a way there is, in a way there is not. Let me illustrate this by using an example from outside religion.

Imagine someone asks you to forgive him. You consider the possibilities. You are aware that you can say you forgive him, or you can say that he has hurt you too much so at the moment you cannot forgive him. Both statements would be regarded as perfectly normal. They both fit the circumstances; they both fit your personality. Now, what do you say? Whatever you say will from then on be part of who you are. It is both a discovery about what kind of person you are, and a decision about what kind of person you want to be. I think it makes sense to say that you often feel what you must say, whether you can forgive him or not.

But this is not the end of it. Suppose you say that you forgive him, because you feel that way and you genuinely intend to forgive him. Nonetheless, later on you discover that you cannot treat him as you did before the whole affair. You don't want to, but you see him differently. In many language-games with the concept forgiveness, however, you should not do this. You have only really forgiven someone if the way you treat him is no longer related to the hurtful event. You knew this, you were aware of this part of the rules of this language-game. You thought and you felt that you could forgive him, but apparently you cannot. In the rules of the language-game it is determined that for forgiveness to be real, you must look at the way you treat someone afterwards. You felt you could and should forgive, but later on you found out that you could not. The rules of the language-game tell you what part of reality is relevant. You knew where to look, and your initial feeling that you could

forgive was kind of an educated guess, but the future – the future reality – showed something else.

In this example we see the important difference between knowing what could be said meaningfully in a specific situation, and knowing what you should say there and then, the difference between knowing what could be true and saying what is true to yourself, hoping and anticipating that it is the truth.¹³ You knew the criteria of the language-game in which you were involved. You chose what you genuinely thought was true, but later on reality showed you were wrong. You bumped into reality.

5. RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE-GAMES AND REALITY

Now, on this account of language-games and reality, what do our language-games show about reality? As said in the example of reincarnation above, our language-game with reincarnation shows that reality is such that the concept of reincarnation is usable, and actually being used. Does this give us any factual knowledge about the world? No, our language games are not making factual statements about the world, but are part of our living in the world. Our language-games are not based on statements about the world. The agreement of which our language-games are an expression is not an agreement in opinions, but in form of life, as Wittgenstein (1958:241) put it. Elsewhere Wittgenstein (1972:204) states that our acting lies at the bottom of our language-games.

Taking our lead from Phillips's statement that our language-games express viewpoints in the same reality, gives a new meaning to his earlier remarks on our initial reactions to the world which he calls 'primitive reactions' – using a term borrowed from Wittgenstein. Our primitive reactions are taken up in our language-games. For example in his article 'On Really Believing' Phillips (1993:39) states:

“Unless we agreed in our colour reactions, we would not know what it means to entertain beliefs about colours changing, fading or being renewed. But our reactions are what we do. They are not consequences of our beliefs. Without agreement in reactions there would be nothing to have beliefs about.”

13 In Phillips's work since 1996, following Rush Rhees and Peter Winch, the difference between knowing what *could* be said meaningfully in a specific situation, and knowing what you *should* say there and then, has become important. See for example Phillips (2000a).

This can be done in many different ways. Take the example of colours: in our language-games we distinguish between blue and black, whereas the ancient Greeks did not bother to do so. They will have reacted differently to the colour of the day sky and the night sky, but these different reactions did not result in different concepts. The other way around, we use a single concept of 'romantic love' to cover as different aspects as sexual attraction, producing offspring and being soul mates, whereas for the ancient Greeks these three were completely separate. To philosophically elucidate a language game we need to uncover which primitive reactions are taken up into it.¹⁴ As Phillips (1993:86) states: "The concepts are themselves rooted in these common reactions and responses."

Of course the way in which a philosopher describes primitive reaction, betrays the philosopher's own language-games in which these primitive reactions are taken up. As long as we are willing to acknowledge that, it does not matter, since the goal is no longer disinterested description, but understanding. Unlike in the Kantian transcendental method where a philosopher tries to infer from our current experience what the world must be like, the Wittgensteinian philosopher tries to infer which primitive reactions, which of our primitive dealings in reality are taken up in our language-games. The interest in primitive reactions is not because they would be foundational to our language-games, but because they may elucidate their sense to reach understanding. As Cora Diamond (2005:108) says about examining simpler language-games: "Wittgenstein's methodology often involves the examining of language-games simpler than ours, not because they reveal an essence, but because they can help us to avoid the moves that lead us into philosophical difficulties when we think about our own modes of thought."

The importance of investigating primitive reactions in philosophy of religion may open new ways to engage in collective enterprises together with other sciences, such as for example displayed in the Dutch primatologist and ethologist Frans de Waal's *The Bonobo and the Atheist: In Search of Humanism among the Primates* (2013). Where would we look in the lives of primates to see whether they display for example primitive reactions that are taken up in our language-game of vocation? As philosophers of religion we would not be as interested in the actual outcome of this research, as we are in imagining the shape such a research would take. We would not be investigating primitive reactions to find the foundations of our language-

14 As I mentioned in footnote 8 above I can understand the mother using the language-game of reincarnation in the above mentioned movie *Agneepath* as far as I recognize the primitive reactions that are taken up into it, in this case for example the maternal love and the need to express this on a scale beyond this life.

games, but to contemplate and elucidate the nature of our language-games by asking ourselves what aspects in primates would interest us to see for example something taken up in our language-game of vocation. Such questions may help to find a way in which the sciences, philosophy of religion and theology together can form an epistemic community attempting to understand the one reality in which we live, despite all our different viewpoints within that reality.¹⁵ This would provide a way to avoid questions such as whether God or reincarnation exist that Burley showed to be meaningless, and to investigate what people mean when they use these concepts.

CONCLUSION

Trying to do justice to either our awareness of the importance of the context with its own language and rules, or the fact that in our language we are dealing with reality, philosophies of religion and theology have been going back and forth between realism and non-realism. Labron and Burley have suggested that the Wittgensteinian approach may provide a way out of this metaphorical fly-bottle. Avoiding their failures to live up to this challenge I presented an interpretation of D.Z. Phillips's concept of ordinary realism that can help us to stay clear from the deadlock between realism and non-realism. Our different perspectives are viewpoints in the same reality. In the way I interpreted this suggestion it allows us to acknowledge both that our language is relative to the context in which we find ourselves, and that our language deals with reality. We can elucidate these different and diverse dealings with reality by investigating our primitive reactions or primitive dealings with reality, which are taken up, into our language-games. Scott and Moore (1997:418) conclude their assessment of Phillips's work by quoting Wittgenstein (1991:vi 23) saying "Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing", adding that: "It is a thing that awaits adequate treatment by Wittgensteinians in the philosophy of religion." I hope to have done so in this article.

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¹⁵ See Buitendag (2013).

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*Getting texts to talk. A critical analysis of attempts
at eliciting contemporary messages from ancient
holy books as exercises in religious communication¹*

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ABSTRACT

Religious Communication as academic discipline analyses the ways in which the spiritual commitments of humanity find expression in and through communicative acts. Diverse and multi-disciplinary as this discipline is, one of the aspects Religious Communication studies, is the problematic religiously inclined people experience in eliciting a meaningful message, relevant to modern times, from holy texts (such as the Bible) that stem from ancient times, dissimilar cultures, and far-removed communicative contexts. Within Christianity such problematic have, *inter alia*, given rise in the modern era to exegesis as an expert enterprise with which to practice the science and art of both understanding the texts within their ancient contexts and eliciting valid messages from them for current times. In such endeavours, Communication and Theology mix in a unique way as an expression of Religious Communication. In this contribution, the author builds forth on previous publications in the fields of Religious Communication and of Exegesis, to discuss here some major modern attempts in this regard. The pre-modern allegorical use of biblical texts were through the rise of historical consciousness, as part of the Enlightenment, replaced by historical-critical interpretations of the holy texts, which then dominated the exegetical scene for about two centuries. During the past half-century, however, different a-historical methods have been developed. In this contribution, the *communicative intent* with each of these exegetical methodologies are described and compared critically.

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1. GENERAL CROSS-DISCIPLINARY ORIENTATION: THE IMPOSSIBLE AND THE POSSIBLE OF “GOD TALK” IN OUR TIME

Talk of God, the domain of Theology, has in Western cultural streams of the past two millennia always found itself between the dual poles of the impossibility of speaking of God and the impossibility of not speaking of God. The latter has been acknowledged in refined theological reflection as being a function of the category of revelation (cf. Berkhof 2007:43-115) as divine self-disclosure to humanity, without which all talk of God would, for religiously inclined people, become speculative. This insight is, to be sure, itself a confession of faith, namely of the kind that constitutes a tipping point between Theology and the approach of the Humanities or Social Sciences, that is, within the broadly accepted scholarly protocols of the Humanities in which such a confession is impossible to employ². Within the Humanities, “God talk” (a now popular expression, seen in the work of Allen 2002 and others) does not require a sense, a confession or a spiritual orientation on the existence of God (and all the implications that that would imply) or not – although the implicit inclination is towards the latter. The Humanities do not consider *God*. Religious humanity, the psychological and social effects of religiosity and the philosophical implications around ideas about divinity however all do lie within the ambit of such non-theological intellectual consideration and social-scientific investigation. No kind of religious orientation is required when godliness is considered scientifically within the Humanities.

Of course, the way in which the Humanities consider religiosity or spirituality is not without its own general orientations, which do colour in various ways what is “seen” (studied / considered) and what is not. That is a phenomenon inherent to all intellectual inquiry. This has in broad terms been demonstrated by the philosophy of science, with Thomas Kuhn’s work (1962) on paradigms of understanding as the most influential work in this regard.

2 Religiously confessional Humanities scholarship is of course possible – cf. e.g. Bratt & Wells 2001. Although I would hold (on the grounds indicated in Lombaard & Froneman 2006:151-158) such e.g. “Christian scholarship” to be intellectually viable and legitimate, even commendable in the extent that that its proponents spell out at least some of their underlying assumptions more clearly than is often the case in the Humanities, or other broad fields of scholarship, I find myself more at home with the more generally-accepted non-/a-religious models of Humanities scholarship, because of the often more daring, more open and more critical atmosphere of intellectual engagement one encounters in such spheres.

When these two approaches of Theology and the Humanities meet, much creativity can be found³. To limit ourselves within the Humanities to the specific field of Communications, ample examples are to be found of attempts at disciplinary intersection with Theology. These include three broad approaches:

- From one side, to attempt to produce theologies of (aspects of) communication (cf. e.g. Mugridge & Gannon 2008);
- From the other side, to come to communicative insights on (aspects of) theology (cf. e.g. Attfield 2001); and
- In amalgamation: to combine these two disciplines formally within the scholarly field of Religious Communication (cf. Lombaard 2006:141-150, Lombaard & Froneman 2006:151-158 for an overview).

In this contribution, a very small section of this broad intersection (cf. Du Toit 1992:178-192) is taken into consideration. The intended new contribution made here is namely to explore from the side of Communication Science the communicative intent of one relatively small but highly influential aspect of the theological enterprise, namely *exegesis – the methodologically refined exploration of the meaning of biblical texts* (for other definitions of exegesis, cf. i.a. Brown 2007:23-26, Porter & Clarke 1997:4-21). This is done here with the purpose to form an orientation from which to evaluate other, broader-scale projects at eliciting messages from ancient Scriptures, namely Scriptural Reasoning⁴, Biblical Reasoning⁵ and Textual Reasoning⁶, as part of an on-going research trajectory on evaluating the way in which the Bible is employed within latter-day expressions of spirituality (cf. e.g. Lombaard 2008a:263-283 / 2012a:139-169; for a broader exposition of the underlying model of Biblical Spirituality at work here, cf. Lombaard 2008b:139-153 / 2012a:111-137; 2012b:933-934).

3 The inherent tensions should not be forgotten, though. Combining disciplines or interpreting and evaluating the one from the perspective of the other hold many problems of misunderstanding. The distinct scholarly protocols in different academic disciplines, the at times different world views from which are foundationally departed, and the false confidence created by specialisation in one discipline that the other could easily be mastered with equal depth and nuance, are just three examples of this.

4 Cf. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/ssr>, www.scripturalreasoning.com, www.scripturalreasoning.org.

5 Cf. <http://biblerevival.com/blog/tag/biblical-reasoning>; Webster 2008:733-751.

6 Cf. www.bu.edu/mzank/STR/general.html, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/tr/>, Ochs & Levene 2002.

Within deliberations on exegesis, Communication Theory has indeed been employed (e.g. Brown 2007). However, this most often does not go beyond the most basic of communication models – the linear “Sender – Message – Receiver” schema (cf. e.g. Narula 2006:16), which is intellectually more indebted to Aristotle (cf. Narula 2006:25) than to modern Communications Theory⁷. In an interesting intra-disciplinary development within Exegesis, this model has come to be used not only to portray the process of communication of an ancient text in its context, but also to summarise briefly the history of modern exegesis, thus entrenching this basic model’s use within the discipline. Earlier exegetical enterprises that sought to retrieve meaning from within the mind of the ancient author, are namely presented as Sender-oriented, whereas text-analytical exegesis was regarded as Message-focussed, and reception history / reader response oriented interpretations were presented as the most candid, acknowledging as they do that the Receiver, the modern reader of the text, in reality determines its meaning (Lategan 1984; cf. Van der Merwe 1995:47-51). However, to end the use of Communication Theory there is to leave the cross-disciplinary interaction, as it relates to exegesis, underexplored⁸. Therefore, in order to use this most basic of Communication models in a slightly more complex, more nuanced way, the focus here will be on communicative intent.

The latter will be undertaken below with respect to exegetical methodology. Over the centuries, an array of exegetical methods have namely emerged, each dominant within a certain era and social circle. Below, each of the methodologies is briefly described, and then an analysis is offered: *what is it about the ancient text that the methodology seeks to communicate?* Exegesis, namely, cannot tell us everything about a text: the methodology followed, and at times purposely chosen, inadvertently opens the exegete’s eyes to certain aspects of the text under investigation, yet at the same time blinds the exegete to other aspects of that same text (cf. Lombaard 2013). Only certain aspects of the dynamics of an ancient biblical text can be conveyed by an exegetical study. As with modern Bible translations, “elke vertaling is ’n vertelling” (Lombaard 2002:754-765) – each translation is a narration. Similarly, with exegesis: each attempt at conveying the meaning of an ancient text tells a story, namely of

7 On the complexity of modern Communication Theories, cf. Craig 1999:119-161 / 2007:63-98.

8 Not surprisingly, in e.g. the Missiology and related sections of the encyclopaedia of theological disciplines, Communication Theory comes into play differently, e.g. with respect to the Mass Media (e.g. Schultze 2000) and Intercultural Communications (e.g. Segami 2008). Vanhoozer in his 1998 and other works combines Communication Theory with an explicit seeking of theological meaning – a project that deserves an analytical-evaluative study of its own.

certain aspects of the ancient text under consideration. Not everything can be said of a classic text (and this is true of all good texts in the “Western canon” of Bloom 1994). Below, then, what an exegetical method can say, the communicative intent of that method, is explored.

2. THE “US / THEN” DIVIDE OF EXEGESIS

The history of exegetical methodology (cf. e.g. Sæbø 1996; Kraus 1982; thematically: Soulen & Soulen 2001) is for the main part testimony to the difficulty of coming to terms with classic texts held to have religious authority. These are therefore, in that sense (thus leaving aside here the difficulties associated with inspiration theories, ideas on inerrancy, and the like), holy texts, in which a living deity is believed to have addressed people in the past, and with which the deity continues to do so with the faithful, throughout the centuries, up to this day.

The single most pivotal element that divides exegetical methods into two groups, is the importance accorded history. Since before the identification by Lessing (1797 [1777]:13) of “der garstig breite Graben” between the ancient world/s in which the text originated and the modern world/s of the interpreters, history has become a kind of Midas touch (Otto 2004:14) for exegetes. Once the eyes are opened to the importance of history (cf. Le Roux 1993:35-63) – that is, *inter alia*: that the ancient setting (*Sitz im Leben*, as the term popularised by Gunkel 1913:33) is key to come to the fullest possible understanding of the text – it becomes difficult to look at the biblical texts differently. However, both prior to the advent of historical-critical exegetical methods, and again since the 1970s with the scholarly search for non- or a-historical interpretative methods, history was not the primary framework for understanding the Bible. Rather, with the older allegorical interpretations of the Bible texts and again, in different ways, with the newer text-immanent readings (i.e. narratological, structuralist, semiotic, genitive-theological⁹, socio-scientific and, most recently, mystagogical approaches) of prime importance is the meaning for *me* or *us*.

This distinction around history and meaning becomes something of a loose organising principle below: it will be clear that what the exegetical method seeks to communicate about the ancient text lies always on one side or the other of this “us / then” (or “me / then”) divide. To be clear, the recurring criticism of the historical-critical methods of exegesis, that it destroys meaning for the present, is based on misconceptions, on the “politics” of interpretation between church and academia, on the complexities of the task of understanding (hermeneutics), and at times, simply

9 I understand under this category also the reader-response kind of theories.

on intellectual laziness. On the other hand, the claim of the alternative, a- or non-historical methods that they would render more clearly meaning for the present is itself misplaced (cf. Lombaard 2008c:49-62). The matter is thus more complex than a naïve either-or set of alternatives would imply. However, these complexities are for the moment set aside, in order to come to grips with the task at hand: to indicate what the communicative intent is with these methods.

3. THE COMMUNICATIVE INTENT OF EXEGETICAL METHODS

Five representative exegetical approaches will in this section be briefly described, with the communicative intent of each approach then indicated. These methodologies are:

- allegory;
- historical-critical methodologies;
- text-immanent methodologies;
- genitive-theological hermeneutics;
- mystagogical appropriation.

Naturally, more exegetical approaches are to be found, and most of these approaches consist of a variety of methodologies, closer or loosely related. However, by concentrating on just these five, the most important sense of the argument here will have been conveyed.

3.1 Making (taking) meaning for me 1: *Pre-modern allegory of biblical texts*

The allegorical way of making meaning from the biblical text, the more popular of the two ancient ways of interpretation over against the more literal Antiochene school of reading the Bible¹⁰, was couched in a series of interpretative moves that came down to “more imposition than exposition” of meaning (Richardson 2007:14; cf. Zuck 1984:37). The truest meaning of a text was regarded to lie behind the words, rather than in the words, so that the words are mere signs or symbols of deeper, holier meaning. It is in the latter that the divine can be heard. The divine thus speaks in a kind of mystic oracle, which requires deciphering in order to find the meaning God intended for the time of the interpreter. Not without continued influence, developments from this early impetus include the later “fourfold sense” of Scripture and some modern charismatic Bible interpretations. It is also precisely

¹⁰ Behind this lies the Platonic-Aristotelian divide on either an idealist or a realist world-view.

this way of understanding the Bible that lies behind literary sensations in our time such as the novel *The Da Vinci Code* (Brown 2003; cf. Lombaard 2009:285-298; in lighter vein, cf. Eaton 2006 & Kombuis 2003), and is clearly present in the millennial expectations when especially the New Testament book of Revelations is read as if it secretly “predicts” important events in our time, such as immanent cataclysm, the end of the world, or such outcomes of salvation history (cf. Vojtíšek et al. 2013).

Though the “true” meaning accorded a text, or even just a word, can be wildly speculative, there is always a controlling background, namely in the theological framework of the interpreter. However, the understanding is that the biblical text *conveys* these insights, rather than that they are imposed, with the text interpreter’s context taking primacy over the ancient context/s in which the text came into existence.

The *communicative intent* of this form of exegesis is thus to unearth the “true” meaning, what God seeks to convey, but which is couched in symbolic mystery within the holy text. It is, in this understanding, only through enlightenment that this meaning can be obtained from the text. Such enlightenment comes from on high. In a strangely circular way of thinking, never acknowledged, it is therefore God who unveils the meaning of the holy text that God had self hidden there. Though the message from God is present in the text, it is not easy to detect; special, holy guidance is required. Only in this way it is the word of God to be had from the Word of God. The implicit communicative intent of scriptural interpretation is thus to hear the holy will for the people. These people are however not the ancient audience/s intended by the original author, but the latter-day reader/s of the text or the audience addressed by the practitioner of allegoric exegesis. The *us* of the addressed group, the *me* of the interpreter of the identified texts read allegorically, are the primary role players in this communicative process.

3.2 Mining meaning for the modern(ist) mind: *Historical-critical exegetical methods*

Though often maligned by an older generation of confessionally inclined theologians, the historical-critical methodologies of reading the Bible has been acknowledged in more recent years as having indeed had both apologetic intentions and continued confessional value (cf. e.g. Fitzmyer 2008). This was namely a set of methods developed in order to deal with the rise in historical consciousness that went along with the Enlightenment. This set includes, as just the most prominent exegetical approaches:

- Textual criticism, in which an agreed-upon standard text (or text tradition) of either the Old or New Testaments are restored, as far as it would be conceivable, to as close as possible to an original form (cf. e.g. Deist 1988 & Petzer 1990);
- Literary criticism, in which the different identifiable texts within the Bible were isolated, as far as possible, and put into their historical relations to one another (the name of Wellhausen is always mentioned in this regard; cf. e.g. Wellhausen 1876);
- Form criticism, in which the genre identification of the texts are refined and related as closely as possible to (at times certainly hypothetical) real-life situations in which the texts forms could either have originated or had been used in antiquity (Gunkel, as the originator of this form of exegesis – cf. e.g. Gunkel 1925 – has been influential in other intellectual disciplines too);
- Redaction criticism, in which the editing activities on ancient discrete texts are retraced as far as possible (cf. Perrin 1969);
- Tradition criticism, in which the intra-textual interpretative histories are retraced as far as possible (with Von Rad as the father of this approach; cf. e.g. Von Rad 1960).

Already this brief summary of the historical-critical methodologies reveals that they were primarily concerned with determining the text in its most ancient form as it had functioned in its most ancient setting/s, and from there wanted to trace how the textual interpretation history developed. Not intended to destabilise faith, but rather in an implied sense to rescue it for the intelligentsia of the time, these methods repeatedly had that destabilising effect, though, because the scholarly findings subverted often dearly held positions which now could be proven to be invalid or historically contrived or, at the very least, historically determined. The early positivist underpinnings of the findings, or of the debates around them, further strengthened these negative perceptions. However, the communicative intent of these methodologies was to seek a “purer” form of the text, cleansed of interpretative layers from post-canonical church history and popular conceptions, and thus to understand the faith traditions in their most unadulterated forms. In time, many of the assumed positivist underpinnings had been let go of, as exegetes realised that the later interpretations, within texts themselves, between texts, and by later interpreters, were as much historically situated and understandable as were the earlier sources of these interpretations. That included the own understandings. Thus, the communicative intent of these methodologies have been modified in a

sense to show the interrelationship between history and text and interpretation, from the earliest traceable form of the text up to the modern interpreters' views.

3.3 The text tells all: *Text-immanent methodologies*

Yet, many scholars did not see matters in the way just explained. For them, a new method had to be adopted in order to come to more faith-full understandings of the Bible texts. Thus, new methods had been adopted by groups of exegetes, which look at the texts as texts rather than in their relation to their history. Here, composition not in its sense of coming into being is studied; rather the composition of the a-historical building blocks of the text is considered.

The two most important strands of this broad text-immanent approach are:

- Structuralism (at times also called discourse analysis, and related to semiotics – cf. Patte 1990), which seeks to understand interrelationships of the parts of a text (most often words), not to the historical world “outside” of any given text, but to the other parts of the text. This method found its roots in early 20th century Russian formalism, via an understanding of De Saussure’s 1922-work. However, typical of this method, its own historical roots are not very well studied by exegetes. More important is what it reacts against, and what it wishes to present: stability of meaning, structurally indicated. Within this broad aura of understanding, a number of loosely relatable forms of structuralism had developed (cf. e.g. Richter 1971 & Prinsloo 1988);
- Narrative exegesis, which wants to understand the storyline or plot and all other literary aspects of the text, in order to come to terms with how the telling of the account unfolds intrinsically and artistically (cf. e.g. Tolmie 1999). In the telling of the story, truth resides, and it is this manner of conveying meaning, by retelling, that the account being retold lives again for the modern reader / hearer. By analysing a text narratologically, the inherent value of the text itself comes to the fore.

The communicative intent of this broad exegetical approach is to find meaning in the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text. In the text, stability of meaning exists, and the text-immanent method employed will extract it. About this the proponents are confident. Whereas the historical-critical methodologies are experienced as not relating meaning for today, because of them delivering inconclusive and often-contradictory results, they are habitually by proponents of text-immanent methods declared defunct. In the text-bound method the madness of meaning is tamed. The text has meaning, and the task of this exegetical method is to relay it.

3.4 Justice in our time: *Genitive-theological exegetical methodologies*

When theologians use the term “hermeneutics”, at least three broad forms of interpretative exercise can be implied: the philosophical branch, in which the understanding of understanding is explored (e.g. Gadamer 1975), the methodological strand, in which exegetical method is considered, and what has been called the genitive-theological exercise, in which modern socio-political corrective measures are strongly called for. In the latter, a cause of justice to which the interpreter is committed is taken as the prime interpretative criterion. This includes causes such as political freedom in theologies of liberation, or gender equality in theologies of feminism, or the ecology in theologies of the environment (cf. e.g. Segovia 2003). In all cases, though not always with this terminology, readings “against the grain” are undertaken. This “grain” against which a reading is undertaken usually refers to three matters, although it is seldom indicated in this way (since the description here is ideal-typical): the dominant understandings within the biblical text (e.g. on the social position of women), the ways in which these texts have been employed throughout history in church and wider circles (e.g. to serve an unjust cause), and an untenable socio-political state of affairs in the world at present.

Although the latter form of hermeneutics clearly draws heavily on the former two, its practitioners are most often too committed to the present cause to spend much time on philosophical and methodological considerations: the cause of justice at hand is too pressing to allow for too much valuable energy to be expended on anything that does not contribute directly to the rectifying the injustice/s. Historical analyses are often included, namely of how the biblical texts had been ab/used throughout history in order to give sanction to discriminatory or unsustainable practices (the issue of slavery is a classic case in point here), and also of the practices themselves, namely how they had come into being and had been kept in place. By such “unmasking” strategies that expose both the present intolerable situation and the suppressive interpretation histories, it becomes possible to suggest new ways of seeing the world and being in it. New, “liberative” interpretations of existing texts are proposed, and / or (aspects of) texts that have seldom in the past been given prominence are “foregrounded”, and / or the inability of the ancient texts at all to deal with the modern issue is pointed out (e.g. Germond & De Gruchy 1997). By proposing a new understanding, or, though rarely, quite an altered basic view of the religion concerned (e.g. Johnson 1992), the cause at hand is better served.

Although the agenda of the interpreters and hence also the new interpretations offered are often radical, for the most part the broad outlines of the Christian metanarrative (to employ here the language of Lyotard 1979) are kept to. Even in the rare instances where a rewritten Bible is proposed to favour the present cause, this is

seldom meant as literally as Banana (1993:17-32) did, but is most often a metaphor for suggesting new readings.

The communicative intent of genitive-theological exegetical enterprises is different than any of the other methodologies discussed here. Socio-political change is namely called for directly, not only by implication, as may be the case with the other methodologies discussed here. Not conversion in the usual religious sense is called for, which then has implications for practice, but the practice itself is directly addressed here. This is an activist approach. Often, the directive impulse or foundational value of understanding is extra-biblical, for the common-sense reasons that these modern concerns are not found within the biblical texts, at least not in a way that makes easy sense within the prevailing values of our time, and / or the texts have been used precisely in favour of the other, now unmasked and hence discredited, oppressive side. The purpose of exegesis, or in a vague sense then: eisegesis, is to present the Bible, the faith and the situation in the modern world anew, so that a more just, equitable society may be the result. Idealistic as this approach is, it is therefore not unnatural that a “higher”, what has earlier in this paragraph been called an extra-biblical benchmark of understanding / interpretation is employed. From this, the Bible is read inductively. Then, new “voices” (or messages) within / from the Bible are found, at times with far-reaching influence, as with the case of Latin-American liberation theology. Therefore, even though the initial point of departure may not have been deductive, from the Bible itself, it is most often the case that in the argumentation it is pointed out that the Bible has, after all, lesser-known texts or now better-understood texts that validate, for the religiously inclined at least, the theological validity of the favoured cause. Thus, new “empowering” readings of the texts, that is: in favour of the previously marginalised cause, now become possible. The Bible – and hence by implication: the church, the faith, or even God – has in this way been afforded a voice of restored respectability.

Though some elements of apologetics may be seen in this, this is seldom a directly visible intent of these exegetical methodologies. The approach here is more instrumentalist: to correct a current wrong, with the Bible regarded as an acknowledged potentially powerful force to the good, even though it may well in the past have been employed (or perhaps even, deployed, like a dangerous weapon) negatively with respect to the present cause.

3.5 Making (taking) meaning for me 2: *Post-modern mystagogy and biblical texts*

Mystagogy has in recent theological writings received renewed interest, particularly through the work done at the Titus Brandsma Institute, Radboud University,

Nijmegen, the Netherlands (cf. however e.g. Dericquebourg 2001:149-158 & Regan 1993:416-422). In the background of this renewed interest lies, implicitly, a dissatisfaction that scholarly exegesis of the biblical texts are not rendering results in which modern readers feel themselves addressed. However, unlike the newer text-immanent exegetical methods that have from the 1970s onwards been seeking meaning from method, here the express interest is to garner a divine encounter from the biblical text. As always in the history of Christianity when this term had been used, mystagogy is therefore still about “Christian initiation” (Reilly 1974; cf. Waaijman 2002:870-874). This, not in the sense of theological education or ministerial formation (although not unrelated to such aspects), but more: a personal, existential encounter is sought. Fully informed about the *via negativa* as a more sustainable way of discerning faith than the strongly dominant cataphatic theology in many Western(ised) societies, and thus fitting well with the sociologically newly-unfolding post-secularist cultural climate of our time (cf. Gorski et al. 2012, Nynäs et al. 2012; Lombaard 2012/2014), this is a more humble, less self-assured approach to finding meaning with the text. Important, therefore, is still that the text interacts with the hearer of today. In this interaction, in some way, an encounter with the holy is the corollary. Though finding meaning may be the goal, not finding meaning is an equally acceptable result too. Here, mystery is the principal sphere of orientation. This, though, is not a naïve engagement with the text, but finds itself in/formed by the intellectual history from the Enlightenment onwards. At the same time, though, it finds itself equally fully in/formed by the faith history of, though primarily Christianity, also Judaism, Islam and other faith traditions of the world.

The communicative intent here is thus not in the first instance to find *the* meaning of a biblical text, nor primarily to experience meaning for *me*, respectively *us*. Rather, an *encounter* is intended (cf. as a recent practical example Waaijman 2011:1-20). Meaning is negotiated – with the self, with the divine, via the text: “an experience that is already there is interpreted” (Waaijman 2002:870). Meaning – “clarification” (Waaijman 2002:872-873) – is sought, but if not found, the encounter is still regarded as valid; not fruitless. Meaninglessness is not meaningless. This is the mode of the mystic. Experience, grounded in the histories of faith and intellect and culture and the self, *is* meaning; therein God communicates. This is the mode of mystagogy.

4. THE VALUE OF ANALYSING EXEGETICAL METHODS AS RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION

Religious Communication as an academic discipline examines the ways in which the spiritual commitments of humanity find expression in and through communicative acts. Diverse and multi-disciplinary as this discipline is, one of the aspects Religious

Communication studies, is the problematic religiously inclined people experience in eliciting a meaningful message, relevant to modern times, from holy texts (such as the Bible) that stem from ancient times, dissimilar cultures, and far-removed communicative contexts. Within Christianity such problematic have, *inter alia*, given rise in the modern era to exegesis as an expert enterprise with which to practice the science and art of both understanding the texts within their ancient contexts and eliciting valid messages from them for current times. In such endeavours, Communication and Theology mix in a unique way as an expression of Religious Communication.

In this contribution, some major modern attempts in this regard have been briefly discussed. The pre-modern allegorical use of biblical texts were through the rise of historical consciousness, as part of the Enlightenment, replaced by historical-critical interpretations of the holy texts, which then dominated the exegetical scene for about two centuries. During the past half-century, however, different a-historical methods have been developed. In this contribution, the *communicative intent* with each of a representative selection of these exegetical methodologies has been described. The communicative intent for each of the respective approaches namely is:

- For the allegorical method, to find the “true” meaning God intends in the Bible, but which is hidden by means of symbolism or mystery. The intent of the “exegete” is to perceive this meaning through guided revelation. The Divine, which hid the meaning in the text, reveals the meaning from the text. In so doing, the holy will is discerned by the exegete and conveyed to the intended audience;
- For the historical-critical methodologies, no secret “code” within the text must be unveiled, but the mists of history must be pierced, in order to come to an understanding of the meaning of the texts. The intent of exegesis is to recapture and retrace, also to relive, the ancient meaning/s of the text-in-context. In that way, the meaning for today can be validly conveyed, where possible;
- With the text-immanent approaches, the communicative intent is again to find meaning within the text, but now not hidden, as with allegory, or terminally uncapturable, as in history. The texts themselves provide certainty of a firm meaning, and methodological exactness relays this certitude to today. Only then can the modern reader be well served by exegetes;
- In genitive-theological exegesis, the communicative intent is to create greater justice in the modern world by recouping lost meanings from within the biblical text. Change must happen, not solely within us humans, but especially in our world. The Bible, the history of its interpretation and modern society

must be reread, understood anew, for this to happen. Then the Bible becomes a positively empowering resource towards a better world.

- In mystical use of the Bible, the communicative intent is a different kind of transformation, namely engagement with the text in order to re-evaluate and deepen the experience with the Divine. All the above is accounted for, but then more is required: also the direct sense of God, of the self and of the world is sought – an encounter goes beyond easy answers.

In the (acknowledged oversimplified) triangular relationship of God-person-Scripture experienced by most believers¹¹, there are a number of well-established ways of participating in this triad of meaning. Only some of the major established exegetical / interpretative ways have been taken into review here. The diversity that we find as one of *the* characteristics in the biblical texts themselves (Lombaard 2011a:49-65), we see reflected also in the diversity of exegetical approaches available, and points in some respects already to the diversity of religious commitments within our world (Page 2012:137-154). In all cases, there is an imbued sense within these broad approaches of the importance of “transhistorical intentions” (Hirsch 1994:549-567; cf. Brown 2007:116) with the biblical texts; however, the implied contestation on how best to elicit these intentions are clear from just the five approaches outlined above.

Precisely where this should all lead to, only unfolding history will tell us; certainly no “methodological imperialism” (Du Toit 2004:212) in which one approach completely rules out the others can be foreseen. The value of however pointing out the different things that these approaches want to do – their *communicative intent* – is that this unfolding history can be more open and honest, and more susceptible to intellectual scrutiny.

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¹¹ This relationship was graphically represented in e.g. Lombaard 2011b:3 and further applied in e.g. Van der Merwe 2012:182.

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KEY WORDS

Exegetical method
Religious Communication
Holy Texts
Extraction of meaning
Communicative intent

TREFWOORDE

Eksegetiese metodiek
Religieuse kommunikasiekunde
Heilige tekste
Verhaling van betekenis
Kommunikatiewe bedoeling

*Die verskeidenheid in spiritualiteit: 'n
Transdissiplinêre benadering*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to reflect on individual worship practices and offer a description of spirituality, and the varieties in spirituality, by drawing on the insights of neuroscientists and neurotheologians. The varieties in spirituality are described transversally according to the Neethling Brain Instrument (NBI). The article concludes by offering a description of the different aspects of spirituality accentuated by individuals and links this description to the discussions about church structure and unity in Reformed churches in South Africa.



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1. INLEIDING

In 'n onlangse uitgawe van *Kerkbode* bespreek Nelus Niemandt die dalende lidmaatgetalle van die gereformeerde kerke in Suid Afrika en Duitsland. Hy sluit aan by Henning Wrogemann van Duitsland wanneer hy verduidelik dat die kern van die kerk nie gaan oor lidmaatgetalle nie. Hy skryf:

Die hartklop van die kerk is om mense te help om deel te neem aan die verheerliking van God ... Die kern van die saak gaan oor lidmate se innerlike lewe. Daarom is aanbidding die hartklop van die kerk se lewe. (Niemandt 2013:9)

Na aanleiding van Niemandt se stelling word gevra: Wat behels die verheerliking van God – m.a.w. wat behels aanbidding? Dit is my veronderstelling dat die woord *aanbidding* verwys na die praktyke en rituele van gelowiges in hul daaglikse lewens. Die doel van hierdie artikel is om lig op spiritualiteit¹(die praktyke en rituele van gelowiges) en kerkstrukture te werp deur spiritualiteit te beskryf aan die hand van die Neethling Brein Instrument. In die ontwikkeling van hierdie beskrywing maak ek van komplekse interdisiplinêre fasilitering² gebruik om in gesprek met die neurowetenskappe te tree.

Die artikel word in drie bedrywe aangebied. In die eerste bedryf fokus ek op die kennis en interpretasies van neurowetenskaplikes rakende spiritualiteit en

1 Dit is baie belangrik om te verduidelik wat met die woord *spiritualiteit* bedoel word. Sandra M. Schneiders verduidelik dat spiritualiteit, as 'n akademiese dissipline, onderskei word van teologie en godsdienswetenskap (Schneiders 2005:15). In hierdie dissipline word spiritualiteit as 'n eksistensiële fenomeen bestudeer. In sy boek *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* stel Kees Waaijman (2002:535-62) voor dat die akademiese bestudering van spiritualiteit van fenomenologiese en dialektiese metodologie gebruik maak. Spiritualiteit, as akademiese dissipline, is refleksie op menslike praxis (Waaijman 2002:563). Alhoewel hierdie 'n belangrike gesprek is, is dit nie my bedoeling om hier aan die gesprek deel te neem nie. Wanneer ek die woord *spiritualiteit* gebruik verwys ek na die verhouding van 'n individu tot die transendente. Na aanleiding van die doel van die artikel onderskei ek nie tussen spiritualiteit en *religieuse ervaring* nie. In 'n komplekse interdisiplinêre beskrywing van spiritualiteit is so 'n onderskeid van sekondêre belang en val dit buite die bestek van hierdie artikel.

2 Hierdie artikel is die derde in 'n reeks artikels wat handel oor Wentzel van Huyssteen se epistemologie en teologie, asook Paul Cilliers se insig en betoog rondom die verstaan van komplekse sisteme. Komplekse interdisiplinêre fasilitering (Kif) is 'n benadering tot inter- en transdisiplinêre navorsing wat in 'n postfunderende epistemologie gewortel is. Epistemologies word daar gewaak teen reduksionisme, asook relativisme. Daarom word daar na die verskeidenheid *in* spiritualiteit en nie na verskillende *spiritualiteite* verwys nie.

godsdien in gesprek met Andrew Newberg. Die tweede bedryf tree in gesprek met Kobus Neethling en sy insig vanuit neurosielkunde. In die derde bedryf word die verskeidenheid in spiritualiteit aan die hand van Neethling se brein-instrument aangebied. Ek sluit af deur die implikasies van hierdie verskeidenheid vir kerkstruktuur te bespreek.

2. SPIRITUALITEIT

In 'n reeks artikels rakende spiritualiteit verduidelik Dirkie Smit (1989:85) dat, hoewel die woord *spiritualiteit* op baie maniere gebruik word, die nuwe belangstelling in spiritualiteit gefokus is op individuele ervaring en die wyse waarop hierdie spiritualiteit uitdrukking vind in die lewe van die individu. Ter verkenning van hierdie landskap met die doel om toepaslik daarmee om te gaan bespreek Smit ses verskillende tiperings van spiritualiteit. Hy bespreek praktyke soos meditasie en kerkgang; siklusse en seisoene in spiritualiteitsbeoefening; die tipe simbole wat gebruik word in spiritualiteitsbeoefening; die motiewe wat as dryfvere of doelwitte funksioneer vir spiritualiteit; die verskillende verhoudings tot die kultuur waarin spiritualiteit uitdrukking vind; en, die veronderstelde lewens- en wêreldbeskouing van spirituele uitdrukking (Smit 1989:88-92). Spiritualiteit kan op baie maniere beskryf word en nie een van hierdie beskrywings is voldoende alleenlik nie.

“Uit die aard van die saak bied nie een van hierdie (of ander) benaderings alleen 'n afdoende tipering van spiritualiteit nie, maar indien 'n mens almal tegelyk in die oog probeer hou en soek na die onderliggende verbande en verskille, kan dit help om 'n perspektief te kry op sowel die eiendomlike sterk punte as die eensydighede en tekortkominge van 'n bepaalde gestalte van Christelike spiritualiteit.” (Smit 1989:92)

In die tweede artikel van hierdie reeks, bespreek Smit *gereformeerde spiritualiteit* aan die hand van die ses tiperings hierbo genoem. Hy is van mening, soos in die eerste artikel, dat dit nie moontlik is om 'n tydlose beskrywing van gereformeerde spiritualiteit te bied nie, omdat so baie van die beskrywing deur interpretasie en keuse beïnvloed word (Smit 1988:183). Smit maak dit ook duidelik dat so 'n beskrywing die sosio-historiese konteks van spiritualiteit in ag moet neem.

In sy boek *Varieties of religion today* (2002) reflekteer Charles Taylor oor die veranderende landskap van godsdienste in die Westerse kultuur. Hy bespreek die ontwikkeling van ons kulturele psige en verduidelik dat die huidige kulturele uitgangspunt klem lê op die uitdrukking van individualiteit. Hierdie klem vind sy oorsprong in die Romantiese beweging van die 18de eeu. Die etos van hierdie beweging word saamgevat in die idee dat elkeen van ons ons menslikheid mag

uitleef op verskillende maniere en dat dit belangrik is om getrou te bly aan jouself (Taylor 2002:83).³ Die klem het geskuif van die groep na die individu en dit is die verantwoordelikheid van die individu om uitdrukking te gee aan sy/haar menslikheid. Ons klere, motors, musiek, politiek en geloofspraktyke is uitdrukkings van ons individuele menslikheid en ons spiritualiteit is nie vrygespreek van hierdie lewensuitkyk nie. Die lewenspad en psige van die individu is nou die fokus van spiritualiteit en hierdie spiritualiteit mag uitdrukking vind buite die grense van kerke, godsdienstradisies, kulture en politieke sisteme, net soos ons uitdrukking kan gee aan ons burgerskap deur 'n wêreldreisiger te wees (Taylor 2002:94). Spirituele uitdrukking word nou bedryf met een beginsel: die individuele uitdrukking van een mag nie 'n ander individu benadeel nie (Taylor 2002:101). Dit beteken dat daar 'n baie wye spektrum van moontlikhede vir spirituele uitdrukking is. Individue kan dus aan hul spiritualiteit uitdrukking gee binne gemeenskappe soos kerke of beweeg tussen gemeenskappe en tradisies (Taylor 2002:102). Daar is individue wat hulself as ateïsties of agnosties beskryf, asook diegene wat behoort aan 'n geloofsgemeenskap, maar nie meer aktief deelneem aan die gemeenskap se praktyke nie (Taylor 2002:106). Daar is diegene wat nie glo aan 'n persoonlike god nie, maar verkies om die transendente te beskryf as 'n krag of energie. Daar is dié wat Oosterse praktyke verbind met terapie, asook die wat hulself as godsdienstig beskryf, maar nie al die dogmas van die godsdiens aanvaar nie. Daar is selfs die wat Christenskap

3 Taylor (2002:100) wys daarop dat Friedrich Schleiermacher die punt gemaak het dat elkeen hul eie spirituele weë mag ontwikkel al val dit buite tradisionele strukture. Cristián Parker (2006:74) sluit hierby aan wanneer hy daarop wys dat mense hulself beskryf as *gelowig op my eie manier* of *'n reisende gelowige*. Om 'n relevante verstaan en beskrywing van godsdiens en spiritualiteit te bied, kan die navorser nie meer fokus op kerkstrukture en dogma alleenlik nie. Navorsers moet eerder reflekteer oor die manier waarop mense hul spiritualiteit of godsdienste ontwikkel en spesifiek fokus op praktyke wat buite die kerkstrukture beoefen word (Parker 2006:68). Parker maak dit ook duidelik dat individue nie lukraak kies en keur tussen spirituele en godsdienstige praktyke wat pas by hul persoonlikheid nie. Mense is ernstig daarvoor, maar is wel besig om hul eie *godsdiens* te ontwikkel (Parker 2006:69). Hierdie *godsdiens* kan beskryf word as 'n netwerk van oortuigings, simbole, rituele en praktyke wat nie noodwendig sistematies uiteengesit is nie en wegbreek van tradisionele uitdrukkings van geloof (Parker 2006:71). Robert Campbell (2006:101) argumenteer ook dat daar opnuut gedink moet word oor hoe godsdiens en spiritualiteit beskryf behoort te word. Mense beweeg weg van tradisionele godsdiensstrukture na alternatiewe uitdrukkings van spiritualiteit en godsdiens. Daar word meer klem geplaas op spiritualiteit as op godsdiens en die rede hiervoor is waarskynlik 'n soeke na 'n geloofsgemeenskap met 'n meer buigbare struktuur wat verskeidenheid kan akkommodeer (Drune 2006:131).

en Boeddhisme vervleg (Taylor 2002:107). Dit gesê is daar ook diegene wat hul spirituele weë vind in gevestigde geloofsgemeenskappe (Taylor 2002:112).

In sy boek *Network of the human soul* (2012) verduidelik Daniël Louw dat spiritualiteit verstaan moet word as 'n proses van integrasie wat geloof met lewe verbind; toewyding met verhoudings; godsdiens met sosiale uitreik; en kerk met gemeenskap (Louw 2012:181). Spiritualiteit is 'n beliggaming van idees en norme binne die eksistensiële realiteite van die lewe (Louw 2012:194).⁴ Met ander woorde, spiritualiteit het te make met die doen en leef van geloof en “kom konkreet tot uitdrukking in bepaalde godsdienstige gebruike, tradisies en rituele” (Louw 2005:141).⁵

'n Nuwe navorsingsgebied, genaamd *Neuroteologie*, het ontstaan met die doel om die verband tussen ons beliggaamdheid en godsdiens te verstaan. In sy boek *Principles of neurotheology* (2010) bespreek Andrew Newberg die nuanses van hierdie navorsingsgebied en verduidelik dat neuroteoloë reflekteer oor die belangrike verhouding tussen die brein en teologie (Newberg 2010:1).⁶ Hierby word ingesluit die verhouding tussen ons brein en ons denke; en die verhouding tussen ons denke en ons godsdiens (Newberg 2010:2). Denkers soos Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Desiderius Erasmus, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schleiermacher en William James het almal tot 'n seker mate besin oor hierdie verhoudings (Newberg 2010:7-11). Daar word wel doelbewus daarteen gewaak dat godsdiens tot 'n empiriese wetenskap gereduseer word (Newberg 2010:19). Die idee is dat godsdienstige rituele komplekse praktyke is wat die brein op vele sensoriese, kognitiewe en emotiewe vlakke beïnvloed. Neuroteoloë wil dié interaksie verstaan (Newberg 2010:19). Hierdie verstaan word moontlik gemaak deur die universele funksie van die mens se brein, daarom is dit moontlik om godsdienstige oortuigings en sisteme

4 Claire Wolfteich (2003:828-830) wys daarop dat spiritualiteit te make het met 'n outentieke lewe en dat dit so gebruik word in Christenskap, Judaïsme, Boeddhisme, Islam, Hindoeïsme, Taoïsme, Konfusianisme en die sekulêre wêreld.

5 In *Pastoraat as vertolking en ontmoeting* (1997) bespreek Louw die moontlikhede wat die neurowetenskappe vir die pastoraat kan bied. Hy stel voor dat geloofsvolwassenheid bevorder word deur te fokus op die regterbrein denkprosesse (Louw 1997:244). Neethling stel ook voor dat dit regterbrein denkprosesse is wat met godsdiens te doen het (Neethling 1992:45). Ek verskil van beide Louw en Neethling, maar sluit aan by hulle verbinding van pastoraat, godsdiens en die neurowetenskappe. Spirituele volwassenheid word bevorder deur *heelbrein* spiritualiteit. Hiermee word bedoel dat 'n individu spirituele groei bevorder, deur erkenning te gee aan die beklemtonings van al vier kwadrante. Dié beklemtonings word hieronder beskryf.

6 In *The mystical mind: probing the biology of religious experience* beskryf d'Aquili en Newberg neuroteologie as: die studie van teologie vanuit 'n neurosielkundige perspektief (d'Aquili & Newberg 1999:15)

in verskillende kulture vanuit 'n neuroteologiese hermeneutiek te beskryf (Newberg 2010:64).

Newberg (2010:48) maak 'n baie belangrike onderskeid tussen godsdiens en spiritualiteit. *Godsdiens* verwys na formele en gestruktureerde praktyke en oortuigings wat met 'n spesifieke geloofsgemeenskap geassosieer word. *Spiritualiteit* verwys na die gevoelens, gedagtes, praktyke en ervarings wat met die *heilige* geassosieer word, wat die *heilige* ook al mag behels.⁷ In ooreenstemming met Smit en Taylor koppel Newberg ook spiritualiteit aan die individu, maar Newberg benader godsdiens en spiritualiteit vanuit 'n neurologiese perspektief. Hy verduidelik dat breinfunksie en denkprosesse ons alledaagse praktyke beïnvloed, asook ons ervaring van godsdiens, spiritualiteit en teologie (Newberg 2010:84). Ons brein vorm en skaaf die maniere waarop ons aan en oor God dink (Newberg 2010:85). Met behulp van nuwe tegnologie soos fMRI, CAT en PET skandering en EEG kan neurowetenskaplikes verbande trek tussen sekere denkprosesse en breinareas (Newberg 2010:73). Die regter breinhemisfeer word byvoorbeeld gebruik in abstrakte en holistiese denkprosesse en speel 'n belangrike rol in die integrasie van persepsies, idees en geheue via die hippokampus (Newberg 2010:77). Die linker breinhemisfeer word op sy beurt weer gebruik in analitiese en reduksionistiese denkprosesse (Newberg 2010:77), maar oor die algemeen werk hierdie twee breinhemisfere saam. Newberg bied 'n voorbeeld en verduidelik dat die linker pariëtale lob fokus op *wat* gesê word in gesprek, waar die regter pariëtale lob fokus op *hoe* nie-verbale (stemtoon en lyftaal) aspekte die betekenis beïnvloed (d'Aquili en Newberg 1999:28). Neuroloë kan nou argumenteer dat Herakleitos se standpunt dat *verandering* die essensie van die heelal vorm, breinareas benut wat verskil van die van Plato wat *konstantes* as belangrik geag het (Newberg 2010:109). Neuroteoloë kan reflekteer oor hoe verskillende breinareas en denkprosesse bydra tot sulke verskillende oortuigings (Newberg 2010:110). Verder, wys Newberg (2007:547) ook daarop dat neurowetenskaplikes vas kan stel dat die regter breinhemisfeer baie gebruik word in die aanvangsfases van meditasie. Brown (2006:242) wys wel daarop dat dit 'n epistemologiese fout sou wees om godsdiens of spiritualiteit eenvoudig tot breinfunksie te reduseer. Selfs al kon neurowetenskaplikes godsdiens of spiritualiteit ten volle verduidelik in terme

7 Kelley Mayo (2011:66) onderskei godsdiens van spiritualiteit deur te wys op die grense van die twee terme. Sy argumenteer dat dit makliker is om die grense van godsdiens vas te stel as wat dit is om die grense van spiritualiteit vas te stel. Godsdiens, aan die een kant, behels georganiseerde sosiale stigtings en oortuigings rakende die heilige of die goddelike. Spiritualiteit, aan die ander kant, sluit nie noodwendig godsdiens in nie en word gewoonlik geassosieer met 'n persoonlike soeke.

van biologiese prosesse, mag daar emergente⁸ lae van organisering wees wat nie in terme van biologie beskryf kan word nie (Koenig e.a. 2001:274-275). Dit gesê is daar wel goeie bewyse dat spiritualiteit moontlik is deur middel van brein aktiwiteit (Koenig e.a. 2001:264).

Neuroteoloë kan dus wys dat godsdiens en spiritualiteit onlosmaaklik aan die menslike brein gekoppel is. Nog meer, neuroteoloë kan 'n verband tussen sekere denkprosesse en breinareas trek. Neuroteoloë kan lig werp op *hoe* ons liggaam, in dié geval ons brein, ons spiritualiteit fasiliteer, soos dit ook ons wetenskap, kuns en sport fasiliteer.

3. NEETHLING BREIN INSTRUMENT

Die verband tussen breinfunksie en gedrag is nie 'n nuwe navorsingsgebied nie. Nog voor gesofistikeerde tegnologie het Hippokrates al gevind dat spraak hoofsaaklik 'n linkerbrein aktiwiteit is (Neethling en Rutherford 2005:67).⁹ Intussen het ons kennis van die brein aansienlik gegroei. Kobus Neethling is 'n internasionaal gerekende spesialis op die gebied van kreatiwiteit en die nuanses tussen linker- en regterbrein denkprosesse. Neethling se navorsing spruit spesifiek voort uit die werk van Robert Sperry en Paul Torrance. Sperry se navorsing het gewys dat die linker- en regter hemisfere van die brein informasie verskillend verwerk (Botha en Neethling 1999:43-4). Die linkerbrein fasiliteer taal, spraak, analise en logiese denke, waar die regterbrein verbeelding, holistiese denke en ongestruktureerde take fasiliteer (Neethling en Rutherford 2005:67). Belangrik hier is dat elke persoon 'n spesifieke denkvoorkeur het wat hul gedrag, besluite en keuses beïnvloed (Neethling, Rutherford en Schoeman 2005:58). Neethling se navorsing is daarop gemik om te verstaan watter gedragspatrone geassosieer word met watter denkprosesse,¹⁰ met die

8 Hierdie term verwys na die teorie dat meer gevorderde of komplekse sisteme gevorm word deur die samewerking van kontingente faktore. In Engels: emergent. Sommige navorsersgebruik die woord *ontluikend*.

9 Neethling (1984:23) wys daarop dat seuns oor die algemeen meer aktief is as dogters (wat regterbrein denkprosesse behels), maar dogters sal waarskynlik vroeër en meer akkuraat praat (wat linkerbrein denkprosesse behels). Verder verduidelik Neethling dat dit waarskynlik die ontwikkeling van taal is wat gelei het tot die dominansie van linkerbrein denkprosesse in kultuur. Die vroegste rotstekeninge waarvan ons bewus is, is geteken met die regterhand wat beheer word deur die linkerbrein (Neethling 1992:52). So ook is die vroegste wapens geskep vir die regterhand.

10 Albright (2007:540) wys daarop dat navorsing 'n korrelasie tussen sekere breinareas en denkprosesse toon.

doel om mense te begelei na wat hy noem *heel-breindenke*.¹¹ Om hierdie proses te fasiliteer het hy die Neethling Brein Instrument (NBI) ontwikkel wat die verhouding tussen breinfunksie en denkprosesse in vier areas en agt dimensies deel. 'n Persoon se denkprosesse kan gegroepeer word in vier areas van die brein en elkeen van hierdie areas word gekoppel aan spesifieke denkprosesse (Korf 2009:5). Die instrument kan dan aandui by watter denkprosesse 'n persoon se voorkeur lê, wat dit moontlik maak om af te lei watter gedragspatrone verwag kan word van daardie persoon (Neethling e.a. 2005:58). Met ander woorde, die NBI is 'n instrument wat lig werp op hoe mense inligting verwerk en kennis genereer na aanleiding van hul denkprosesse. Die NBI is oorspronklik ontwikkel met die oog daarop om studente te help om goeie leerpraktyke te ontwikkel, maar die gebruik van die NBI het oorgespoel in ander velde, onder meer besigheid, bemaking, kommunikasiebestuur en sport. Daar is gevind dat kulturele verskille nie 'n invloed het op die uitslae van die NBI nie (Korf 2009:22). Neethling (2000:6) bied die volgende sleutelwoorde wat die linker- en regterbrein kwadrante en denkprosesse beskryf:

L1: (Wat?) Gefokus, presies, akkuraat, klinies, feitelik, konkreet, logies, objektief, analities, realities en krities.	R1: (Hoekom?) Holisties, buigbaar, risiko, nuuskierig, alternatief, eksperimenteer, verbeelding, strategies, visualiseer, intuïsie, ongestruktureerd en verbind <i>verskillende idees</i> .
L2: (Hoe?) Georganiseerd, tydbewus, beplanning, gestruktureerd, stap vir stap, lojaal, deeglik, detail, sekuriteit, tradisioneel en betroubaar.	R2: (Wie?) Lyftaal, aanraking, samewerking, deelname, bewus van mense en hul gevoelens, empatie, ondersteunend, spelerig en sensitief vir die <i>sosiale atmosfeer</i> .

Die NBI bied nie 'n beskrywing van mense se vermoëns nie, maar eerder 'n beskrywing van die manier waarop hulle verkies om inligting te verwerk en kennis te genereer. Mense is nie vasgevang in hul geliefde denkprosesse nie en kan inligting verwerk en kennis genereer deur gebruik te maak van denkprosesse waarin hulle 'n lae voorkeur toon. Wanneer mense buite hul voorkeur denkprosesse werk, is daar wel groter moontlikheid vir spanning. Die doel van hierdie instrument is om te identifiseer hoe mense verkies om inligting te verwerk en kennis te genereer. Dit is ook belangrik om aan ander denkprosesse aandag te gee, want daar is verskillende maniere waarop inligting verwerk en kennis gegenereer kan word. Neethling wil waardering en respek vir alle denkprosesse kweek en deelnemers begelei na 'n *heelbrein* benadering.

11 Barbara Clark (1983:27) verduidelik dat intelligensie bevorder word deur linker- en regterbrein denkprosesse te stimuleer. Dit is moontlik om die vermoë tot sekere denkprosesse te bevorder, maar intelligensie word die beste bevorder deur *heelbreindenke*.

Die Springbok-rugbyspan maak al 'n geruime tyd van hierdie model gebruik om spelers in gepaste posisies te plaas, asook om gepaste oefening en eetpraktyke te kweek. In *Creative rugby: don't just sweat it, think it!* verduidelik Naas Botha en Neethling dat 'n heelagter gebruik moet maak van R1 en R2 denkprosesse, waar 'n stut weer gebruik moet maak van L1 en L2 denkprosesse (Botha en Neethling 1999:54). Die heelagter het nodig om die spel en veld in geheel te sien, om met intuïsie keuses te maak en om deur middel van kommunikasie in samewerking met ander spelers 'n aanval te loods. Die heelagter moet gemaklik wees in riskante situasies en graag 'n ondersteunende rol vervul (Botha en Neethling 1999:59). Die stut moet weer baie presies en betroubaar wees in die skrum. Daar is sekere spelpatrone wat stap vir stap ingeoefen is om balbesit te bekom of te behou en die stut moet hierdie stappe deeglik en aggressief kan uitvoer (Botha en Neethling 1999:66). Net soos hierdie instrument toegepas word op rugby en sport, word dit ook toegepas op leierskap, onderwys, verhoudings (romanties en familieel) en leefstyl. Die NBI kan daarom dan ook gebruik word om insig te kry in hoe mense hul wêreldbeelde ontwikkel, aanvul en uitleef.¹²

4. DIE VERSKEIDENHEID IN SPIRITUALITEIT

Die insig wat bekom is rakende spiritualiteit moet nou geïnkorporeer word in teologiese refleksie. Watter kennis is ter sprake en hoe word dit geïnkorporeer? In gesprek met Andrew Newberg het dit duidelik geword dat ons spiritualiteit gepaard gaan met breinfunksie. Verder, het dit ook duidelik geword dat daar 'n korrelasie tussen spesifieke breinfunksies en spiritualiteit is. Nog meer, het ons gesien in die voorbeeld van Herakleitos en Plato, dat neuroteoloë 'n verband kan trek tussen sekere wêreldbeelde en breinareas, veral tussen linker- en regterbrein denkprosesse.

In gesprek met Kobus Neethling het ons gesien dat daar instrumente is wat breinareas en denkprosesse verbind. Hierdie instrument kan na aanleiding van die

12 Mikael Stenmark (2003:929) verduidelik dat 'n wêreldbeeld 'n konstellasie van oortuiginge en waardes is wat mense (bewustelik of onbewustelik) in hul hantering van hulle eksistensiële vroeë rig. Gordon Kaufman (1972:207-208) onderskei tussen drie aspekte van 'n wêreldbeeld, naamlik gevoelens, denke en aksies. Verder argumenteer Kaufman dat 'n oorbeklemtoning van hierdie aspekte onderskeidelik lei tot 'n sekulêre, godsdienstige en teïstiese wêreldbeeld (Kaufman 1972:210-223). Hierdie wêreldbeelde kom wel selde suiwer voor. Meeste mense leef met 'n mengsel van hierdie wêreldbeelde (Kaufman 1972:224). Die punt wat Kaufman wil maak is dat filosofie, godsdien en teologie tot uitdrukking kom binne 'n spesifieke wêreldbeeld wat 'n invloed het op ons hele bestaan. Ons kan daarom nie ten volle sin maak van ons bestaan sonder om die belangrikheid van ons wêreldbeeld te verreken nie.

denkprosesse van die individu 'n raamwerk bied waardeur 'n persoon verkies om inligting te verwerk en kennis te genereer. Dit is dan moontlik om vas te stel watter waardes die individu verkies om te gebruik in die vorming van 'n wêreldbeeld. Dit is belangrik, want spiritualiteit word binne 'n spesifieke wêreldbeeld beoefen en hierdie wêreldbeeld vorm, bewustelik of onbewustelik, deel van elke individu se die betekenisvormingsproses.

Die Neethling Brein Instrument bied insig rakende die sleutelwaardes wat voorkeur geniet in die vorming van 'n wêreldbeeld. Dit is binne hierdie wêreldbeeld dat 'n individu se spiritualiteit tot uitdrukking kom. Dit is dus baie belangrik om in gedagte te hou dat die NBI die sleutel waardes uitlig waarmee individue verkies om hul wêreldbeeld te ontwikkel en te onderhou. Nog meer, dit is nodig om te verstaan dat die NBI juis daarop gemik is om heelbrein denkprosesse te bevorder en dat meeste mense dus oor die vermoë beskik om gebruik te maak van die denkprosesse in al vier kwadrante. Hulle verkies wel een of twee van die kwadrante. Dit beteken dat die individu verkies om op sekere sleutelwaardes te steun en te fokus. Dit is dan belangrik om te verstaan dat daar nie 'n verskeidenheid van wêreldbeelde is nie, maar eerder dat verskillende individue klem lê op verskillende aspekte en lae van die wêreld. Eweneens sal verskillende individue verskillende aspekte en lae van spiritualiteit beklemtoon. Dit is daarom meer gepas om te praat van die verskeidenheid *in* spiritualiteit, eerder as die verskeidenheid *van* spiritualiteit. Verskillende uitdrukkings van spiritualiteit word dus eerder verstaan as verskillende beklemtonings in spiritualiteit.¹³ Met behulp van die NBI is dit moontlik om die beklemtonings in spiritualiteit soos volg te groepeer.¹⁴

13 In sy boek *Types of Christian theology* (1992) bied Hans W. Frei 'n beskrywing van die verhouding tussen gerekende teoloë soos, Schleiermacher, Tillich, Barth en Pannenberg en hul onderskeie verhoudings tot filosofie en die sosiale wetenskappe. Frei (1992:2-5) plaas hierdie teoloë op 'n tiperende spektrum met die doel om Christelike teologie te kan vergelyk met ander teologiese refleksies. Die verskil tussen Frei se tipering en die instrument wat in hierdie artikel voorgestel word, is dat Frei teoloë op 'n spektrum plaas met twee uiterste pole. Die instrument wat hier voorgestel word belig die aspekte waarop teoloë klem lê. Die veronderstelling van die instrument is dat al vier die kwadrante met hul onderskeie denkprosesse en veronderstelde spiritualiteit waardevol is. Alhoewel daar teenoorgestelde beklemtonings is, is dit beklemtonings van een onderwerp.

14 In sy boek *Hellfire and lightning rods: liberating science, technology, and religion* stel Frederick Ferré voor dat daar moontlik 'n verband is tussen ons linker- en regterbrein denkprosesse, ons wêreldbeeld en ons beskrywing van ons spiritualiteit of godsdiens (Ferré 1993:77). Dit is dan so 'n beskrywing wat in hierdie artikel gebied word.

4.1 L1 (links bo)

In die ontwikkeling en instandhouding van 'n wêreldbeeld beklemtoon die individue met 'n voorkeur vir L1 denkprosesse duidelikheid, feitlikheid, logika en analise. Met L1 denkprosesse word die wêreld geanaliseer deur gebruik te maak van logika en word daar deeglik gesif deur die informasie en (wat beskou word as) feite. Hierdie proses produseer gewoonlik 'n duidelike en realistiese wêreldbeeld. Individue wat hierdie denkprosesse verkies is daarom oortuig dat 'n objektiewe etiese sisteem met duidelike en onbuigbare onderskeidings tussen reg en verkeerd onderhou kan word. So 'n etiese sisteem is baie belangrik, want dit is nodig om die samelewing te beheer. Hierdie individue is daarom baie toegewyd aan hierdie sisteem, maar sou die feite verander, moet die sisteem daarmee saam verander.

Binne hierdie wêreldbeeld duld individue nie wollerige en ongedefinieerde beskrywings van die transendente nie. Hulle argumente vir die bestaan of nie-bestaan van die goddelike is gewortel in (wat beskou word as) feitlike kennis.¹⁵ Verder verkies hulle om spesifieke instruksies vir daaglikse lewe te bekom en versamel hulle graag al die inligting aangaande spiritualiteit, want dit is noodsaaklik vir 'n bekwame en gevorderde spiritualiteit. Hierdie individue waardeer 'n mentor wat objektief en realisties is en verkies gefokusde gebed of meditasie sonder versteurings. Dit is van uiterse belang vir hierdie individue dat gedeelde oortuigings gegrond is in objektiewe feite en daarom is hulle baie krities oor sulke oortuigings. Individue met hierdie wêreldbeeld assosieer graag met 'n gesiene gemeenskap wat gedeelde oortuigings of waardes deeglik navors. Hulle hou nie baie van metafore nie, maar as daar gebruik gemaak word van metafore moet dit duidelik wees. Hulle konseptualiseer die wêreld as 'n rekenaar – wat jy insit is wat jy uitkry.

15 Keith Ward (2009:77) wys daarop dat Immanuel Kant hierdie aspek beklemtoon het. Kant het geargumenteer dat die idée van God die ideaal van Rede is en dat 'n rasonale persoon hierdie ideaal moet veronderstel. Dit is in hierdie lig wat Kant bewyse vir God ontwikkel (Ward 2009:79). In *The God delusion* (2006) bied Richard Dawkins (wat hy beskou as) feitlike bewyse rakende die bestaan van 'n god en kom tot die logiese slotsom dat die God Hipotese nie 'n goeie hipotese is nie (Dawkins, 2008:189). Dawkins (2008:254) verduidelik ook dat moraliteit gewortel is in biologie. Met ander woorde, hoewel moraliteit gekleur is deur die kultuur waarin dit tot uitdrukking kom, is daar 'n universele etiese sisteem wat bestuur word deur natuurlike seleksie. In reaksie op die sielkundige voordele van geloof in God, antwoord Dawkins (2008:394) dat dit steeds nie as bewyse kan dien vir die waarheid van godsdienstige oortuigings of die bestaan van God nie.

4.2 L2 (links onder)

In die ontwikkeling en instandhouding van 'n wêreldbeeld beklemtoon individue met 'n voorkeur vir L2 denkprosesse dissipline, detail en struktuur. Hierdie individue kompartementaliseer die wêreld en verkies 'n etiese sisteem wat goed gestruktureerd (tog prakties) is en wat sekuriteit bied. Hulle beklemtoon stabiliteit en daarom is hulle oortuig dat 'n gemeenskap alleen volhoubaar kan wees as langdurende patrone en praktiese onderhou word. Hulle is baie geheg en lojaal teenoor hierdie gemeenskap. Verandering mag alleen plaasvind as dit noodsaaklik is en as daar deeglike en praktiese planne bestaan om die verandering te stuur.

In hierdie wêreldbeeld maak individue met 'n voorkeur vir L2 denkprosesse 'n baie duidelike onderskeid tussen die transendente en die immanente.¹⁶ Hulle verkies sekuriteit en konseptualiseer die goddelike as magtig en betroubaar. Wanneer hulle argumenteer vir die bestaan of nie-bestaan van die goddelike sal dit gebaseer wees op die sekuriteit en stabiliteit wat so 'n verstaan 'n mens bied.¹⁷ Dit is vir die rede dat hierdie individue die mees waarskynlike aanhangers van 'n lewe na die dood sal wees. Verder verkies hulle om uitdrukking te gee aan hul spiritualiteit op praktiese en langdurende maniere wat stabiliteit in hul lewens bied. Daarom waardeer hulle 'n georganiseerde en gedissiplineerde mentor. Hierdie individue waardeer 'n stap vir stap plan waarvolgens hul spiritualiteit kan ontwikkel en volg die plan baie gedissiplineerd. Hulle verkies om 'n gewoonte te maak van gebed of meditasie en waardeer leiding in gebed en meditasie. Hierdie individue sal daarom graag dagstukkies en leesroosters volg. Hulle verkies die stabiliteit van tradisie en die rus wat gevind word in rituele. Dit is daarom belangrik vir hierdie individue om deel te wees van 'n gedissiplineerde en lang bestaande gemeenskap. Gedeelde oortuigings is belangrik want dit verseker ordelike en betroubare gedrag binne die gemeenskap. Metafore is vir hulle bruikbaar as dit orde gee aan hulle lewens. Daarom verkies individue met 'n voorkeur vir hierdie denkprosesse metafore met 'n lang geskiedenis. Hulle verstaan die wêreld as 'n masjien – elke deel moet doen wat dit behoort te doen.

16 So 'n onderskeid kan gesien word in Karl Barth se dialektiese teologie waar Barth klem lê op die kontras tussen die Heilige God en die sondige mensdom (Hardy 2008:25). Verder argumenteer Barth dat die kerk teenoor die kultuur staan. (Kennedy 2010:102).

17 Sigmund Freud het hierdie aspek van spiritualiteit gekritiseer en geargumenteer dat mense in 'n persoonlike God glo omdat dit vir hulle sekuriteit bied (McGrath 2001:41). Freud was wel van mening dat die idee van God 'n valse sekuriteit bied.

4.3 R2 (regs onder)

In die ontwikkeling en instandhouding van 'n wêreldbeeld beklemtoon individue met 'n voorkeur vir R2 denkprosesse menseverhoudings, verdraagsaamheid en emosionele meeleving. Hierdie individue het 'n aanvoeling vir die atmosfeer en oorhoofse gemoed van mense en die wêreld. Hulle verkies dus 'n etiese sisteem wat mense nader aan mekaar bring en plek maak vir die verskille en emosies van mense.¹⁸ Dit is belangrik, want om 'n gemeenskap te vorm moet mense interaksie hê met en omgee vir mekaar. Samewerking is noodsaaklik. Die gees en kommunikasie van die gemeenskap is belangrik, asook konsensus. Die individue is passievol toegewyd aan die gemeenskap. Verandering is nie 'n probleem nie, solank almal deel is van die onderhandelinge en daar aan almal gehoor gegee word.

In hierdie wêreldbeeld verkies individue 'n persoonlike en narratiewe beskrywing van die transendente wat verbind tot hul lewens. Hulle konseptualiseer die goddelike as vriendelik en geïnteresseerd in die lewens van mense.¹⁹ God kan dan beskryf word as 'n Vriend wat omgee vir die welstand van 'n vriend. Hierdie individue se argumentasie vir die bestaan of nie-bestaan van die goddelike is baseer op persoonlike en emosionele ervarings. Hulle gee uitdrukking aan hul spiritualiteit deur 'n persoonlike besorgdheid vir die welstand van die wêreld en die mense daarin.²⁰ Rakende die daaglikse lewe, verkies individue met 'n voorkeur vir R2 denkprosesse praktyke wat emosionele welstand en groepsamewerking bied. Hulle waardeer 'n mentor wat 'n persoonlike band bou met mense. 'n Mentor wat goed luister en mense nader aan mekaar bring. Hierdie individue is baie entoesiasies oor persoonlike groei en verkies om uitdrukking daaraan te gee in groepsverband. Hulle wil graag bid of mediteer in 'n gemaklike en gelukkige atmosfeer. Die dryfkrag van hul spiritualiteit is 'n soeke na 'n goeie gemoedstoestand of tot 'n gepaste sienswyse.

18 H. Richard Niebuhr se beskrywing van etiek beklemtoon hierdie wêreldbeeld. Niebuhr verduidelik dat etiek nie gaan oor wat reg en wat verkeerd is nie. Vir Niebuhr is etiek 'n deurlopende poging om te verstaan hoe ons lewens 'n antwoord is op die handeling en lewens van ander, met die oog daarop om verantwoordelik om te gaan met onself en ander in die gemeenskap (Hauerwas 2008:198).

19 In sy latere werke argumenteer Jürgen Moltmann dat die trinitariese God in 'n wedersydse verhouding van liefde tot die wêreld staan. God beïnvloed die wêreld en die wêreld beïnvloed God (Bauckham 2008:154).

20 Hierdie kan gesien word in die werk van Dietrich Bonhoeffer en sy argument dat God geken word deur gemeenskap en menslike verhoudings (Floyd 2008:49). Kennedy (2010:95) wys ook daarop dat Bonhoeffer se vroeër teologie daarop gefokus is om die kerk as gemeenskap te beskryf.

Musiek en atmosfeer is baie belangrik en hulle waardeer informele en gemaklike rituele waar mense met mekaar kan praat en hul gevoelens verwoord.

Gemeenskap is baie belangrik omdat dit mense verbind en deel maak van 'n familie. Konsensus is daarom belangrik want gedeelde oortuigings verseker dat mense mekaar verstaan en bevorder die ontwikkeling van egte bande tussen individue in die gemeenskap. Dit gesê moet elkeen kans kry om uitdrukking te gee aan hul ervarings en oortuigings, want die gemeenskap moet probeer om almal te akkommodeer. Hierdie individue luister graag na ander mense se ervarings, want hulle kan daaruit leer en verkies 'n gemeenskap wat die wêreld dien. Metafore help om uitdrukking te gee aan persoonlike en emosionele ervarings en hierdie individue verkies daarom metafore wat visueel is en mense verbind. Hulle sien die wêreld as 'n familie – mense wat vir mekaar omgee en mekaar ondersteun.

4.4 R1 (regs bo)

In die ontwikkeling en instandhouding van 'n wêreldbeeld beklemtoon individue met 'n voorkeur vir R1 denkprosesse holisme, sintese, verskeidenheid, intuïsie en konteks. Hulle kombineer verbeelding en intuïsie om ongewone verbindings te maak in die ontwikkeling van 'n holistiese strategie vir die toekoms. Hierdie individue verkies daarom 'n etiese sisteem wat die groter prentjie en konteks in ag neem. Dit is belangrik, want hulle neem risiko's en verken onbekende weë. Hulle het ook 'n voorliefde vir avontuur, verskeidenheid en opwinding en waardeer kreatiwiteit, spontaniteit, verskeidenheid, individualiteit en buigsaamheid in die gemeenskap. Hierdie individue is gewoonlik voorstanders vir verandering, want hulle is oortuig dat sisteme moet aanpas as dit volhoubaar en relevant wil bly in die toekoms. Hulle is nie baie toegewyd aan een sisteem of gemeenskap nie, want hulle beweeg tussen sisteme en gemeenskappe en raak gou verveeld met net een sisteem of gemeenskap.

In hierdie wêreldbeeld gebruik individue graag metafore vir die transendente wat baie plek bied vir interpretasie.²¹ Hulle soek holistiese konsepte wat alles saamvat

21 Hierdie beklemtoning kan gesien word in die werk van Paul Tillich. In sy werk het hy godsdiens binne 'n kulturele konteks geplaas en is beskou as 'n teoloog van kultuur, asook 'n kerk teoloog (Taylor 1991:16). Hy het geargumenteer dat die menslike kondisie fundamentele vrae na vore bring wat op verskillende maniere in kultuur tot uitdrukking kom. Godsdiens bied dan 'n antwoord op hierdie vrae d.m.v. godsdienstige simbole en terme (Kelsey 2008:64). Gordon Kaufman (1972:217-218) skryf dat denkers soos Tillich, Heidegger, Nietzsche en die Romantici gebruik maak van vae en onpresiese taal met oproerende betekenis. Hulle is ook geneig om minagting uit te spreek teenoor duidelike, presiese en logiese beskrywings. William James het ook sterk klem gelê op die kulturele konteks waarin godsdiens ontwikkel en beoefen word (Newberg 2010:11).

en saamsmelt.²² Daar is geen noodsaak vir detail nie en paradokse word maklik hanteer. Hulle verkies 'n verskeidenheid van ongedefinieerde konsepte van die goddelike en mag daarna verwys as 'n energie of 'n fundamentele besorgdheid (“ultimate concern”). Hierdie individue sal 'n collage van verskillende tradisies aanbied as konseptualisering van die goddelike. Hulle argumente vir die bestaan of nie-bestaan van die goddelike sal gebaseer wees op die vermoë van die konsep om die geheel saam te bring. Rakende die daaglikse lewe, beklemtoon hulle die estetiese, asook opwinding, holisme en diversiteit in spiritualiteit. Hierdie individue waardeer 'n mentor met 'n oop kop. Persoonlike groei word benader op unieke, holistiese en onortodokse maniere, want hulle hou daarvan om verskillende benaderings saam te vleg.²³ Hulle verkies gebed of meditasie in 'n omgewing wat estetiese waarde het

Dit is waarom hy gebruik gemaak het van kennis uit verskillende dissiplines en waarom hy ook beskryf kan word as 'n denker wat klem gelê het op R1 denkprosesse. James het ook baie gemaak van emosie en beklemtonings wat geassosieer word met R2 denkprosesse, maar James het spesifiek geargumenteer oor die ervarings van die individu en nie soseer op die van 'n groep of gemeenskap nie. Die werk van Gordon Kaufman self beklemtoon ook R1 denkprosesse. Sy boek *God: the problem* (1972) belig hierdie klem. In hierdie boek bespreek Kaufman die konsep van *God* met die doel om 'n gepaste en relevante verstaan van die konsep te bekom. Hy is daarom besig om die konteks of die groter prentjie van denke oor God te beskryf. In hierdie boek is Kaufman besig om strategies om te gaan met die konsep van God. Kennedy (2010:211) wys daarop dat Kaufman sy verstaan van teologie in hierdie proses verwoord wanneer laasgenoemde verduidelik dat teologiese refleksie nie beperk is tot denke oor God nie, maar dat hierdie denke gepaard gaan met 'n volledige interpretasie van die mens en die wêreld. Anders gestel, teologie is 'n kreatiewe en verbeeldingryke formulering van idees oor God gewortel in ervaring van die mens en die wêreld (Kennedy 2010:211).

- 22 In sy teologiese refleksie argumenteer Wolfhart Pannenberg vir 'n outentieke en intellektueel aanvaarbare beskrywing van Christenskap (Schwöbel 2008:144). Hy ontwikkel hierdie beskrywing deur intradissiplinêre refleksie. Hy toets hierdie beskrywing teen ander wetenskappe in interdissiplinêre refleksie. Hy was dus besorg oor die toekomstige relevansie van Christenskap en het nie gekroom om gebruik te maak van kennis en inligting uit verskillende vakgebiede nie. Pannenberg wou Christenskap beskryf op 'n manier wat die verskillende aspekte van die konteks van Christene saamtrek.
- 23 Nietzsche se onortodokse filosofie en kritiek op godsdiens belig 'n voorkeur vir R1 denkprosesse. Hy benader en skryf sy filosofie op 'n totale onortodokse en poëtiese manier (Ward 2009:115). Hy argumenteer teen die bestaan van objektiewe rede en bespreek breedvoerig hoe om vry te wees van tradisie (Ward 2009:119). Nog meer is daar baie prominente paradokse in sy filosofie (Ward 2009:118). Nietzsche het duidelik sterk kritiek gelewer teen 'n L2, L1 en R2 beklemtoning van spiritualiteit. Sy sterk R1 beklemtoning en die filosofie en wêreldbeeld wat daaruit gevloei het, beteken wel

– onder ’n groot boom, op ’n berg, in ’n kamer met ’n positiewe energie of wat ryk is aan simboliek. Verder, verkies hulle esoteriese en ongewone rituele wat die konteks in ag neem en assosieer hulle met gemeenskappe met ’n goeie humorsin wat hulle genoeg vryheid bied om nuwe moontlikhede te ontdek en verskeie ervarings te beleef. Gedeelde oortuigings is nie noodsaaklik nie, want ’n gemeenskap het diversiteit nodig om volhoubaar en relevant te bly. Hulle weerstand teen definisie en detail maak dit in elk geval moeilik om oortuigings goed te verwoord.²⁴ Hierdie individue gebruik graag metafore en vind dit essensieel ten einde paradokse, sintese en die groot prentjie te verduidelik. Metafoor roep ’n collage van konsepte en interpretasies wat gevisualiseer kan word op. Hulle visualiseer die wêreld is ’n organisme – die geheel is meer as die som van die dele.²⁵

5. SLOT

Die NBI bied ons ’n beskrywing van die maniere waarop mense verkies om uitdrukking te gee aan hul spiritualiteit. Aan die hand van die beskrywings hierbo, raak dit dan duidelik dat individue met ’n voorkeur vir L2 en R2 denkprosesse gemaklik uitdrukking kan gee aan hulle spiritualiteit in geloofsgemeenskappe soos die kerk.²⁶ Individue met ’n voorliefde vir L2 denkprosesse verkies die struktuur,

nie dat sy kritiek teen die ander aspekte van spiritualiteit ongeldig is nie. Sy kritiek is waardevol al het sy alternatiewe voorstel nie noodwendig pos gevat nie.

- 24 Hierdie klem kan gesien word in die werk van Don Cupitt. Cupitt beskryf homself as ’n post-dogmatiese gelowige, omdat die tradisionele verstaan van God nie meer gepas is vir die huidige konteks nie (Kennedy 2010:272). Cupitt argumenteer dat die tradisionele geloofs-sisteme nie meer gepas kan praat oor dit wat verstaan word onder die term *God* nie. Sy doel is om hierdie sisteme van vooraf te ontwikkel, met die doel om gepas te kan praat oor dit wat onder die term *God* verstand word (Kennedy 2010:275).
- 25 Hierdie klem kan gesien word in die werk van Hegel en Whitehead. Ward (2009:97) wys daarop dat Hegel en Whitehead die transendente beskryf het in inklusiewe metafore en die heelal gesien het as ’n organiese geheel wat deelneem aan kosmiese bewussyn wat besig is om te verander.
- 26 In *Religion for atheists: a non-believer’s guide to the uses of religion* bespreek Alain de Botton die wysheid in godsdiens as steeds belangrik is in ’n sekulêre wêreld. Een van die groot wysede wat hy uitlig is die van *gemeenskap*. Hy verduidelik dat godsdienste begrip het vir die soeke na deel wees van ’n gemeenskap, maar dat dit moeilik is om deel te wees van ’n gemeenskap (De Botton 2012:63). Dit is vir die rede dat godsdienste moeite doen om sekere rituele en praktyke voor te lê aan hul volgelinge. Die ontwikkeling en volhoubaarheid van gemeenskap is belangrik en hier kan ons sien dat dit ook te make het met ’n groot gedeelte van spiritualiteit. Bergemann en vennote maak die punt dat spiritualiteit te make het met die idee dat die individu deel is van ’n groter geheel (Bergemann, Siegel, Eichenstein en Streit 2011:100). Godsdiens bou gemeenskappe

tradisie en rituele van die godsdiens, waar individue met 'n voorliefde vir R2 denkprosesse die samesyn van godsdiens verkies. Dit is selfs moontlik om te bepaal dat groot charismatiese kerke en saamtrekke dan baie klem lê op die R2 aspekte in spirituele uitdrukking, maar moraliteit beskryf volgens L2 denkprosesse.²⁷ Die meeste gemeentes en geloofsgemeenskappe sal wel aspekte van al vier kwadrante vertoon, maar daar sal 'n spesifieke klem op een of twee van die kwadrante val.

Individue met 'n L2 voorkeur sal uitdrukking aan hul spiritualiteit kan gee binne godsdiensstrukture. Hierdie strukture bied sekerheid en gee stap vir stap riglyne vir daaglikse uitdrukking van 'n soeke na God. Hulle sal gemaklik voel om hulself godsdienstig te noem. So ook sal individue met 'n R2 voorkeur gemaklik uitdrukking kan gee aan hul spiritualiteit binne godsdiensstrukture. Vir hulle is die strukture nie so belangrik nie, maar eerder die samesyn van gelowiges en die ontwikkeling van persoonlike bande wat hierdie strukture bied. Individue met 'n L1 voorkeur kan baie krities wees oor hoe daar uitdrukking gegee word aan spiritualiteit, en mag hul self buite godsdiensstrukture plaas. As hulle wel hulself binne die strukture plaas sal hulle waarskynlik nie baie simpatie toon met die onduidelike R1 en R2 beklemtonings van spiritualiteit nie. Individue met 'n R1 voorkeur sal maklik tussen verskillende gemeenskappe, godsdienste en filosofieë beweeg. Hulle wil nie vasgedruk voel nie en sal daarom waarskynlik hulself as spiritueel – maar nie godsdienstig – beskryf nie.

Hierdie groeperinge help ons ook om te besin oor kerkeenheid. Individue met 'n voorkeur vir L2 denkprosesse sal ongemaklik voel met die verandering in kerkstrukture. Hierdie ongemaklikheid word dan beheer deur 'n soeke na deeglike beplanning en administratiewe refleksie rondom kerkeenheid. Individue met 'n voorkeur vir R2 denkprosesse, aan die ander kant, gee nie om oor die strukturele verandering nie. Wat belangrik is vir hulle is dat almal in harmonie moet saamleef. Dit is nodig dat ons na mekaar se verhale luister en erkenning aan elkeen se menswees gee. Individue met 'n voorkeur vir R1 denkprosesse verkies diversiteit en kan op twee maniere besin oor kerkeenheid. Hulle kan argumenteer dat dit beter

deur rituele, maar die gevaar bestaan dat hierdie geloofsgemeenskap geïsoleer kan raak en hulself afsonder van ander groepe.

27 Die klem op R2 denkprosesse in spiritualiteit en die klem op L2 denkprosesse in moraliteit kan ook gesien word in die denke van Huldrych Zwingli. Alister McGrath (2001:42-43) wys daarop dat Zwingli sterk beïnvloed is deur die Switserse humanisme wat die Christelike geloof gesien het as 'n lewenswyse. Persoonlike, individuele hervorming van moraliteit was belangrik, maar dit was nie noodsaaklik vir dogmatiese hervorming nie. Die R2 klem op die persoonlike, asook die L2 klem op duidelike riglyne kan dan getrek word van Zwingli tot kontemporêre charismatiese geloofsgemeenskappe.

is om verskillende kerke te onderhou, want dit bied diversiteit. Aan die ander kant sal hulle kan argumenteer dat kerkeenheid baie belangrik is, omdat kerkeenheid in die konteks belangrik is, maar hierdie individue sal nie noodwendig baie omgee oor die detail van so 'n eenwording nie. Individue met 'n voorkeur vir L1 denkprosesse sal die feite op die tafel wil sit en sal ten gunste van eenheid wees as dit 'n logiese bevinding is na deeglike ondersoek. Hulle sal klem lê op die invloed wat die kerk sal geniet indien eenheid bewerkstellig word.

Die Neethling Brein Instrument bied 'n beskrywing van spiritualiteit wat erkenning gee aan die vloeibaarheid en verskeidenheid in spiritualiteit in verband met verskillende interpretasies van *self*, *ander*, *gelowig*, *spiritueel* en *God*. Verder, bied die NBI beskrywing van spiritualiteit ook 'n antwoord op die dalende lidmaatgetalle van gereformeerde kerke en waarom dit nodig is om opnuut te dink oor wat as gepaste spiritualiteitsbeoefening beskou word. Die verskeidenheid in spiritualiteit vra nie net na 'n inklusiewe benadering tot kerkwees nie, maar na 'n herinterpretasie van wat beskou word as kerk.

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TREFWOORDE

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Human rights – the tension and conflict between church and state in Malawi: 2004-2012

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I show the critical role played by the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches with regard to the government's abuse of human rights in Malawi in the years 2004 to 2012. I argue that the Protestant and Catholic leaders' response to Bingu wa Mutharika's government's violation of human rights was influenced by a number of factors: first, the Church leaders' perceptions of Wa Mutharika's uneasiness about their critical voice. Second were the Church leaders' perceptions of the weak position of the government. Finally, I argue that though not always uniform or consistent, the churches' prophetic voice was occasionally undermined by their partisan interests, which sometimes were exploited by the government.



1. INTRODUCTION

This article will highlight the prophetic witness of the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches in Malawi in response to the issues of human rights and governance during the era of the government of President Bingu wa Mutharika in the years 2004-2012. The study will illustrate that in spite of its critical voice against human rights abuse and issues of governance, the Churches' social witness was also undermined by its own weakness of divisions and inability to observe human rights within its own ranks. The study will show that though the Churches did not always speak with one voice, nevertheless their sustained witness tried to highlight the socio-economic and political issues that the country faced during the presidency of wa Mutharika. Wa Mutharika was the third State President of the Republic of Malawi after Bakili Muluzi (1994-2004), the latter succeeded Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the first democratically elected President at Malawi's independence in 1964. President Mutharika died in office in 2012, when President Joyce Banda succeeded him.

1.1 "Church power" as a factor in wa Mutharika's presidency: 2004

If Rene Dumont's thesis that Africa had 'a false start' at independence following African dictators' perpetuation of colonial monopoly of power with its excesses (Fortman 2004: 3) is correct, perhaps to a degree it can also be said that in 2004 Malawi had a 'false start'. Constitutionally barred to run for a third term, and marginalising his 'obvious successor', Vice President Justin Malewezi (Gama 2010: 161), the former State President, Bakili Muluzi, 'anointed' Bingu wa Mutharika, hitherto unknown in the party, to succeed him in 2004.

Previously not a Catholic, in 2003, a year before he came to power, wa Mutharika embraced Roman Catholicism (*The Maravi Post*, 22/5/11).¹ As *The Maravi Post* put it, he 'joined the Church in 2003 in order to gain the support from the huge Catholic community (*The Maravi Post*, 22/5/11).'² When he became president in 2004 wa Mutharika knew well that since the 1992 epoch-making Catholic bishops' Pastoral Letter, it was the Roman Catholic and to some extent the Presbyterian Churches which wielded tremendous 'political' influence on the Malawian society.

A narrow margin win at the polls appears to have placed wa Mutharika's government in a much weaker position in relation to the powerful opposition parties, Malawi

1 <http://www.maravipost.com/Malawi-scope/op-ed225-2011-ayear-of-missed-opportunities>, accessed June 25, 2012.

2 <http://www.maravipost.com/Malawi-scope/op-ed225-2011-ayear-of-missed-opportunities>, accessed June 25, 2012.

Congress Party and United Democratic Party in parliament from 2004 to 2009. Hence this paper will seek to address the issue of the response of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Church leaders in Malawi to the government's abuse of human rights in the years 2004-2012. It will seek to illustrate that amongst other factors, the apparent initial weak position of the wa Mutharika's government, President Bingu wa Mutharika's attitude towards the Churches' critical voice and of the opposition parties and the NGOs, influenced the Churches' response to the government's abuse of human rights.

2. THE RISE OF DICTATORIAL TENDENCIES

2.1 Mounting church-state confrontation – widening divisions in the churches: 2008-2010

The year 2010 was critical for Malawi for the following developments: a 'gay couple' was arrested and sentenced, the new national flag was launched amidst controversy – in a ceremony where all the Church leaders were not involved except for the Anglican Bishop of Upper Shire Diocese, economic woes continued; then the President called upon the members of his Democratic Progressive Party to beat up those who insulted him.³ In response to these developments, according to Reverend Macdonald Kadawati, then Chairman of the Public Affairs Committee Public Affairs Committee General Secretary of Blantyre Synod, the Public Affairs Committee issued a general communiqué at Lilongwe Hotel on 13 August 2012 and in *The Nation* of 12 March 2011 in which they condemned the laws (Questionnaire, Telephone interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12).

2.1.1 Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter – “The signs of the times”

It is in this context that on 31 October 2010 the Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter entitled, 'The Signs of the Times' (*The Nation*, 2/11/10).⁴ Unlike the landmark Pastoral Letter of 1992, the language of this letter was mild. Reflective in tone, the bishops took as their point of departure the Scriptural texts Ezekiel 33:7 and Luke 12:54-56 and Church tradition *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph 1. Commending government's efforts towards food security, the bishops then went out to condemn a wide range of issues, notably the lack of proper consultations on national issues, the lack of respect for the office of the Vice President, the use of public media to

3 <http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881367>, accessed June 20, 2012.

4 <http://www.trademarksa.org/news/malawi-full-pastoral-letter-catholic-bishops>, accessed June 20, 2012.

muzzle dissent, corruption, the dislocation of people to give way for government development projects without making proper provisions for them.⁵ It is strange that the bishops made no reference to the issue of homosexuality during the time when there were not only national but also international ramifications following the arrest of Mr Chimbalanga and Mr Mongeza allegedly for their homosexual acts. The fact that it was not mentioned would seem to suggest that the Church was not yet ready to make a pronouncement on an issue that was very sensitive. However, this was to change only in 2013.

More significantly, the Bishops condemned what they called ‘the big-man syndrome’ when young new blood is not allowed to enter into political leadership.⁶ In other words, according to the Bishops, Mutharika’s political style of leadership brooked no opposition, it was a kind of leadership that could be illustrated in the Malawian language proverb: ‘Two cocks cannot crow in the same kraal’, *Atambala awiri salilira mkhola limodzi*. The expulsion of the Vice President tended to demonstrate that ‘competitive leadership’ is not tolerated in Malawi culture.

The Bishops’ statement also created divisions within the Churches; this was witnessed more particularly in the Presbyterian Blantyre Synod. At a press conference, Reverend Mmangisa, the Moderator of Blantyre Synod, attacked the bishops. In response, his colleague, Reverend Kadawati, the General Secretary, endorsed the Bishops’ statement (Reverend Macdonald Kadawati, Questionnaire/Telephone Interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12). Thus Reverend Kadawati aligned the Synod with the position of the Catholic Church. Others construed the Moderator’s attack on the bishops as a sign of his open support for the wa Mutharika government (Interview, Willie Zeze, Stellenbosch, 05/03/12).

According to the Church leaders, the socio-economic and political situation created a sense of national urgency to the extent that they resolved to see the President. It is said that a date originally set as 1 December 2010 for an appointment with the President was postponed indefinitely as the officials made every effort to obstruct the meeting from taking place (Interview, Reverends Davidson Chifungo and Bosman Chitheka, Stellenbosch, 25/03/12). It would seem the lack of the opportunity to see the President privately impelled some Church leaders to resort to communicating to the President on public forums. For instance, at the National Day of Prayer organised by the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (Catholic Bishops) and the Malawi Council

5 <http://www.trademarksa.org/news/malawi-full-pastoral-letter-catholic-bishops>, accessed June 20, 2012.

6 <http://www.trademarksa.org/news/malawi-full-pastoral-letter-catholic-bishops>, accessed June 20, 2012.

of Churches (Protestant Church leaders) which the President attended in June 2011 at COMESA hall, in his sermon, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Mzuzu diocese, Joseph Mukasa Zuza, referred to ‘those who have more authority’ to threaten civil society, the faith community and the media in the face of the deteriorating social, economic, governance and political situation in Malawi (*Nyasa Times*, 25/08/11).⁷

At the *International Trade Fair* President wa Mutharika is reported to have responded saying that, ‘A couple of days ago I was in that building (COMESA hall) over there. Somebody there, complete with a clerical collar on his shirtfront, was saying Bingu you are the most stupid person *ndine chindere ndiwenso chitsiru*. I want you to realise that I tolerate a lot; but some are mistaking this tolerance for stupidity. Please, that is wrong. When I stand up to fight back, you will see.’ And then he went on to say, ‘I can ... let this country go on fire if you want to...I want to tell you enough is enough! I can’t stomach this insolence anymore (*Malawi News*, 25/08/11).’ It is clear that President wa Mutharika had come to regard the Churches and the civil rights groups as his rivals. These seemed to stage themselves like the opposition parties, which were at this stage politically weak.

On several occasions the government tried to silence its critics by intimidating or harassing them and in some cases perpetrating violence against them. For instance, on 20 August 2010, following his preaching against wa Mutharika’s style of leadership relating to the reshuffle of the cabinet ministers at a funeral, and the passing of unpopular bills, Reverend Levi Nyondo, the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia Synod, was arrested (*Malawi Today* 20/08/10).⁸ Yet according to Reverend Mezuwa Banda, Educational Secretary of the Livingstonia Synod, not only did the church leaders keep silent over the arrest, worse still the Nkhoma Synod in Lilongwe condemned the Livingstonia Synod itself as deserving the treatment [and] that the Government was justified in taking the action (Questionnaire, 06/05/12). On the other hand, Reverend Fathers Macdonald Sembereka and Michael Mtambo, both Anglican priests highly critical of the government’s abuse of human rights, had their houses petrol bombed allegedly by the government agents, as were the Roman Catholic Church’s Secretariat offices in Lilongwe (Questionnaire/Telephone interview, 08/06/12).

7 <http://www.nyasatimes.com2011/08/25/Mutharika-attacks-bishop-zuza>, accessed May 10, 2012.

8 <http://www.malawitoday.com/news/123279>, accessed June 18, 2012.

3. THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RELIGIOUS ADVISER

Divisions in the ranks of the clergy and the Churches have largely been attributed to the role of the Presidential Religious Advisor. Several respondents strongly claimed that the office of the Presidential Religious Advisor compromised the Churches' prophetic witness. For instance, Reverend Father Macdonald Sembereka claimed that he himself had been approached by the Religious Advisor who tried to 'buy him out of civil society' (Questionnaire/Telephone interview, 08/06/12). On the other hand, Reverend Mezuwa Banda noted that 'because of the perks that go with the office 'the holders of the office have put pressure [on] Churches to toe government's line'. He concluded saying that, 'they must be squarely blamed for the abuses' (Questionnaire, 06/05/12). Similarly, Reverend Macdonald Kadawati noted that 'the position became a political one as the advisor was used by the government/political masters to go out to distribute money with the aim of buying [government's] critics...' (Questionnaire/Telephone Interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12). These assertions highlight the weakness usually associated with money and power, issues that tended to be divisive.

4. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH NGOS

If the government used money to undermine the unity of the Churches, the international community sponsorship of human rights projects in the Churches became the front to criticise the government's human rights record.

Established on November 25, 1993, Blantyre Synod's Church and Society project concentrates on civic education, reporting and monitoring. It has designed a course to educate voters on their rights, which covers the theology of human rights, a course on democratic principles that covers the implications of voting, and basic human rights as contained in the international human rights conventions and other relevant instruments. The seminars are designed to train trainers, who will then proceed to the field and train others so as to facilitate the development of a community-based scheme. The project also works closely with the other human rights groups. In an attempt to make Western notions of justice meaningful to the rural people in Malawi, to their credit, the officials of the project have adapted Western concepts and structures relating to justice to traditional Malawian equivalents, hence court 1 is bwalo 1 and court 2 is bwalo 2 (court 2).

The Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia runs the largest local NGO in the Northern Region of Malawi and has co-operated with DanChurchAid since 2002. Human rights have become an important aspect of its work. Unlike the other human rights projects in the Presbyterian Church's Blantyre and Nkhoma Synods, in the Livingstonia Synod, the Church and Society project under the leadership of Moses

Mkandawire has been more militant. It organised the national protest in Northern Malawi on 20 July 2010.

Nkhoma Synod in Central Malawi runs a Church and Society desk that was established in 2003 which covers 117 congregations. The Synod encourages its members to engage in the social and political affairs of the nation with the aim of promoting unity and peace in the country in safeguarding the rule of law and human rights.

To a degree the power behind the Roman Catholic Bishops' strong voice against human rights abuse is the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). The CCJP was established in 1996, four years after the landmark Bishops' Pastoral Letter. It has translated the Malawi constitution in two languages that it distributes to villagers and educates them on human rights. It also works in partnership with government agencies and others to improve justice, democracy and governance.

Together with the NGOs, the Church projects on human rights receive funding for their programmes from overseas donors to whom they therefore are accountable. These include the Danish Fund for International Development, the American-sponsored TEAR Fund, the Danish International Development Aid (DaniDA), Danish Fund for Development and Norwegian Church Aid. Some of the directors of the NGOs having started as crusaders of human rights ended up being given posts in the wa Mutharika's government – consequently creating a perception that they sympathised with the government. For instance, Reverend Father Boniface Tamani of the Roman Catholic Church, who served as Public Affairs Committee Chairman (Public Affairs Committee) since 2001, was appointed to a committee of the Technical Advisor of the Malawi Bureau of Standards to the President, responsible for advising the President. These Overseas-funded organisations have raised an elitist group, graduates living in cities, whose socio-economic life starkly contrasts with that of the rural-based masses in the villages (Englund 2000: 5).⁹

That the President regarded the Churches and the NGOs as its enemies may be ascertained from his speech that he delivered during the graduation ceremony at Mzuzu University on 16 December 2010. He is quoted to have said, 'It was Jesus, the son of God who said turn the other cheek. Do you want me to be Jesus? That was Jesus, the son of God, I am Bingu, You slap me here, and I will hit you. That is the way life is.'¹⁰ Yet President wa Mutharika was also very much aware of the role of the donor money in influencing the activities of the NGOs in criticising human rights

9 http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0022278X00003487, accessed April 2, 2013.

10 <http://www.africaglobalvillage.com/pt/southern-Africa/Malawi/471>, accessed May 18, 2012.

and governance issues. In his speech at the DPP rally in February 2011, President wa Mutharika accused donors of breaching the Venice Convention by supporting NGOs.¹¹

As the Public Affairs Committee regularly and fiercely criticised the government's handling of human rights, the government viewed it as its adversary (Reverend Kadawati, Questionnaire/Telephone Interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12). As some Public Affairs Committee members witnessed violence perpetrated against some of the government's critics and experienced personal threats, they feared for their lives (Reverend Kadawati, Questionnaire/Telephone Interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12). Bishop James Tengatenga, Anglican bishop of Southern Malawi, asserted that fear of violence from the government security agents deterred some Church leaders outside the ranks of the Public Affairs Committee from involving themselves in its activities. He put it as follows, 'There were more serious issues involved. It was too dangerous – engagement is actually dangerous, real risk of bodily harm and other threats' (Questionnaire, 07/06/12).

As the leadership of the Public Affairs Committee found it increasingly difficult to raise their concerns with government officials including the President, it resorted to addressing the nation through the press. *The Nation* regularly published statements, which were critical of the government's handling of human rights and governance issues (Questionnaire/Telephone Interviews, Reverend Kadawati 15/05/12; 21/05/12). This angered the government to the extent that in March 2012, Mr Frank Mwenefumbo, National Youth Director of the ruling party DPP during the rally in Zomba, warned all civil servants to stop buying and reading the paper.¹² Irritated by the activities of the human rights 'activist' clergy, government officials, notably, Mr Simoni Vuwa Kaunda, the Minister of Information and Government Spokesperson, and Dr. Hetherwick Ntaba, the Presidential Spokesperson, would at Press Conferences challenge them to join politics rather than 'hide under the cloak of religion' (Reverend Father Sembereka, Questionnaire/Telephone interview, 08/06/12). This would suggest that the government was more uncomfortable with the 'political' activities of the Church leaders than the opposition parties.

Nonetheless while the Church leaders have been fairly quick to respond to the violation of group human rights, they have tended to be slow or not strong enough when it came to individual rights. In 2011 human rights activists, Messrs John Kapito, Billy Mayaya, Brian Nyasulu, Habiba Osman, Ben Chiza Mkandawire and

11 <http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20111110>, accessed 5 May 2012.

12 <http://www.maravipost.com/Malawi-nation-news/Malawi-political-views/614>, accessed June 2, 2012.

Comfort Chiseko as well as Presidential candidate Atupele Muluzi were arrested and detained. Several respondents noted that ‘the Churches were silent on this issue’ (Bishop Tengtenga, Questionnaire, 07/06/12; Reverend Kadawati, Questionnaire/ Telephone Interviews, 15/05/12; 21/05/12). However, it was the Church leaders’ organised national protest that was to shake the government.

5. JULY 2011 NATIONAL PROTEST

The Church leaders’ failure to see the President to address the deteriorating economic crisis, worsening diplomatic relations with the neighbouring states and in particular the British government, governance issues, created a sense of national emergency. It was in view of this that the Catholic Bishops, leaders of the Public Affairs Committee (consisting largely of Protestant Churches), among others led by Bishop James Tengtenga, the Anglican Bishop of Southern Malawi, the civil society and others organised a national protest on 20 July 2011 with a view to putting pressure on the government to ‘resign’ or reform. During the course of the protest, acting under the provisions of the Police Bill Act of 2010, the police shot and killed 18 and arrested 2 275 people.¹³

In the aftermath of the police killing of four people in Kafukule, Mzimba district in Northern Malawi, Moses Mkandawire, the Director of Church and Society Programme of the Livingstonia Synod ‘called for the establishment of the Police Complaints Commission as a means to end Malawi Police Services impunity.’ He went further to assert that, ‘There is nobody to monitor their conduct which seems to be devoid of human rights.’¹⁴ In the meantime, the Public Affairs Committee condemned the violence and the killings. Commenting on its activities, President Bakili Muluzi noted that at ‘a critical time the Public Affairs Committee was a voice of the voiceless’ in Malawi (Interview, former State President of Malawi, Bakili Muluzi, Stellenbosch, 17/06/12).

6. NKHOMA SYNOD PASTORAL LETTER 2012

In the meantime on 2 April 2012, Nkhoma Synod issued a Pastoral Letter entitled, ‘Exercising Our Faith through Prayer, In Our Time, In Our nation’¹⁵ which

13 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Malawian_Protests, accessed June 12, 2012.

14 <http://www.nyasatimes.com/Malawi/2012/02/02/church-calls-for-end-polcies-impunity>, accessed May 18, 2012.

15 See <http://munthalikondwani.blogspot.com/2012/04/full-ccap-nkhoma-synod-pastoral-letter.html>, accessed 5/3/12.

was critical of governance and human rights issues in society (Interview with Reverends Davidson Chifungo and Bosman Chitheka, Stellenbosch, 25/03/12). Their action surprised other Churches since for a long time the Synod had never publicly commented on governance and human rights issues. Unlike the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter of 2010 which is theologically integrated, solidly backed by Scriptural references and tradition and was fairly direct in its thrust, this letter sounded like a litany of prayers, exhortations to the government, lacking sting. It exhorted the faithful to pray for the alleviation of social ills in society, complained about unfulfilled promises of money and development projects from the President in Central Malawi, and gave advice to the President on justice issues. The Letter has three Scriptural references. It referred to their members 'as the light and salt of the world' (Matt. 5:13-16) and urged their members to pray for the nation because as the leadership stated 'whatever happens to our country politically, socially and economically will affect us too' (Jer. 29:7).

On the controversial issue of homosexuality, however, with no reference to Scriptural texts, the Pastoral Letter merely condemned the practice on the premise that it '[was] biblically and culturally an evil that dehumanises people and provokes God's wrath.'¹⁶ No theological reflection was offered as to why they deemed homosexual as evil or why it was incompatible with 'Malawian culture.' That the Church leadership dismissed homosexuality merely on the basis that it was 'unbiblical' and 'incompatible' with Malawian culture would suggest that they had not yet worked out a theological stance to respond to a critical issue and consequently was not yet ready to engage seriously with the highly controversial issue that affected some Malawians.

The core of their criticism lay in the assertion,

We have to pray for our lawmakers to avoid being influenced by their political party biases when passing laws in parliament. Laws such as the Civil Procedures (Suits by or Against Government or Public Officers) including Injunctions, Section 46 of the Penal Code Amendment Act (discretionary control over the media)...only serve the interests of a few.¹⁷

The Letter concluded by citing John 8:12 asserting that 'Jesus is the Light to the world so are we. That Section 46 of the Penal Code caused a lot of pain and suffering to Malawians. That the leadership fell far short of condemning it and demanding its

16 See <http://munthalikondwani.blogspot.com/2012/04/full-ccap-nkhoma-synod-pastoral-letter.html>, accessed 5/3/12.

17 See <http://munthalikondwani.blogspot.com/2012/04/full-ccap-nkhoma-synod-pastoral-letter.html>, accessed 5/3/12.

repeal is strange ‘only serving the interests of a few.’ One gets the impression from the Letter that in the view of the leadership ‘prayer’ was a panacea to the social evils and human rights abuse in Malawi.

Commenting on this law on 25th June 2012, President Bakili Muluzi, stated, ‘those laws virtually robbed Malawians of their social freedom privately and publicly’ (Interviews, former President, Bakili Muluzi, Stellenbosch, 17/06/12; Reverends Davidson Chifungo and Bosman Chitheka, Stellenbosch, 25/03/12).

However, the differences in the style and approach regarding the Roman Catholic Pastoral Letter of 31 October 2010 and the Nkhoma Synod Pastoral Letter lie in the fact that the Catholic Church had a longer tradition of drafting and promulgating Pastoral Letters on which it relied while for the Nkhoma Synod it was the first time that it promulgated one.

Nonetheless, the Pastoral Letter provoked a response from the government. The Civic Education Minister, Mrs Patricia Kaliati, claimed that the Church leaders’ motive to write the letter was the unfulfilled pledge of K10 M (\$59 880) by the President (*Nyasa Times* 03/04/12).¹⁸ It would seem that Mrs Kaliati’s claim was not entirely misplaced. This has been disputed by some Church leaders. For instance, Reverend Macdonald Kadawati argued that ‘the minister tried to detract from the real national issues that the nation was facing’ (Questionnaire/ Interview, 17/06/12).

The 2 April 2012 Pastoral Letter followed the one which was drafted in 2011 and was signed by 32 clergy. The Letter was never promulgated as the senior leaders of the Synod refused to endorse it (Interview, Reverend Dr. Zeze, Stellenbosch, 05/03/12). Since the leaders did not endorse the Letter, their action created perceptions that they sympathised with the government (Interview, Reverend John Gondwe, Stellenbosch, 05/03/12). Though the Letter addressed issues similar to the 2010 Catholic Bishops’ Letter nonetheless it raised critical issues that demanded urgent solutions. After faltering for a while, and despite joining the others late in the struggle for human rights, it was a courageous stance on the part of the Nkhoma Synod clergy; their voice added to that of many in society who were crying for justice

7. MALAWIAN CULTURE/S AND HUMAN RIGHTS

7.1 Gay rights opposed to Malawian culture?

No issue in Malawi has demonstrated the difficulty of understanding on one hand the interface between human rights and Malawian cultural view relating to

¹⁸ [Nyasatimes.com/Malawi](http://nyasatimes.com/Malawi), accessed 25 May 2012.

sexual orientation and Christian morality on the other as gay rights. The arrest of the 'homosexual' couples, Chimbalanga and Mongeza and their conviction to 14 years in prison in 2010 in Malawi caused an international furore much like the homosexual death sentence bill passed in Uganda two years ago. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon's swift flight to Malawi to plead for their clemency signified this.¹⁹ The Churches' response that homosexuality was against Malawian culture and unchristian raised further criticism from amongst others, the NGOs.²⁰

The Malawi Council of Churches, representing the Protestant Churches in Malawi, advised the government to retain current laws against homosexuality in the criminal code and to disregard the pressure from donor countries, advising the countries to 'respect Malawi's cultural and religious values and refrain from using aid as a means of forcing the country to legalise sinful acts like homosexuality in the name of human rights.' On the other hand, the Catholic Archbishop of Blantyre, Tarcisius Gervasio Ziyaye, never issued a statement either in favour of the sentence or in condemnation of the treatment,²¹ but the NGOs condemned the government and the Churches for their harsh reaction towards a homosexual couple. As it were, common opposition to homosexuality seemed to unite the Churches and the government.

The episode raised the issue of how a country that subscribed to the UN charter of human rights could deprive a 'gay couple' of their rights to sexual orientation. The Churches disapproval of homosexual rights may suggest inconsistency on their part as the Churches supported all other rights as enshrined in the constitution. Or it may also imply that the Churches did not fully understand the secular notion of human rights. Yet at stake here is also the issue whether gay rights conflicted with Malawian/cultural norms of sexual behaviour.

According to Thoko Kaime, 'Culture profoundly affects the articulation and implementation of any social standards because of its function and constant influence on human motivation and behaviour (Kaime 2009: 172)'. He further argued that, 'The ability of members of a cultural tradition to take alternative courses of action is conditioned by the broad parameters of their culture' (173). The Church leaders' argument invoking culture and religion shows the extent to which these factors have influenced their and Malawians' view of human rights. Even though there is no such thing as 'a homogeneous culture', nevertheless basic common principles of behaviour underlie almost all tribal cultural norms in Malawi and by extension Africa.

19 <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE64506I20100529>, accessed May 18, 2012.

20 <http://www.voanews.com/content/butty-malawi-gays-church-18march10-88325027/15377.html>, accessed June 18, 2012.

21 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Malawi, accessed May 20, 2012.

Though Malawian languages do not have the concept of ‘human rights’ in their vocabulary, nonetheless, traditionally Malawian cultural norms have always conceived the dignity of the persons, not in terms of asserting the ‘individual’ rights, rather as an intrinsic part of the ‘rights of the community.’ The Malawian notion of human rights is entailed in the saying ‘birth rights’ conceived as *ufulu wachibadwidwe*, denoting some ‘entitlement’ to rights.

But as de Gaay Fortman argued, ‘Whereas international human rights do not in any way refer to spiritual roots of the conviction that human dignity must be protected against any abuse of power, in an African setting it is abundantly clear that human rights is a mission that cannot be separated from people’s religious convictions’ (2004: 9). In other words, culture and religious convictions influence the interpretation and understanding of human rights. Thus Western cultural norms have to be received and interpreted within the framework of a local culture otherwise they lose their authenticity. Local cultural tools therefore constitute the only criteria on which a cultural norm has to be judged and interpreted and therefore considered valid.

Finally, there is no doubt whatsoever that the promotion of human rights has been a positive development in Malawi. However tendencies of anti-social behaviour have also surfaced which appear to undermine some positive aspects of traditional values of communal life. Today in contrast to the ‘disciplined’ social life which was imposed and regulated under the Banda regime it is not uncommon to hear or see some young people displaying arrogant behaviour to their parents or some senior members in the community in the name of *ufulu wachibadwidwe*. For instance, in 2007, the author experienced a situation in a bus where a young man to the dismay of the other passengers, refused to surrender his seat to an elderly sickly man because as he claimed ‘he had more right to sit there than the old man.’ In this respect, human rights viewed as entitlements border on disrespect or arrogance. There are others who refuse to get involved in community work in the villages as they proclaim their ‘birth-right freedom.’ In this case, insolence or irresponsibility is confused with exercise of one’s human rights.

8. CONCLUSION

In the preceding discussion, I have shown that the Churches responded to the issue of human rights on two levels. The first area involved the work of human rights projects in the Churches, which through its programmes tried to make people aware of their rights. In this respect, the role of the international donor community in funding the Churches’ human rights projects and the NGOs was critical to the promotion of human rights culture in Malawi. The second category entailed the Church leaders issuing public statements in the press or in the form of Pastoral

Letters addressed more immediately to their faithful and more widely to the nation. This form of the Churches' social witness was fairly strong in denouncing the abuse of human rights and drawing the government's attention to governance issues. That the government adopted an adversarial attitude to the Church leaders and others suggests the extent to which the Church leaders had become effective in speaking for the voiceless majority. Nonetheless, in some respects their social witness was not consistent enough as they failed to uphold the rights of a 'homosexual couple.' To some extent their witness was undermined by two major factors, namely: divisions in its ranks, which were attributed to intimidation, harassment, and in some cases violence perpetrated by state agents and its officials against its critics. Divisions in the Churches were said to be enhanced by the office of the Presidential Advisor on Religious Affairs who allegedly offered financial rewards to some clergy. It has also been highlighted that the Wa Mutharika government's adversarial attitude to the Church leaders and other critics reflected Malawian cultural intolerance to opposition and rival leaders that challenged government.

The issue of gay rights in the context of Malawian culture raises a question whether human rights as a Western construct conflict with the norms of a particular culture? The other question that is equally valid is, are human rights meant to be universally valid? Or do they have to be superimposed on a local culture? To what extent can human rights supersede the cultural norms of conduct? These are issues that would need further study. Though Malawian languages do not have the concept of 'human rights' in their vocabulary, nonetheless, traditionally Malawian cultural norms have always maintained the dignity of the persons within the framework, not of the 'individual' but rather as an intrinsic part of the communities. Western cultural norms have to be received and interpreted within the framework of a local culture otherwise they risk being irrelevant in the particular context. Local cultural tools therefore constitute a critical framework in which universal human rights can be interpreted and received.

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TREFWOORDE

Malawi

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“It is better to build a bridge...” Using the praxis cycle of Holland and Henriot in discerning an African Reformed missional ecclesiology¹

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ABSTRACT

Reformed churches in Africa need bridge-building, uniting ecclesiologies. From the challenges on local congregational, but also at denominational level, it seems as if ecclesial apartheid (sadly) remains. From an (Southern) African Reformed perspective, I argue however that all is not lost. The question is how can our different theologies bridge these gaps? In this respect, the current conversations on “missional” and “emergent church” may be signs of hope. These notions can play a key role in bridging this gap between an ecclesiocentric, colonial ecclesiology and postcolonial ecclesiologies, which discern the *Missio Dei* afresh in the contemporary context. In my recent doctoral research I took up this challenge and used an adapted or what I prefer to call a “remixed” version of a praxis methodology to develop postcolonial (Southern) African missional ecclesiologies. I reflect on the usage of this methodology in order to make proposals on its relevance in the wider discourse on developing African missional ecclesiologies.

1 This article has come a long way. It is based on my doctoral research in Missiology which was finally completed in 2013 (Nel 2013). An earlier version of this article was also presented at an international conference in Utrecht, The Netherlands, 21-25 June 2010, at the Protestant Theological University. The theme for the conference was, “Being surprised by God: Embodied Ecclesiology in Local Contexts”. Financial support from the Unisa, College of Human Sciences is acknowledged with gratitude.



1. ON BRIDGING THE GAP

Any African missional ecclesiology must engage one of the bitterest legacies of colonialism - ecclesial *apartheid*. In particular, a racially segregated (Southern) African Reformed church will continue to fail playing any meaningful role in the deep transformation of its contemporary and future contexts. This article contends that fundamental to our tolerance of this impotence, is the persistence of a colonial ecclesiology, which goes through as *gereformeerd* (“reformed”). The key question in this article is *how* we are to discern an appropriate African Reformed missional ecclesiology. The challenge for African Reformed churches is not about better marketing; it is about a way of doing theology, in particular postcolonial theology. It is about discernment.

Frans Weijzen (2005:129) argues convincingly that a different way of doing theology developed from the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EAWOT) in response to dissatisfaction with Eurocentric theological epistemology and methodology². He surmises that the gap between the practitioners of two forms of theology, what he calls, the “academics” and “activists”, has widened over the past few decades. This dichotomy is an oversimplification. However, it does highlight a deepening of the divides. Is it possible to bridge these gaps?

One of the experiences in ministry that sparked my interest in this quest for discerning a specific missional, which I would qualify as a postcolonial³, African ecclesiology (Nel 2013:2-3), relates to a telephone call I received as a minister in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), in the urban context of Riverlea, Johannesburg. A secretary at a *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK) (“Dutch Reformed Church”) congregation, in one of our neighbouring presbyteries, called me and explained that they met two families from different URCSA congregations who relocated from another province. These families wanted her now, to request their membership certificates, in order for them to join this NGK congregation - after all, she continued, they are now staying in “their” congregational boundaries.

2 See also Torres and Fabella (1976); Bosch (1991:423-425; 432f).

3 The term “postcolonial” is used in a specific way in my work. I agree with various scholars (Sugirtharajah 2003:15-16; Kim 2007:162; McEwan 2009:17-26) who makes a useful distinction between “post-colonial” (with a hyphen) which indicate “a chronological moment when many of the West’s formerly colonised ‘nations’ became politically independent” (Kim 2007:163) and, on the other hand, “postcolonial” (without the hyphen) i.e., “continuity with the anticolonial movement ... a critical stance against colonialism in the past and its ideological rhetoric (colonial discourse) that is still operative in the present” (Ibid).

She didn't know any contact details of the URCSA congregations where they were coming from and this was the reason why I was contacted. I thought of previous collegial conversations with the particular minister of this congregation, but also, with other colleagues from the NGK, in the context of the current re-unification process amongst the various racially segregated Reformed churches. In these conversations, we as black ministers from URCSA, related to our white colleagues in the NGK, the new (vulnerable) situation that many of our URCSA congregations now face in the aftermath of the well-known political system of Apartheid, which in our view, was a particular expression of colonialism⁴. In our experience, our younger professional members and especially their children, who now after the abolishing of apartheid rightfully have the means and freedom to relocate to the former all-white residential areas. This means that they move "out" of the existing URCSA congregational boundaries. In the mean time, however, our preliminary observations were that the white NGK members relocate elsewhere⁵. So, seemingly, on the one hand this white NGK (numerically shrinking) congregation was finally "open" to receive black members, yet on the other hand, though, it seems some, highly mobile URCSA members were discontinuing their church membership. Some, as my story indicates, opt to assimilate into the NGK⁶ and it seems that, at least this white congregation welcomes this movement. For these receiving congregations often, this migration by the black members into the exclusively white church is indicative of it now being a successful *missional* church that has (thankfully!) transcended its racist past.

In the church re-unification conversations, we discussed the implications of this mobility, and dreamt of how, specifically on the basis of the Confession of Belhar, i.e.,

4 In my thesis, I show how the system of apartheid is to be seen as a particular expression of internal colonialism (Nel 2013:26f.; 69-71).

5 Whilst one could see this migration as the ecclesial face of the "white-flight", this view however needs to be substantiated by more research. This was however not the focus of my project and therefore not of this article. My interest was with the impact of the migration of black members on the specific Reformed congregations, from black townships. My understanding of the term "black" (and "white") here is informed by the work of Biko (2006[1978]:96-108) and Boesak (2009:48-62) in an inclusive praxis sense, and is not simplistically, to be confused with the designations by the Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950 or recent post-apartheid legislation, like the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998.

6 Some members also migrate to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (Hendriks 2003:10), whilst others simply leave the institutional church altogether. There isn't however any specific quantitative studies available currently, done by URCSA itself, on these shifts of membership. My (perhaps anecdotal) observations here are simply based on my ministry experience in the urban context of Johannesburg, Gauteng.

in the spirit of unity, reconciliation and justice different congregations, (including white NGK congregations in these suburbs), could partner with the congregations in the black townships to locate these members or possibly explore new expressions of bridge-building or *uniting* congregations in order to address this new situation⁷.

Upon receiving this telephone call, however, I was not sure whether I had to be hopeful or distraught. The questions kept haunting me. Is this what “missional church” is all about? Is a “new” missional ecclesiology to be discerned along the same (apartheid) boundaries, where white suburban congregations, now struggling for institutional survival, and therefore are under pressure to expand numerically, to be at the expense of the poor and black church, back in the townships? Did we transcend our ecclesial apartheid? It seemed as if another crucial set of questions needed to be asked together, in order to take the scholarly discourse about missional ecclesiology to be discerned further than the mere *angst* over institutional survival on both sides of the divide. It is also not merely about the transfer of membership certificates, almost exclusively from poor, black congregations in townships to rich, white congregations in the suburbs. A key question it seems was however how to bridge these gaps by probing the deeper reasons for these movements of families, in particular the younger, mobile generations. For the particular churches from the Dutch Reformed tradition in (Southern) Africa, this question needed to be engaged theologically by engaging the Confession of Belhar on the imperatives for ecclesial re-unification, reconciliation and justice, or what I simply call, building bridges in a new context. We needed to ask how is this physical mobility is tied to or influencing a deeper mobility, in terms of their understandings of faith, church and witness? Whilst from my immediate need as a minister, this was a critical moment of discernment for the congregations in the black townships and for re-unification of (Southern) African Reformed churches; it also raised the broader critical questions for an appropriate (Southern) African missional ecclesiology - beyond the colonial-shaped, church boundaries. The official system of apartheid was abolished in 1994, but ecclesially it seemed that a new expression of colonialism was still to be in place. This experience therefor called for a broader, *postcolonial* missional conversation.

7 See Esterhuizen & Marais (2007:116-121) and Z.Nel & Setshedi (2007:130-134) for reflections on the unification of congregations and presbyteries, within the struggles for unification, healing and reconciliation of the broader Dutch Reformed Church cluster of churches in Southern Africa.

2. A BROADER MISSIONAL CONVERSATION

These experiences (and unanswered questions) are neither unique to the urban context, the various reformed churches, nor to (Southern] Africa. A growing percentage of younger generations enthusiastically explore new, exciting possibilities that global and local transformations offer⁸. The phenomenon of members and more pertinent younger, mobile generations migrating within, between, or even out of congregations and denominations is not new⁹ and could relate to many factors¹⁰. The concept “missional” therefore has gained currency, especially since the publication of *Missional Church: A Vision for sending the church in North America*

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- 8 From a North American context, Tony Jones (2008) and Kinnaman (Kinnaman & Lyons 2007) are some of the leading voices who also highlight this membership mobility and institutional decline in their context. Jones himself became one of the well-known personalities, alongside Brian McLaren, Tim Keel, Karin Ward, Doug Paggit and others, in what became known as the “Emerging Church Movement” (ECM). The initiative called Fresh Expressions, from the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom, as well as the work of theologians like Tobias Faix (2007) and Henk de Roest (2008; 2010) from Western Europe, should also be noted. Hence we see more discourses on the question of how to understand and address the challenges raised by newer (mobile) generations to the mission of the church.
- 9 Earlier quantitative studies, at least in the South African context, confirm a decisive transfer of membership from mainline churches to what they would call, “independent” churches (Froise 2000; Siaki 2002; Hendriks 2003). In 1998 already, Hendriks and Erasmus established the Unit for Religious Demographic Research, which aimed at tracing crucial demographic changes affecting communities as well as congregations (Hendriks 2003:5-6). They conclude that a key and typical feature is this numerical decline of mainline churches, parallel to the growth of African Independent churches and, what they call, “Pentecostal/Charismatic” churches. They predict: ‘We expect these trends to continue in South Africa with a rise in the typical America-oriented Independent Churches (the Pentecostal/Charismatic category)’ (Hendriks and Erasmus 2001:29-30).
- 10 A publication by the Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research (Kritzinger JJ 2002) identifies various relevant issues in the (Southern) African context, namely, the growing religious pluralism, declining official membership in mainline denominations over against rising membership in the African Initiated/Independent Churches (AIC’s), African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa’s development (NEPAD), the HIV/AIDS pandemic and, linked to this, the growth of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC’s), ecological concerns, racial and cultural polarization, and crime. Missiologists and church leaders under the leadership of Hendriks within the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT), a network of theological institutions in sub-Saharan Africa, largely agree with this assessment (Hendriks 2004:15-17; 72-102; 2012:12-135; 2013:40-58).

(Guder 1998). After this we saw in South Africa too an upsurge of publications¹¹ and online sources¹² of reflection on “missional” ecclesiology or “emergent”¹³ church.

No church community can ignore these realities. In his inaugural address, a little more than 10 years ago, as professor in Practical Theology at the University of Stellenbosch, Hendriks warned tellingly that the various Reformed churches in particular (!) are unaware of what he called the “gravity of their situation” (2003:10). The crucial question for this conversation is indeed: How do we, as a particular cluster (family) of African Reformed churches, respond to these shifts? The challenge is indeed not simplistically about how ministers can be better marketers - but whether these churches are able to understand, interpret and learn from the seemingly different ways in which these younger (mobile) generations re-imagine faith, church and witness. The aim of this *broader* conversation is to discern God’s redemptive presence for today, for a particular faith tradition, with a particular history, faced with pertinent challenges in (Southern] Africa. This conversation is broader than a repeat of the Northern and Western focus, on postmodern questions. This new reality unfolding today is a particular post-colonial¹⁴ context, and it poses important questions to the prevailing missiological understandings of what it means

11 See amongst others Hendriks 2004; Dames 2007:34-53; Wepener 2008:206-219, Müller 2008:53-65; Niemandt 2007, 2010:397-413; M.Nel 2011; M.Nel & Ungerer 2011

12 Various prominent South African blogs (<http://mycontemplations.wordpress.com>, <http://allaboutcori.blogspot.com>, <http://www.futurechurch.co.za>, www.emergentafrica.com, www.nextchurch.wordpress.com, etc) also focus on discussing and defining missional ecclesiology, whilst others like, <http://www.spirituality.org.za/blogger.html>, <http://khanya.wordpress.com>, <http://stephenmurray.wordpress.com> are broader in scope, but they also deal at various points, on this topic.

13 It however need to be noted that the concept “emergent” or “emerging” is not new and preceded this predominantly North American usage. The first EATWOT publication, edited by Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella, was initially entitled, *The Emergent Gospel* (1978), whilst the publication of Johann Baptist Metz, *Jenseits bürgerlicher Religion. Reden über die Zukunft des Christentums* (1980), was translated in English and published as *The Emergent Church: The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois world* (1981). Bosch also spoke of “an emerging missionary ecclesiology” (1991:372) or sometimes simply refers to “emerging ecclesiology”.

14 Whilst I simply use the term “post-colonial” here, I concede that the current transformations also intersect with what others would name “post-modern”, “post-Christendom” or “post-racial”. Detweiler and Taylor (2003:31-58), speak of a ‘post-national, post-literal, post-scientific, post-technological, post-sexual, post-racial, post-human, post-traumatic, post-therapeutic, post-ethical, post-institutional, and post-Christian era.’ This is overstating the point. The meanings and context of the usage “post”, in these various concepts, are not the same and cannot be used interchangeably.

to be church. How are we, as particular, uniting African Reformed churches then to understand and respond meaningfully, but more pertinently, missiologically, to these transformations? This question is therefore both missiological and ecclesiological and touches on matters of ecclesial transformation in a particular way.

3. ECCLESIAL TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS *MISSIONAL* CHURCH?

From a missiological perspective, inspired by Bosch's notion of an "emerging, ecumenical paradigm in mission" (Bosch 1991:368f.) and challenged by my ministry experience, I share this agenda and passion for ecclesial transformation towards a missional church. However, the key challenge is to clarify the meaning of the concepts we use, within a specific African context. After presenting an overview of the key quantitative data on the movements of church members, Hendriks also argues convincingly that this situation calls for "transformation" and what he calls "transformation management" (Hendriks 2003:11-12) if churches want to be reckoned with as a "church of the future"¹⁵.

Hendriks is explicit that "transformation" is to be understood in terms of seven priority areas that, as he notes, correspond with the broader literature from the "Western Established Churches" and the "Gospel and Our Culture" movement¹⁶ in the USA and other continents. What is of interest is referred to in one of his priority areas, which in my view gives perspective to his other priority areas. This perspective holds the promise to address the challenges raised in my opening story. In describing this priority area for ecclesial transformation, Hendriks explains,

The church of the future focuses on the community's needs. In other words, this is where a *missional* ecclesiology, a mission-oriented church concept, redirects the church's focus away from its devotion to self-maintenance to the need around it, the need of its neighbour (2003:12-emphasis added).

Yet, the discourses that they represent are central to the questions I ask within a specific context.

- 15 The notion of *The future of the church, the church of the future*, was appropriately the title of the inaugural lecture of Hendriks as professor in Practical Theology (2003).
- 16 See his footnotes 7 & 8. The "Gospel and Our Culture Network" was started formally in 1992 in the United Kingdom, inspired by the work of missiologist and Bishop Lesslie Newbigin. The aim of this movement, which spread rapidly over the Western world, was to reflect critically on the witness of the gospel in a predominantly Western cultural context.

In my mind, the challenge he raises here and which he links to “recent” Northern and Western ecclesiological discourses, is however rooted much deeper back and would therefore, point in a different direction. These processes indeed draw inspiration from the wells of the earlier works of Karl Barth, Jürgen Moltmann, but also missiologists like Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch, who served in India and South Africa respectively. JNJ Kritzing (2007) also makes the critical point that the concept “missional” itself is not so new. The journal of the Southern African Missiological Society (SAMS), started by Bosch in 1968, was first called “Missionaria”, but changed in 1973 to “Missionalia” (JNJ Kritzing and Saayman 2011:110). However, the theological implications of this term were not discussed at the time, although concepts like *sending* (“mission”), *sendeling* (“missionary”), etc., were already hotly contested and vigorously debated in the South African context and Bosch himself was evidently aware of these contestations (Bosch 1991:226-230; 302-313). Why and how would I then continue to use the term “missional”, given this contestation and the fact that the church in which I serve as a minister, formerly known as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), and now the URCSA, stopped using concepts like *sending* and *sendeling* in the late 1970s and replaced them with *getuienis* (“witness”) (Botha 1986:35)?

I agree with this shift within the former DRMC. It came as a result of the deep scars left by colonial mission and social crusades, but more so, the fundamental theological flaws inherent in its usage (Bosch 1979:12-21; Saayman 2010:6-8). The question raised by my introductory story is however, whether the concept or the notion of *getuienis* (as introduced) in the DRMC and URCSA, is still able to articulate God’s liberating presence and movement in the face of a post-apartheid, but neo-colonial context, and whether, since the introduction of this new term, it was able to do so at all on a local, congregational level? It would seem that the sound Barthian theology behind the shift in the concepts (Bosch 1979:170; 1991:389-393), in particular the shift from an ecclesiocentric towards a Trinitarian missiology (Bosch 1979:240), has largely been missed at a local congregational level in the former DRMC and later URCSA¹⁷. Despite the efforts from the various denominational functionaries and

17 In this respect see Botha (1986:38f), who serves for many years as full time secretary of the Witness Commission of the DRMC and now URCSA and stated this reality in 1986, but also suggests the reasons for it, as fundamentally related to the missionary ecclesiology of the NGK. I agree with Botha, but my observation is that not much has changed since 1986. I also refer in my thesis (Nel 2013:298-306) to the work of the Commission for Restructuring within the former DRMC and URCSA, where it was in particular Dames who played a key role. However the assessment of this commission’s work is not the focus of this article.

structures¹⁸, fit seems to me that most of the ordinary members in congregations the popular meaning of the word *getuiedenis* has remained confined to individual storytelling, traditional evangelism programmes and outreach campaigns organised by enthusiastic individuals and committees, within congregations. The underlying colonial edifice has remained intact. In the URCSA context, *getuiedenis* has largely remains the verbal witnessing of individuals, not the transformation of congregations or the reshaping of congregational or social boundaries. In the history of the various Dutch Reformed churches, it remained the well-known and vocal prophetic witness of individual personalities, but also a small, yet influential dissident movements, influenced largely by South African Black Theology, within and beyond the church, that have embodied the shift. Officially, the particular tradition within church meetings led to the writing and “acceptance” of various faith statements or even confessions¹⁹. These important influences were correctly expressed as a “prophetic voice” or, a “prophetic church”, however, the question remains whether these initiatives did flow self-consciously from congregational transformation or from influential individual members – often professional theologians or articulate ministers – as well as from dissident movements, functioning mostly independent of and sometimes in opposition, to the institutional churches.

It is within this context then that the notion of ecclesial transformation towards “missional church” – focusing on the local context – was introduced²⁰ in Southern

18 Cf Skema van Werksaamhede van die NGSK (1986:452-453; 455; 489-490) and (1990:473-478; 504-531), which shows, amongst other study reports, how the Synod of this church also initiated in 1986, an *Ad Hoc Kommissie vir Bedieningsstrukture* (“Ad Hoc Commission for Ministry Structures”), which were to study the restructuring within the context of unification. JJ Kritzinger’s *’n Missionêre Bediening-op weg na strukture vir ’n jong kerk* (JJ Kritzinger 1979), although still steeped in an older missionary paradigm, also shows the earlier search within the NGKA for a different expression of ministry at congregational level. The question however remains whether these efforts prepared us for the challenges today.

19 In this regard I refer to the Belhar Confession and the Accra Declaration that, although influenced by various movements within the institutional churches, were in their final form drafted and adopted by ecclesial meetings. This particular process stands in the European confessing tradition, which hails from the 16th century onwards. Whilst I remain part of a church which subscribes to this tradition, my question here is not the process, but whether the shift in the terminology has fundamentally shaped our ecclesiology and praxis, expressed also as congregations.

20 Whilst the notion of “missional church” was introduced as a new phase in the focus of Practical Theology on congregations, formerly known as *gemeentebou* (“Congregational upbuilding”), this new emphasis also drew selectively on the insights from Missiology and, to a lesser degree, from Systematic Theology. Through the influences of those

Africa, as a possible answer to the transformation of the local faith community (or congregation) in the new context (Hendriks 2004; Dames 2007; Van der Watt 2010; Niemandt 2010, 2012). However, as Saayman (2010:13) shows, this new “church conversation”²¹ remained a Northern affair. It remained a movement of diverse conversations, primarily via various informal gatherings, social networking platforms and publications, but also to what they call, “church experiments” that address questions of church, theology and culture, especially in what is framed as the postmodern context²².

I agree in this respect with Saayman’s (2010:5-16) basic argument and his warning that the term *missional* relates in this usage specifically to what he calls its ‘very introverted countenance’ (:14) and, as indicated, an explicit ‘postmodern North Atlantic culture.’ (:15) This argument, in my view, however does not totally disqualify the usage of the term. Saayman is not against the usage of terms, which include the Latin root “*missio*”, or “sending” (in Afrikaans), irrespective of its ambiguous origins and usage. Like Bosch (1979:239-240; 1991:289-293), he argues that the term “*missio*”, in spite of its defective colonial usage later, is rooted in Trinitarian relations, where the Father sent the Son, and the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to continue the work of caring, healing, saving and loving the world. The Latin notion of *missio Dei* (God’s mission), used since the 1950s, invokes this meaning to indicate the triune God’s movement to and on behalf of His world, and this has been expressed ever-since, especially in ecumenical documents. I would therefore opt for a critical, constructive engagement with our colleagues from Practical Theology, while pointing out (with Saayman) that the meaning and the concept itself is certainly not new within ecumenical discourse. In speaking of *missional* church, then, I use it as a bridge which can connect the developments in missionary ecclesiology, influenced by the various emerging theologies, specifically now to the theory and practice of

practical theologians who focussed on *gemeentebou*, South African congregations within the white, Afrikaans Dutch Reformed churches, quickly accepted these developments and were vigorously calling other congregations, including black ones to follow suit. The assumption seems to be that these theological frameworks, contextual analyses and their practical implications can seamlessly be applied to an African context.

- 21 Gibbs and Bolger (2005:29) show that most participants in these developments prefer to be known as a “conversation”, instead of a movement, church or denomination. This is because of the inherent diversity of expressions, but also of contexts and views.
- 22 See www.emergentvillage.com. Gibbs and Bolger simply state, “Emerging churches embody their way of life within postmodern culture” (2005:44). Within the South African context, the subtitle of Niemandt’s publication on dreaming for a new reality of being church is, *Geloofsgemeenskappe in pas met ’n postmoderne wêreld* (“Faith communities in step with a postmodern world”) (2007).

local congregations. That will be how I use this term. Whilst the use of the term *getuienis* represented in my own URCSA context, an important and necessary break with the (now largely defunct) Afrikaans term *sending* (“mission”), as argued for, it simply did not connect to the stories and journeys, i.e., the praxis of congregations, as they tried to discern their calling collectively in new contexts. I understand and critically utilise the concept “missional” then, to be the adjective which qualifies that the church, and specifically a congregation, is by its very nature, i.e., at the core of its identity, to be conceptualised, structured and continuously transformed by the fact that it exists by virtue of the triune God’s mission towards, in and with the world. In this respect, I argue that this concept can expand and deepen the understanding of a concept like *getuienis* to suggest fundamentally more than verbal storytelling, evangelistic or social action campaigns or church programmes initiated by individuals, activists or certain groups, commissions and agencies, even when these are called “ministries” within the church. This denotes a particular qualifying self-understanding or identity, an overall intention that permeates the very being of the church in all its different expressions.

In doing this, we should therefore identify at least two interfaces of this discourse. *Firstly*, it seems that this discourse takes place between or better, bridge the gaps between two (or more) distinct – but seemingly convergent – theological disciplines or theological orientations. Within the discipline of Practical Theology in South Africa, since the timely challenge from Hendriks, there has therefore been a welcome flourishing of output related to “missional church” and “missional ecclesiology”. I referred to these in earlier sections. However, I would suggest that the work from Systematic Theology (Mofokeng 1983; Durand 2002; Phiri & Nadar 2005; Jonker 2008), but also black and African theologians, which in the EATWOT usage of the term, continue to remain critical for a study of any (Southern) African ecclesiology. *Secondly*, the flourishing of output, specifically in Practical Theology, relates on another level to the many high profile and newer ecclesial formations, “church experiments”, research bodies, as well as networks. A key consideration, taking serious the challenge by Saayman, is however whether the new challenges we face and the responses to it are related and coherent in terms of the aforementioned scholarly discourses that have been and are (still) taking place amongst related disciplines. Further, I would ask, whether it is relevant to address the challenges raised in my (our) stories, i.e., serving the on-going post-colonial transformations impacting our communities, in relation to God’s action. What is needed is therefore to push through to a postcolonial theological practice in order to discern a (Southern) African missional ecclesiology.

4. TOWARDS AN (SOUTHERN) AFRICAN POSTCOLONIAL THEOLOGICAL PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT

In the previous section, I identified three key considerations, namely firstly the bridge between different theological disciplines, secondly, to respect the body of knowledge build up over many decades of discourse and thirdly the crucial challenge of understanding our current transformations, impacting local communities in relation to God's own action, or *Missio Dei*. One may in this respect also identify the interface between what Hendriks calls the Northern or Western discourses – which I call “Western” – and those from the global South – which Saayman (2000) and I call the “South”. My interest here is self-consciously focussed on an African missional ecclesiology, in other words it is done consciously from a *Southern* (and) *African* context and perspective, which contributes to the broader conversation. This is a geographical, but also ideological qualification. We are practicing theology consciously from the perspective of the question: What has been happening in the faith communities of the South? As we indicated however, our theological practice comes from somewhere.

In the history of *gereformeerde* church formation, in the (Southern] African context, a particular theological method has shaped the church's response to the unique challenges. The development of ecclesiology followed a particular trajectory, especially within Systematic Theology. For the well-known South African systematic theologian, the late WD Jonker, this was a European based theology (1991:120). Jonker conceded that his own theological struggle was informed by European theology. For him it was focussed against the *volkskerk* (“people's church”] idea of his own church, the NGK, which in his view seriously threatened the identity of the church as church of Christ. This colonial ecclesiology, propagated as a pristine *gereformeerde* ecclesiology was for him, the focus of his theological task, i.e., to give clarity on the Reformed understanding of the word of salvation and the vision of the church. Jonker reflects on his own role,

Ek het teologies probeer om die religieus-gekleurde id e van 'n besondere geroepenheid van die Afrikaner te ontmitologiseer en die Christelike identiteit van die kerk op die voorgrond te stel (:121).

He then argues, in response to the challenge that his theology was not African enough. For him, what is needed for the broader faith community (for the future church) is for younger scholars, perhaps African scholars themselves (:121), to take up the responsibility and develop new theologies in response to the challenges facing South Africa. Jonker echoes here the challenge of postcolonial thinker-activist, Steve

Bantu Biko, almost twenty years earlier, as he addressed black ministers in 1973 (2006:58-65). Biko's challenge was,

These are the topics that black ministers of religion must begin to talk about seriously if they are to save Christianity from falling foul with black people particularly young people. The time has come for our theologians to take up the cudgels of the fight by restoring meaning and direction in the black man's understanding of God ... Finally, I would like to remind the black ministry, and indeed all black people that God is not in the habit of coming down from heaven to solve people's problems on earth' (:64-65)

For Biko, this response came at the time, in the form of South African Black Theology of Liberation. Christianity must have meaning for people in their situations. Hence for him, "Black Theology is a situational interpretation of Christianity" (:64). For some scholars, like Wijzen, however this is a practice-oriented theology, i.e., a theology that is focussed on "practical ministry". His concern is that this focus or perhaps obsession, leads not to "academic" research, which is theory based and theory driven. This assessment however doesn't take into account the specific context within which these theologies of liberation emerged. It emerged as a response to a form of "academic" theology, which didn't bridge the gap between the reality of the faith community and the biblical gospel. Whilst all theology, and therefore also Missiology, is contextual, I agree with Maluleke (2001: 366), though, who warns that the notion of contextual theology could become another, what he calls, "grand narrative paradigm", that "can and has been experienced as a new theological hegemony gently sneaking in to blur the painful and deadly practices of theological marginalization"(Ibid). Maluleke continues his analysis, stating, "The positioning of an umbrella paradigm of Contextual Theology may serve to obscure rather than to reveal situations of injustice and inequality. Hence, it does not necessarily follow that contextual theology is concerned with the injustice suffered by marginalised and oppressed peoples." (2001:366-367) He quotes Mosala who states, "The real question is not whether theology is contextual, but what is the socio-political context out of which it serves. Is it a theology of the context of the oppressors or is it a theology of the context of the oppressed?" In this vein, he therefore rejects the notion of a universal, "umbrella paradigm for all Black and African theology" (2001:371) and suggest that we should rather speak of Black and African theologies.

5. BRIDGING THE GAP

This is the place where I find myself, theoretically, proposing a critical African theological methodology where the local context of oppression, as it manifest itself in new ways, is the starting point, but also the space where we find concrete new

creative expressions of the *Missio Dei*. This methodology is a circle of discernment to bridge the gaps identified. The pastoral circle has been introduced by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot (1983) initially as a pastoral approach in this context, and in my mind, this approach takes up these challenges also as a concrete theological practice to bridge the gaps as indicated earlier; it addresses the false dichotomy between an “activist” vs. “academic approach”. Whilst an “academic approach” (:7), for Holland and Henriot connotes study “in a detached, fairly abstract manner”, the notion of a circle or spiral also bridge the gap as it “looks at reality from an involved, historically committed stance, discerning the situation for the purpose of action” (:7), but also reflecting on the theories behind these. An activist approach, which is simply trapped in an essentialised ideological *volkskerk* (“people’s church”) ecclesiology, is also not enough. In my estimation, therefore, the “pastoral circle”, initially developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, as adapted for the South African situation (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1990: 13), as well as appropriated as a missiological hermeneutical tool (Karecki (ed.) 2002:138-141; 2005:159-173) as a spiral, offers a valuable starting point, route and practice in this methodology. This is not a mechanical step-by-step process or recipe to be followed. The mixing of, or the creative tensions between a conscious awareness of where we come from as a community of practitioners and scholars (“insertion”), with a deepening of our understanding of the current transformations (“contextual analysis”), in the light of the *Missio Dei* (“theological reflection”), as a hermeneutical community, is a spiritual practice of discernment.

Wijsen (2005:129-147) is correct then when he argues that in bridging the gap between, what he calls theology in the “West” and the “Rest (of the World)”, this approach indeed “helps to develop grounded theories in theology” (:130). This approach is also appropriate in order to better collaborate on addressing issues like globalisation and marginalization within a neo-colonial context. It is indeed here, in bridging these gaps, where the possibility of bridge-building ecclesiologies can be discerned; it is here where ecclesial apartheid can be confronted and overcome, as African Reformed faith communities.

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*The Afrikaner nation's search for a Christian
identity as a consequence of the Reformed theology
that was practiced between 1961 and 1990*

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ABSTRACT

The role that the traditional Afrikaner churches played together with their way of practicing theology during the years of struggle, contributed to the fact that a large part of the Afrikaner community, which are mostly Christians, currently find themselves in an identity crisis. The triangular Afrikaner identity framework collapsed when it was declared false, hypocritical and sectarian, not only by the international community but also by those who helped to build this identity from inside. Unable to recover from this onslaught on their identity during the crucial years of transformation, the majority of the Afrikaner community is still struggling to give new meaning and content to their identity framework. Cognitive dissonance can help to identify the issues that need to be redressed. Refocusing on the valuable and sustainable content that should constitute the anchors of the Afrikaner identity frame, this group can implement its Christian calling to bring positive change to South Africa.



INTRODUCTION

“Afrikaners had always been fairly certain of what they were. Nowadays, they are no longer so sure” (Cloete 1992:42). 20 years after South Africa changed to a democratic country, a large portion of the Afrikaner community (white and Afrikaans speaking – Cloete 1992:42) still finds itself amidst a debilitating identity crisis. This crisis started about the same time that the so called ‘struggle for justice’¹ ended, with the reversal of the theological sanctification of apartheid (Steyn 2005:550) which had a huge impact on the lives of Afrikaners who tend to shape their whole worldview and their actions around their interpretation of religious issues. The confession about the error of apartheid split the once large Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) and is currently causing havoc in the Nederduitsch Hervormde Church.

From an Afrikaner point of view, the ‘struggle for justice’ did not end in 1990; in fact it started all over again when apartheid was dismantled. The years since 1961, when South Africa became a republic, until 1990 were in Afrikaner eyes golden years. For the first time since the British rule started in 1795, Afrikaners were free from oppression and relieved from their ‘underdog’ status. For about thirty years the Afrikaners were reaping the fruits of their long ‘struggle for justice’: they saw themselves as victims that rose from poverty, oppression and exploitation to establish an independent nation.

Unfortunately the triangular based identity framework that grew strong before 1961, was abused and misused by both church and state to such an extent that after 1994 many Afrikaners felt that they could no longer identify with it. The content of the three pillars of Reformed religion, historical perception and unique Afrikaner characteristics, were by then questioned by the Afrikaners themselves. After 1994, their changed status in society revived the Afrikaner feeling of being victimised and insecure. Insecurity together with the confrontation of the content of their identity brought a crisis. This crisis provides opportunities for change and development away from the political focus that dictated the history of the Afrikaner nation towards positive individual growth and a paradigm shift in group behaviour.

THE IDENTITY CRISIS

Being far less self-confident (Patterson 1957:279) and far less principled than what popular scholarship (Venter 1929:9,10; Van Zonneveld 1987:20; Pretorius 1988:165)

1 A conference was held at the University of Stellenbosch in May 2012 on the theme: “The Reformed Churches in South Africa and the struggle for justice: remembering 1960-1990”.

and the media often portray and Afrikaners like to believe about themselves (Kinghorn 1994:393), a large number of Afrikaners were unable to adjust positively during the transformation period after 1994. General behaviour by this sector of the rainbow nation includes tell-tale signs of an identity crisis such as guilt or shame, fear, a sense of loss, and anger (Jansen 2009) which suggests that there is an urgent need to attend to important issues regarding Afrikaner identity (Verwey & Quayle, 2012).

We are living complex lives and our identities are often shaped by the large array of roles we are playing both in the community and in our private lives, resulting in multifarious identities which are constantly changing and developing. These changes can happen naturally when our roles change or it can be initiated through different stages of development. Identity changes can also be done intentionally. In both these cases, an identity crisis can develop when people are unable to cope with the intensity or direction of the changes.

An identity crisis can be described as a psychosocial state or condition of disorientation and role confusion. It is the result of conflicting experiences, pressures, and expectations and often goes hand in hand with an acute display of emotions (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/identity+crisis> accessed on 16 July 2012).

Traditionally, Afrikaner identity formed a triangle, with religion at the pinnacle, while perception of history and personal characteristics formed the two base corners. During the apartheid-years, all three of these anchors were used for political, social and economical gain. Violation of the principles of the Christian faith to advance the political agenda of the government and to promote the traditional Reformed churches as institutions (Oliver 2011:73) eroded the integrity of Afrikaner identity. Cognitive dissonance can be used to encourage Afrikaners to fill this existing framework with new content to refocus the identity of the Afrikaner nation to be in line with both its religion and history. In order to actively change the identity of a nation, one needs to understand why the change is necessary (De Villiers 1988). For the Afrikaner nation, the search for a new identity is of the utmost importance because it will secure its existence and survival as a minority group within South Africa. The nation needs to recover its identity through the imperative lens of meta memories from salvation history (cf. Volf 2006). This could result in the Afrikaner nation living and proclaiming its identity in such a way that the Afrikaner nation could have a positive influence in South Africa (Oliver 2011:76).

TRADITIONAL AFRIKANER IDENTITY

The character of a nation has a sense of permanence and it is traceable from one generation to the next (Wilcocks 1945:287). National identity is formed by the unique characteristics that distinguish one group of people from other groups. It includes matters like language, culture, worldview, and religion. Religion is seen as an important modifier of identity (Riesebrodt 2000:2). This sense of permanence is, however, not hegemonically defined and fixed (Todd 2005:432) as nations develop and their circumstances change constantly. Traditional Afrikaner identity could provide a solid foundation for an identity filled with content that could aid Afrikaners in the current circumstances.

Traditional Afrikaner identity and culture melted into one solid mass, making it nearly impossible to distinguish between its character, religion and worldview (Erlank 1952:12; cf. Sutherland 2013). Afrikaner history is divided into five general periods (Akenson 1992:59,60). The initial establishment of the settlement and Afrikaner identity was done before 1806. By 1795 the Afrikaner identity was strong enough to resist the British attempt to turn Afrikaners into English citizens (Akenson 1992:62; Pont 1970:12). Afrikaner identity grew strong during the British occupation (1806-1870). Between 1870 and 1910 rapid cultural, political and economical developments brought consolidation of Afrikaner identity. Between 1910 and 1961 the Afrikaner identity development gained an aspect of nationality.

Meyer (1940:27) describes the main characteristic of the Afrikaner nation as being Calvinistic, thus putting the Christian faith of this group of people right on top of their identity framework (an identity framework is a cropping tool to identify and protect the most important characteristics of a person or nation - Gardner 2003). Looking at the Afrikaner identity as it functioned during the twentieth century, two other important pillars supported religion to form the anchors to the triangular mass that served as the Afrikaner identity framework. The pinnacle of the triangle (religion) is linked to the Afrikaner way of dealing with history, which forms one of the bottom anchor points. These two pillars are linked with the third and final cornerstone of Afrikaner identity; the shared characteristics of the nation that influence and determine their actions and behaviour.

Religion

Although South Africa was never officially a Christian country, Protestant religion played a major role in the political, economic and social history and development of the country since the European settlement (Oliver 2008:93-114). Especially during the formation phase (until 1795), religion was not restricted to the walls of the

church but was practised in everyday life, and it even determined the worldview and management of state affairs (Van der Walt 1938:68). The first colonists at the Cape of Good Hope used their religion as a form of identity to distinguish themselves from the local inhabitants and the imported slaves (Giliomee 2009:41).

The Bible was the focus point of Afrikaner life (Wichmann 1941:3). Protestant religion together with the influence of Romanticism with its emphasis on religion, freedom and history (Oliver 2006b:1479) and the unique living conditions during the developing stage of the young nation all work together to structure the Afrikaner identity into a triangle with religion, as the most important part, at the top. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Afrikaner nation was called ‘unconsciously religious’ (Rose 1902:11) and more than a century later, the majority of the Afrikaners can still be identified by their religion (about 87% of the White population of South Africa are Christians – Statistics South Africa 2004:28).

Sadly, the Afrikaner emphasis on religion was also responsible for negative developments in South Africa. There are three major problems that emerged from the focus on Afrikaner religion. In the first place, the schismatic tendency (Steyn 2006:674) and power struggles (Schutte 1943:30) resulted in three different Calvinistic churches formed in less than three decades within one country and one nation (Oliver 2005:41). These strives never stopped (Oliver 2011) and splintering within the traditional churches is still happening (Beukes 2012). Secondly, the selective theology that was preached and practised led to the development of the theological justification of apartheid which in its turn led to the third problem where the church became the handmaid of the a political power.

Afrikaners never were a unified nation and the wide variety of religious influences such as Pietism, Methodism, Neo-Calvinism and Liberal Theology (Oliver 2006b:1473-1475), led to individual conclusions and severe conflict on issues such as doctrine, morals and the interpretation of the Biblical message. Afrikaners tend to see themselves as ‘owners’ of a certain church or tradition (Oliver 2007:34) and disregard others who do not share their beliefs.

In general, traditional Afrikaner theology that formed the backbone of early twentieth century Afrikaner identity centred on the Old Testament covenant. As a result, they saw themselves as a modern counterpart of an Old Testament Tribe (Calpin 1944:17; Mackenzie 1899:158). This emphasis on OT religion in conjunction with the Calvinistic predestination doctrine later developed into heresy (Oliver 2011:78): After the second Anglo-Boer War the unique syncretistic civil religion with the shell of Puritanism and an idealistic concept of theocracy developed which

later provided a Biblical founding for apartheid (Hanekom 1948) and managed to trap Afrikaner religion to become the slave of politics (Oliver 2010).

The Afrikaner churches became involved in politics, which diverted the focus away from the core principles of the Christian religion. A too strong tie to tradition and a dependency paradigm (Oliver 2009b:180) led to further deviation from the Gospel message. In society, the Afrikaner churches gained enormous political, social and economic powers. This led to the adulteration of Afrikaner religion and Afrikaner identity.

When Apartheid was finally exposed, it caused a huge loss in credibility, status and power within the traditional Afrikaans speaking churches. The traumatic result was paralysing to the churches that seemed to lose their voices and ability to act positively (Steyn 2005:551). The pinnacle of Afrikaner identity; the strong reliance on religion; crumbled under the word 'sectarian' that was stick to it first by the international community and in the last years of the 'struggle' also by its own leaders and members. A sharp decrease in membership followed (Oliver 2006a:118). The exodus from the traditional Afrikaans speaking churches cannot be seen as only a result of the disappointment and shock regarding the fall of apartheid. Various other contributions such as secularisation and a search for Spiritual growth and renewal are also among the contributing factors. However, the fact remain that the traditional Afrikaans speaking churches suffered a huge setback. The lack of sufficient dynamic leadership during these crucial events resulted in the churches losing their credibility not only in society but also in the eyes of church members and former church members.

History

Vosloo (2013) refers to the close relationship between memory and identity. He also refers to Sabbagh (2009:194) who indicates that identity is intertwined with memories and that our memories are often sculpt to fit in with who we are or who we want to be. History forms a very important part of the Afrikaner identity (both of who we are and who we want to be). The remark made by Volf (2006:24) that we are because of what we remember about ourselves and also because of what other people remember about us, also seems to be true of the Afrikaner identity cornerstone of historical perception. As memory tends to play parts with the minds of individuals (Bjorklund 2000), the history of a nation can also be shaped to focus on things, as we would like them to have happened or remembered. There are several ways in which this can be traced in Afrikaner history.

Firstly, as has been already said, Afrikaners never formed a unified nation. Dualisms within their identity framework always existed (Coetzee 1977:154 – hero's and cowards, fighters and joiners, believers and unbelievers) and therefore, there is usually more than one account of events recorded depending on the bias and intentions of the historians. Up to this day there is not a single work written about the history of Christianity in South Africa or the general history of the country that comply with or accommodate the diverse opinions of the Afrikaners (cf. Oliver 2011:74).

Secondly, history is too often employed to focus on past grievances, resulting in identity frames conceived in terms of a culture of grievance. The most important characteristic of the group is their status as historical victims (Black 2008). Afrikaner identity was for a long time just that – the remembrance and cherishing of a selected number of grievances, such as the injustice suffered at Slagtersnek, the bloodshed prior to the events at Blood River and the devastating events that took place during the Second Anglo-Boer War (Oliver 2011:83). Maybe because it is still too fresh in the memory of those affected by the Bush War, the impact and trauma that this war had on Afrikaner minds is not yet fully understood and explained (Oliver 2011:83). The political changes that were implemented since 1994, once again put the spotlight on the Afrikaners as victims and underdogs (Oliver 2011:83), taking them back to focusing on grievances, both past and present.

It is clear that history to the Afrikaners is filled with emotion and religious interpretations. Therefore, Afrikaner history is called sacred (Den Boer 1966:33; Van Jaarsveld 1961:228), bias (Denis 1997:86), apologetic (Van Jaarsveld 1958:47,8), schismatic (Gilliomee 2009:179), conservative and narrow-minded (Liebenberg 1966:61), sectarian and imperial (MacCulloch 1987:3,5). The task of historians is to explain and prepare people to consider alternatives (Gilliomee 2003:35). The time is ripe to view the South African history and church history from a new perspective, leading Afrikaners to cherish their remarkable history and unique way of linking history to faith and religion in such a way that it can once again form a cornerstone to their identity.

Character

There is a distinction between the actual (not always so heroic and principled) identity of the Afrikaner nation and the prototype heroic example of the Afrikaner that was developed for later generations to follow (Coetzee 1977:152,153). Focusing on what Afrikaners ought to be, and illustrating it with an incomplete and fictitious picture of Afrikaner characteristics (Booyens 1970:30), did much harm to the identity of Afrikaners who through the years tried, but more often than not failed to

live up to the high standards and expectations painted by historians and educators. Afrikaners themselves tend to evaluate these characteristics as positive but they are currently constantly confronted with the negative aspects resulting in role confusion and disorientation – the symptoms of an identity crisis.

Afrikaners used to see themselves as religious but were labelled as sectarians due to their apartheid-theology (Oliver 2011:77). Afrikaners used to be conservative but were accused of being narrow-minded (Oliver 2011:79). They see themselves as individualistic but others saw them as stubborn (Oliver 2011:79). To themselves they are cunning but to others they are arrogant and dishonest (Oliver 2011:82). The ever-present sense of humour of the Afrikaner is frowned upon as hempen humour by outsiders (Oliver 2011:76). Of course, it should be kept in mind that the degree in which these characteristics can be detected in individuals and groups vary to a large extent, as can be expected.

Just as the only difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist is in the eye of the beholder, so the Afrikaner characteristics can be viewed from either the positive or the negative side. An evaluation of the value and worth and need for nurturing certain Afrikaner characteristics can and should help the confused people to regain a strong sense of identity.

Historians have the goal to clarify the foundations of contemporary society and to identify remedial actions necessary for enhancing a collective awareness of society as a moral community (Nytagodien & Neal 2004:381). Therefore historians and church historians, researching the Reformed theology (and how it functioned in Afrikaner history) and its consequences for Afrikaner identity, could assist in providing content and perspective to rebuild the identity frame of the Afrikaner nation.

A POSSIBLE NEW IDENTITY FOR THE AFRIKANERS

Traditional Afrikaner identity was focused on religion. However, Afrikaners (nor anybody else) cannot claim to be Christians when the basic Christian principles of faith are violated (Oliver 2009a:77). The lesson to be learned is never to let religion become an instrument of ideology. The first step on the way to transforming their religion to faith would be to face and acknowledge the mistakes made in the past. Christian faith should not be characterised by selective theology, schism or ideology dressed as theology. Religion should not be made a handmaid or a hostage of political powers.

Once these errors are addressed, attention would also spread to the supporting pillars of history and behaviour. In the past, Afrikaner historians and church historians

determined what ought to be remembered and how it should be remembered with chosen traumas and glories (cf. Volkan 1994). Painting the picture from a different perspective, cognitive dissonance would become inevitable, opening possibilities for a paradigm shift in both worldview and behaviour.

Leon Festinger (1957) describes cognitive dissonance as the feeling of tension that most people experience when they recognise that they hold two ‘cognitions’ – ideas, beliefs, opinions – that contradict each other. Cognitive dissonance is used as a tool by educators to indicate contradictions between beliefs and actions in order to bring about positive change in both attitude and behaviour, to align beliefs and actions with each other. There are several ways in which people try to avoid this confrontation in order to steer clear of the challenge (Travis and Aronson 2008). Most importantly the dissonance can be ignored or blocked and the importance and impact of the issue can also be down scaled.

It is difficult to change the perceptions of people who choose to believe their own interpretation of events (MacMillan 2009:87). Afrikaners who are now middle-aged (who went to school during the high days of apartheid and were forced to do national service in the South African Defence Force for two years) are perhaps the group that is most intensely affected by the rapidly changing world around them. It is also this group that is affected by affirmative action (Gilliomee 2009:688) and drastic role changes within the household and traditional worldview (Oliver 2011:81). Therefore it is not strange that confrontation with members of this group often results in negation when challenged about the need to redress their identity framework (cf. Verwey and Quayle 2012).

Cooper (2007:74) suggests that dissonance should begin with focusing on the actions of people. Rick Warren (2005) says that the first Reformation was about creeds. The second reformation needs to focus on deeds. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his address at the conference held at Stellenbosch on the struggle for justice, said that we as South Africans are in desperate need of a transformation from words to deeds. In practical terms and regarding the building of Afrikaner identity, this would mean the following: The fact that other Christians were able to label Afrikaner religion (including the religious coloured perception of history and the self-perception of the Afrikaner) as sectarian, schismatic, selective and false because of the theological justification of apartheid, should activate cognitive dissonance. This, in turn should open opportunities for positive change. Intensive self-evaluation and testing against Christian principles would bring changes to the way theology is practised. Christianity is not an ideology but a religion. Faith does not change institutions; it changes people - both in what they believe and what they do. If Christianity is used as framework to focus on history, and Christian principles are implemented for all

sides of the story, Afrikaner history can once again become usable and a positive encouragement to stay true to the Christian faith and act as example for others. The same religious foundation that served as an identity for the first settlers in the Cape, and later on guarded the young nation against British imperialism and became the capstone of Afrikaner identity, could serve this nation again to rebuild a positive identity. This could be a starting point to bring about positive change and fresh content to the Afrikaner identity framework. The biggest influence would be on the behaviour of Afrikaners that should constantly be adjusted according to Christian values.

CONCLUSION

Afrikaner identity forms a triangle with religion at the pinnacle, while the two base corners are anchored in perception of history and personal characteristics. Afrikaners themselves are often not aware of the influence that these three concepts have on their identity and actions as well as on the way other people judge them. Although all three of these corners have strong and positive aspects, a crisis developed because of confrontation with the negative aspects. These weak points disintegrated during the 1990s and the crippled structure is in urgent need of repair to once again serve as the pillars around which the Afrikaner nation can build its identity as part of the South African rainbow nation.

Religious revivalism is a powerful tool to provide a new self-esteem and a Christian identity with an eschatological perspective. Cognitive dissonance could act as a vehicle to activate the process. The more Afrikaners are made aware of the discrepancies that existed between their faith and their behaviour, the more likely the possibility of change would become.

By focusing on the positive aspects of these pillars and rebuilding it with strong positive content, the focus could shift to once again make the Afrikaner nation a key role player in the development and progress of South Africa. By concentrating on the main point that most Afrikaners share, namely their Christian faith, it is possible to rebuild the Afrikaner identity frame into a strong national asset.

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The Belhar Confession in its historical context

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ABSTRACT

In this article I work with the presupposition that the time has arrived that the Belhar Confession should be detached from being a document utilized for advocacy perusal only. The Belhar Confession should rather be interrogated as a historical document in the true sense of the word. This will be helpful in construing the Belhar Confession as a discursive instrument in the discourse on social justice issues both local and global. The article is divided into four parts. In the first part the focus is largely on the socio political context of SA during 1960-1990. In the second part the influence of the ecumenical movement on the discourse on social justice is being attended to. Thirdly I attend to the drafting of the Belhar Confession and lastly attention will be given to the reception of the Belhar Confession (1982-1990).



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ANALYSING THE BELHAR CONFESSION AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

A few months ago I held in my hand for the first time the original texts of the Belhar Confession, handwritten in green and red ink by Prof. Dirkie Smit, one of the co-drafters of the Belhar Confession. Until recently, the original documents were never disclosed. Smit kept the original draft of the Belhar Confession in a drawer in his study for more than thirty years. Suddenly I had to ask myself the very same questions which researchers ask themselves concerning historical texts. What is the context? What is the setting? (*Sitz im Leben?*). Where, why and when was it written? Who is the author and what is her or his place, position, role, reputation, status in society? What kind of document is it? What point is the author trying to make? What was the motive (purpose) of the author(s) in preparing it? Who was it written for? What is known about the audience? What is the argument and strategy utilised by the authors to achieve their goals? During the past three decades, the interpretation of the Belhar Confession had been for the most part ideologically loaded due to the fact that it was mainly used for advocacy perusal.¹ The file, which Dirkie Smit handed to me, consists of the early handwritten notes, the first draft, the first English and German translations of the Belhar Confession as well as the accompanying letter. Much had changed in the final draft before it was tabled at the synod. The insertions, changes, deletions and even omissions by the commission can easily be seen in the original handwritten documents. The handwritten text was typed by Ms. Pontac, the administrative clerk in Prof. Jaap Durand's office at University of the Western Cape (UWC).

1 Van Houten, R. L. 1997. Introduction. *Theological Forum* 25, (No. 4, December 1997); CRCNA Acts 1990 Online at <http://www.crcna.org/pages/belhar.cfm> [Accessed 22 March 2011]; Adler, E. 1974. *A small beginning. An assessment of the first five years of the Programme to Combat Racism*. Geneva: WCC; Botha, J. 1991. Belhar: Yes or no? *Theological Forum* 19, (No. 2, July), 2-10; Cloete, G. D. & Smit, D. J. 1984. *A Moment of Truth: The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Klooster, F. 1991. The Belhar Confession 1986. *Theological Forum* 19, (No.1, March), 14-17; McGarrahan, E. T. 2010. A Study of the Belhar Confession and its Accompanying Letter. Office of Theology and Worship, General Assembly Council Presbyterian Church (USA). Online at <https://www.pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=3353&promoid=17> [Accessed 22 March 2011]; Meiring, P. 1991. The Belhar Confession 1986: A Dutch Reformed perspective. *Theological Forum* 19, (No. 1, March 1991), 18-23.

WHEN IN TIME WAS THE BELHAR CONFESSION WRITTEN?

One of the first questions one has to address, amongst others, is about the timeframe, namely: When was this document produced? Is it contemporary to the events/issues it describes? In what context was it produced? The place in time must be identified in order to understand whether the Belhar Confession has a certain effect on the status quo. The Belhar Confession, drafted in 1982 by the DRMC, has its roots in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa.

The international ecumenical movement played a critical role in the anti-apartheid struggle and the ultimate decision of the DRMC during their synod in September 1986. During the 1980s, the DRMC became a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), the World Council of Churches Programme (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) as well as the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Dirkie Smit represented the DRMC on the commission for human rights of the SACC.² The ecumenical movement influenced the discourse on race relations in the black Reformed churches in South Africa and ultimately the formation of the Belhar Confession. For example, the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism was extensively discussed at the DRMC synod in 1982, and it had a bearing on decisions made regarding racism and apartheid at the same synod. The DRMC sent a full delegation, spearheaded by Dr. Allan Boesak, to the WARC general assembly which met in August 1982 in Ottawa, Canada. In his paper "He made us all, but..." prepared for the assembly, Allan Boesak pointed out that the WARC had a responsibility towards its member churches in South Africa who suffered under the apartheid theology and policy³. Furthermore, Boesak introduced a motion at the assembly requesting that the WARC declare apartheid a heresy. Subsequently the WARC general assembly declared that the situation in South Africa constituted a status confessionis. According to Smit, one of the co-drafters of the Belhar Confession, the expression status confessionis means "that a Christian, a group of Christians, a church, or a group of churches are of the opinion that a situation has developed, a moment of truth has dawned, in which nothing less than the gospel itself, their most fundamental confession concerning the Christian gospel, is at stake, so that they feel compelled to witness and act over against this threat."⁴ Apartheid constituted a status confessionis in which the truth of the Gospel and the Reformed faith was at stake. Status confessionis therefore means that it was impossible to disagree on the issue of apartheid without the integrity of the common confession

2 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982 (Agenda and Proceedings DRMC 1982), 21.

3 Boesak, A. A. 1984. *Black and Reformed*. Bellville: Skotaville Publishers, 117.

4 Cloete & Smit, *A moment of truth*, 16.

as Reformed church being seriously endangered. The WARC declared with black Reformed Christians of South Africa that apartheid (separate development) is a sin, and that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the Gospel and, in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy.⁵ The WARC consequently suspended the membership of the DRC as well as that of the Nederduitsche Hervormde Kerk (NHK) in South Africa.

At the DRMC Synod of 1982, the members of the Confessing Circle played a pivotal role in the deliberations. The Confessing Circle, originally called the Broederkring (Circle of Brothers) (BK), was constituted by black and white clergy, evangelists, church council members and lay members of the DRMC and the DRCA. It had set itself the goal of guiding and pressuring the church in the struggle against apartheid and attaining church unity, especially affecting debates on synodical level with regard to social justice issues. Because of its opposition to apartheid, the members of the BK became victims of security legislation. The BK was viewed as the authentic voice of the oppressed within the DRCA and DRMC. The BK period represents the struggle within the church. The BK swayed the theological thinking of the DRMC and the DRCA, and ultimately influenced the drafting and acceptance of the Belhar Confession.⁶

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL LOCATION OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

Questions such as the following should be asked: Where, why and when was the Belhar Confession written? Where was this document produced? Does the geographical location influence the content? Where is the targeted audience located, and what is their situation? If the situation and location of the audience is misunderstood, the principles in the Belhar Confession, namely unity, reconciliation, and justice, can easily be misapplied. The Belhar Confession, like all other classical confessions, originated in a specific historical context. The Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, Barmen Declaration, et cetera, were undisputedly occasioned by the religious and political discourse in their countries of origin. In this regard, the Belhar Confession is no exception. The socio-political realities in apartheid South Africa had a bearing on the decisions of the DRMC synod of 1982,

5 WARC Seoul 1990. 1989 Proceedings of the 22nd General Council, ed. Edmond Perret, Geneva: WARC, 173-175, 279-281; Ottawa 1982. Proceedings of the 21st General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 177f., Ottawa, Canada, August 17-27, 1982. Geneva, Offices of the WARC, 1983.

6 *Submission of the URCSA to the TRC* 1997. URCSA: Bloemfontein, 1-5.

which convened in Belhar. The Belhar Confession is in the first instance restricted to the issues facing the Reformed churches in South Africa during apartheid. The name *Belhar* in the Confession refers to a township in Cape Town, constituted by the apartheid government for the so-called coloured people in which to reside. The apartheid government had set up semi-urban townships for black, Indian and coloured population groups, of which Belhar is merely one. The adoption of the Belhar Confession, therefore, did not take place in a political vacuum. It was adopted in a so-called coloured township, in a Reformed church especially constituted for people of mixed descent. The delegates at the DRMC synod of 1982 in Belhar were members of a racially segregated church which had been constituted by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC).

According to Coertzen (2010:51) there is a duality in the mission strategy of the DRC. On the one hand new converts from the so called heathendom became members of the existing congregations of the DRC, whilst on the other hand provisions had been made on a growing account for separate ministry to the “Coloured” church members. Until the end of the eighteenth century, converts from indigenous people, slaves and members of the DRC jointly attended services and received their sacraments together.⁷ After 1828, there were several problems in Stellenbosch, Calvinia, Caledon, Riversdale and the Swartland, relating to the admission of black Christians to the Lord’s Table.⁸ On 29 April 1829, the presbytery of Cape Town of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC) dealt with an enquiry of the Swartland congregation with regard to the administering of Holy Communion to people of mixed descent. At the 1829 synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, the issue with regard to administering Holy Communion to people of mixed descent came under discussion. The church council of Swartland submitted a motion relating to administering Holy Communion to people of mixed descent: “Of personen van de kleur, die door het doen van de belydenis en de toediening van den H. Doop tot leden van de Kerke zijn aangenomen – gelijk

7 Kriel, C. J. 1963. *Die geskiedenis van die Ned. Gereformeerde Sendingkerk in Suid-Afrika 1881-1956. 'n Historiese studie van die sendingwerk onder die Kleurlingbevolking van Kaapland* (The history of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa 1881-1956. A historical study of the mission work among the coloured people of the Cape Province). Paarl: Paarl drukpers, 54.

8 Loff, C. J. A. 1981. *Dogter of verstoteling? Kantaantekeninge by die geskiedenis van die Ned. Geref. Sendingkerk in Suid-Afrika*. (Daughter or ostracised? Side-notes to the history of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa). Cape Town: Maranatha, 18-19.

met geborene Kristenen het Avondmaal zal bediend worden.”⁹ Rev. D. F. Berrangé and the commissioner of politics, Sir J. A. Truter, also took part in the discussion and inter alia stated that the discussion of the question was indeed unworthy of Christianity.¹⁰ At the synod, the separation at the communion table based on colour was unanimously rejected. The resolution reads as follows: “Te verklaren, dat men dit voorstel tot geen onderwerp van deliberatie of beslissing by de Synode behoorde te maken; maar hetzelve als een onwrikbaren stelregel op het onfeilbaar Woord van God gegrond, behoort te merken; dat bij gevolg, alle Christen gemeenten, en elk Christen in het bijzonder, verplicht is overeenkomstig te denken en te handelen.”¹¹ With this resolution, the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa confirmed that all members, regardless of race, have access to the sacraments. The synods of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa of 1834, 1837 and 1857, again raised the issue of separate administration of the sacraments to the “gentiles.” In the “Ontwerp van bepalingen Der Hervormde Zending Genootschappen in de Ned. Herv. Gemeenten in Zuid-Afrika van 1834”, provisions had been made on the one side for the establishment of separate congregations for natives, but on the other side allowance was made for members of mixed descent to join existing DRC congregations.¹² The above-mentioned provisions with regard to mission can be seen as the DRC’s first mission policy. With the above-mentioned regulation, provision had been made for racially segregated congregations as well as the integration of races in one church. The first mission policy of the DRC was accepted in 1835 and was reviewed in 1837.¹³ In the regulation, provision was made for the establishment of free, but separated seats in the church for so-called heathen. Notwithstanding the decision of 1829, some congregations such as the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa Ceres generated funds in order to construct buildings where the “heathen” could receive catechism and where the sacraments could be administered to them. For example, in Swellendam, there was a separate building for “heathen”, which had

9 Acta van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Acts of the Dutch Reformed Church) 1829, 79, VI, 6. “Whether people of colour, who by being confirmed and having been baptised may be accepted as members of the church – together with born Christians will receive Holy Communion”).

10 Kriel, *Geskiedenis*, 55.

11 Acta NGK 1829, 71-72. “To declare that one should not make this recommendation a topic of consideration or decision at the synod; but take into account this topic as an unyielding principle in the infallible Word of God; that consequently, all Christian congregations, and each Christian particularly, are obliged to reason and act accordingly.”

12 Kriel, *Geskiedenis*, 49.

13 Adonis, J. A. 1982. *Die afgebreekte skeidsmuur weer opgebou*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 78.

already been completed during 1838.¹⁴ In 1855, 45 white members applied to the church council of Stockenström that leave should be granted to them to celebrate the Holy Communion separately. The church council of Stockenström rejected the request and referred it to the presbytery of Albany. The latter unanimously decided to recommend to the church council of Stockenström that due to the biases and weaknesses of some of the congregants, the Holy Communion should be administered separately to “Coloureds” and Whites.¹⁵ According to Nicolaas Hofmeyer there should not be separation between so “Coloureds” and Whites, but, with regard to the efficiency of ministry, members from the “heathendom” should be minister separately from Whites, but they should remain members of the same congregation (Coertzen 2010:52). Hofmeyer saw the middle way approach as the most feasible: “De middenweg tusschen beide is de verkieslijke” (Coertzen 2010:52).

At the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in 1857, the issue of having separate Holy Communion services for different racial groups was again discussed. Rev. R. Shand of Tulbagh tabled an overture with regard to the above-mentioned decision of the presbytery of Albany: “Of het de goedkeuring der Synode wegdraagt, dat in de Gemeenten der Nederduitsche-Gereformeerde Kerk, waar men het begeert, de gekleurden in een afzonderlijk gebouw, echter onder bestier en opzicht van den Kerkraad, alle voorregten der Christelijke Godsdiens afzonderlijk genieten zullen.”¹⁶ His submission was keenly debated at the synod: The question which had to be considered was whether people of mixed descent who had been baptised and confirmed as fully-fledged congregants should be allowed to partake in the Lord’s Supper together with white congregants, or whether the Holy Communion should be administered to them separately. On scriptural grounds, the synod could not approve this request. The synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (1857), however, did approve it, due to the “weakness of some”, to allow the creation of separate buildings for believers from heathendom.

De Synode beschouwt het wenschlijk en schrifmatig dat onze ledematen uit de Heidenen, in onze bestaande gemeenten opgenomen en ingelijfd worden, overal waar zulks geschieden kan; maar waar deze maatregel, ten gevolge van de zwakheid van sommigen de bevordering van de zaak van Christus onder de Heidenen, in de

14 Loff, *Dogter of verstoteling*, 22.

15 Kriel, *Geskiedenis*, 58.

16 Acta NGK 1857, 58, 60; Acta NGK 1857, 89, XII (5). “Whether the synod approves that in the congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church, where the desire exists, coloureds can enjoy all privileges of the Christian religion separately in a separate building, but under administration and supervision of the church council.”

weg zoude staan, de gemeenten uit de Heidenen opgerigt, of nog op te rigten, hare Christelijke voorregten in een afzonderlijk gebouw of gesticht genieten zal.¹⁷

According to Coertzen (2010:53) this decision, which put the context to allow separate ministries to people from different racial backgrounds, above Scripture, led ultimately to the constitution of separate churches in the Reformed Family. According to Chris Loff, the decision of the 1857 synod of the DRC opened the door for the establishment of racially segregated churches in 1881, namely the establishment of the Dutch Reformed Zendingkerk (Mission Church) of South Africa.¹⁸ With the above-mentioned decision, church apartheid was officially introduced into the Dutch Reformed Church. One should however, take cognisance of the fact that a large number of churches for people of mixed descent (“oefeninghuise” of “gestichte”) already existed by 1857. In Wagenmakersvallei and Tulbagh and many other places, the sacraments had been administered, long before the decision of 1857, separately to people of mixed descent. At the 1857 synod of the DRC, the church praxis merely became church policy. This decision led to the division of Christians on the basis of colour at the table of the Lord as a matter of practice and policy, and paved the way for the establishment of the first racially segregated Reformed church in South Africa, and ultimately societal apartheid. In October 1881, the DRC constituted the DRMC for people of mixed descent in Wellington. From 1910 until 1951, the DRC founded racially segregated churches in each province of South Africa, for African people in particular, which unified in 1963 in order to form the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). In 1968, the DRC founded a church for Indian people, namely the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA).

The DRC also played a pivotal role in the theological justification of what was later known as separate development. At a conference organised by the mission office of the DRC, which took place from 4-6 April 1950 in Bloemfontein, the “Naturellevraagstuk” (The Native Question) was discussed. “Die Naturellevraagstuk”¹⁹ tried to spell out exactly how different nations could live equally but separately in one geographical

17 The decision of the DRC synod reads as follows: “The Synod considers it desirable and according to the Holy Scripture that our heathen members (non-whites) be accepted and initiated into our congregations wherever it is possible; but where this measure, as result of the weakness of some, would stand in the way of promoting the work of Christ among the heathen people, then congregations set up among the heathen, or still to be set up, should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution” (my translation), Acta NGK 1857, 60.

18 Loff, *Dogter of verstoteling*, 21.

19 *Die Naturellevraagstuk: referate gelewer op die Kerklike Kongres van die Gefedereerde Ned. Geref. Kerke in Suid-Afrika, byeengeroep deur die Federale Sendingraad, Bloemfontein*,

area. The solution arrived at during that mission conference later became known as the policy of separate development. There was also an inexplicable absence of critique from both the DRMC and the DRCA on the Native Question. After its election victory, the National Party regime institutionalised and consolidated existing discriminatory and segregatory policies and bills. Numerous apartheid laws were passed from 1948 onwards, which confined the people of South Africa's life in minute detail. The government introduced these laws as an attempt to keep South African citizens apart on a racial and ethnic basis.²⁰ For example, the apartheid laws laid down legal provisions on the specific areas where different population groups could own property, reside, work and even enjoy leisure. The Immorality Amendment Act, Act No. 21 of 1950, for example, prohibited adultery, attempted adultery or related "immoral" acts such as sexual intercourse between white and black people. The primary aim of the Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950 was to make residential separation compulsory. The Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950 provided that all South Africans should be racially classified in one of three categories: White, black or coloured. According to this Act, Indians fell in the coloured category. The racial classification of people was thereby entrenched. As a result of this Act, black people were forced to carry passbooks, the infamous "dompas" which had their fingerprints, photo and information, in order to access non-black areas. Although the members of the congregations of the DRMC and the DRCA directly suffered from the results of apartheid, for example, by forced removals, "dompas", migrant labour, group areas, racially segregated education systems, prohibition on mixed marriages, Bantustans, the decisions of the DRMC and DRCA synods from 1950-1974 reflect a perplexing apathy towards the socio-political situation in South Africa. In December 1960, shortly after the Sharpeville massacre, the WCC organised a consultation at Cottesloe Residence in Johannesburg for the South African churches to discuss the situation in South Africa. At that stage, the DRMC was not a member of the WCC and was therefore not obliged to prepare a response to the questions which the WCC had put to the member churches. Even after Cottesloe, both the DRMC and the DRCA did not straightforwardly reject the basic philosophy of segregation. They stated clearly in their submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) their guilt of not voicing enough their objections against apartheid:

4-6 April 1950. Kerklike Kongres van die Gefedereerde Ned. Geref. Kerke in Suid-Afrika: Bloemfontein.

20 *Apartheid Legislation in South Africa*. Online at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/politics-and-society/apartheid-legislation-1850s-1970s> [Accessed 11 March 2011].

We confess our guilt that we have not always witnessed clearly enough in our situation and so are jointly responsible for the way in which those things which were experienced as sin, and confessed to be so, or should have been experienced as and confessed to be sin, have grown in time to seem self-evidently right and to be ideologies foreign to Scripture.²¹

For example, in 1971, the DRCA viewed the homeland policy as an acceptable alternative to the negative results of migrant labour.²² A lack of resistance during the above-mentioned period against the segregation policy at large was evident in both the DRMC and the DRCA.

Even *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* (RVN) (Human Relations and the South African scene in the light of the Scripture), published by the DRC as a comprehensive policy document during 1974, did not immediately raise any comments from the DRCA or the DRMC. The RVN supports the policy of separate development, of which the outline can be traced back to the 1950 Bloemfontein Conference. The white Afrikaans Reformed churches of South Africa throughout the years worked out in considerable detail the theological and moral justification for the system of apartheid. This situation brought a particular challenge to the church in South Africa. The mid-1970s, with the Soweto uprisings as a turning point, overturned just about everything within the DRMC and the DRCA. These churches did not remain untouched by the realities of the day. Hence, from 1974 onwards, both the DRMC and the DRCA put across their disapproval of the system of apartheid. During the 1970s, the communities served by the DRMC and the DRCA became increasingly involved in protesting against and opposing apartheid legislation in all spheres of life. Youth and student revolts resulted in expulsions and detentions, and ultimately some members of the DRMC and the DRCA even went into exile.²³ As a consequence, during the 1980s, the DRMC and the DRCA strongly opposed the way in which the South African government used banning and detention without trial, and solitary confinement to silence those who criticised the unjust system of apartheid. For example Dr. A. A. Boesak, Reverends R. J. Stevens, A. Beukes, H. R. Botman, J. D. Buys, J. de Waal, E. Leeuw, B. Leuvenink, J. Thyse, A.

21 Submission of the URCSA to the TRC 1997, 5.

22 Acta van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika 1971, 342. (Acts of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa).

23 Submission of the URCSA to the TRC 1997, 5.

J. Visagie, P. Moatse, K. E. Leputu, L. Mabusela, L. M. Matsaung, E. M. Tema, elder N. J. Matlakane, and others were convicted and imprisoned.²⁴

During the 1978 and 1982 synods of the DRMC, numerous social justice issues were tabled and extensively deliberated upon. For example, the 1978 DRMC synod took cognisance of the RVN and stated that apartheid rested to a significant extent on the theological and moral justification of the system. The 1978 DRMC synod declared that apartheid and the moral and theological justification of it ridiculed the Gospel and was a theological heresy.²⁵ A report on “Black power and black theology” was tabled on both the DRMC synods of 1978 and 1982.²⁶ This report influenced the hermeneutics at work in the DRMC. At the 1982 DRMC synod, the role of the church and society in apartheid South Africa again came under scrutiny. A detailed report on apartheid, as well as ones on the ecumenical movement and the problem of racism (1924-1980), were tabled at the synod.²⁷ Consequently, the DRMC called for the repeal of the Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950, which made the residential separation compulsory. At the same synod, the Immorality Amendment Act, Act No. 21 of 1950 and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment Act No. 21 of 1968, which invalidated any marriage entered into outside of South Africa between a male citizen and a woman of another racial group, were critiqued for the very first time in the history of the DRMC. The synod urged the government to recall all laws against racially mixed marriages.²⁸ The synod also affirmed that the migrant labour system was one of the factors which disrupted the stability of marriage and family life amongst black people.²⁹

The 1982 DRMC synod noted the infringement of human dignity which the congregants had to endure due to the apartheid laws, namely separate entrances in business places, unequal salaries, inadequate housing, poor public services, racially divided beaches, poor sport facilities, job reservation to protect particular racial and ethnic groups, et cetera.³⁰ The synod also noted the strong resentment amongst blacks against the racially segregated education system. The synod affirmed that

24 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 25. (Agenda and proceedings of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church).

25 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1978, 2, 21.

26 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1978, 269-298; 1982, 377-380.

27 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 32-34, 443-469.

28 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 15.

29 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 438.

30 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 378-379, 431-443.

equal educational facilities and opportunities should be provided for all.³¹ This set the scene for the decision of a status confessionis and the acceptance of the draft of the Belhar Confession at the same synod. In 1983, the DRCA declared migrant labour to be in conflict with the norms of Scripture and formulated a principled decision against it.³²

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

The next questions are: Who wrote the Belhar Confession? What is known about the author(s)? Who is/are the author(s) and what position, role, reputation, status, did the author(s) have at the time of writing? Was/were the author(s) well known at the time of writing? **What was the purpose** of the author(s) in preparing it? What biases or assumptions might have coloured the views of the author(s)?

The DRMC synod took place during September 1982, shortly after the WARC general council of 1982. The synod deliberated at length on the WARC's declaration of a status confessionis regarding apartheid. A lengthy report on apartheid was also tabled at the synod. Emotional contributions from clergy and church council members were uttered on the synod regarding the hardships people had to endure due to the policy and practice of apartheid. The synod declared a status confessionis regarding apartheid and reasserted that it was a heresy and a misrepresentation of the Gospel. The DRMC affirmed that apartheid contradicted the very nature of the church. Apartheid was seen as a structural and an institutional sin. The DRMC synod followed the WARC in rejecting the defence of apartheid on moral and theological grounds. It was a kairós moment for the DRMC. Prof. Gustav Bam advised the synod that the acceptance of the status confessionis necessarily should lead to the formulation of a confession.³³

The synod appointed a committee, consisting of Rev. Isak Mentor, moderator of the DRMC, Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak, vice-moderator of the DRMC, and three lecturers from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) namely, Dr. Dirkie Smit, Prof. Jaap Durand and Prof. Gustav Bam, to draw up a draft confession of faith, known today as the Belhar Confession. Dirkie Smit, Jaap Durand and Gustav Bam had been

31 Agenda en Handeling NGSK 1982, 439.

32 Acta Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika 1983, 116-121; 360-361. (Acts of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa 1983).

33 Agenda en Handeling NGKA 1983, 22.

lecturing at UWC, at the time a racially segregated tertiary institution.³⁴ The drafters of the Belhar Confession were all people who were held in high regard in the DRMC. The Rev. Isak (Sakkie) Mentor was known in the DRMC circles as a conservative theologian. So I presume that some of the delegates were glad that he had been included in the commission. On the other side was the young Boesak, known to the delegates by his outspokenness on the apartheid situation and crosscutting issues related to social justice. Boesak had done extensive research in the Netherlands and America on the issue of being black and Reformed. Boesak, the newly elected president of the WARC, was known foremost in the DRMC for his dissertation, *Farewell to innocence*, where he stated that apartheid (separate development) was not only a political policy, but also a pseudo-religious ideology. On the other side, three distinguished theologians were included in the commission, namely Professors Jaap Durand, Gustav Bam, and Dr. Dirkie Smit. The latter only commenced his duties as senior lecturer of the DRMC in systematic theology at the faculty of theology at the UWC in February 1981. Furthermore, Dirkie Smit had not been in the synod when the decision was taken about him being nominated on the commission to draft a confession.

The commission entrusted the young Dirkie Smit to draft a document, because most of them were engaged in commission work during the synod. Ever since the article, “Die belydenis van dominee Dirkie” by Murray la Vita had been published in *Die Burger* on 26 May 2011, it became public knowledge that Dirkie Smit played a pivotal role in the drafting of the Belhar Confession. It is also a known fact that the authors of the Belhar Confession do not want to claim any personal honour for the drafting of the Confession. Kritzinger highlighted the role which the theological declaration of the Belydende Kring (BK) in August 1979 played as one of the significant documents used by the authors while formulating the Belhar Confession.³⁵ The “Broederkring van NG Kerke” (BK) was established in 1974 in Bloemfontein by about 60 ministers and evangelists from the NG Kerk in Afrika (NGKA) and the NG Sendingkerk (NGSK). It was later called the Belydende Kring (BK). According to Kritzinger, it does not matter who wrote the Confession. I concur with Kritzinger in that confessions are formally approved in the Reformed tradition by a specific church, on the basis of

34 The University Education Act, Act No. 45 of 1959 made provision for the establishment of separate tertiary institutions for blacks, Indians, coloureds and whites, of which the UWC was one. Black people were not allowed to attend white universities without special permission by the government, and vice versa.

35 Kritzinger, K. 2010. Celebrating communal authorship: The Theological Declaration of the Belydende Kring (1979) and the Belhar Confession. In honour of Simon Maimela and in memory of Chris Loff. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, (July 2010), 209-231.

a well-established procedure involving local (church council), regional (presbytery) and national (synod) bodies. Once a confession has been formally approved by a Reformed church, that *church* “speaks” or “confesses” that particular confession, not the individual authors who formulated it or the committee which proposed it to the church. Communal authorship and ownership is therefore operative in the Belhar Confession. One should always remember that any text, once written, has little to do with the author. The delegates at the DRMC and DRCA synods were painfully aware of the hardships of apartheid and can rightfully be seen as co-authors of the Belhar Confession. The Confession only put into words their observation about the situation in South Africa. The Belhar Confession can therefore rather be seen as a communal endeavour.

The Belhar Confession is indeed the culmination of a variety of factors, processes and efforts in the DRMC, DRCA, BK and Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa (ABRESCA). The movement and philosophy of the BK found extension in the formation of the ABRECSA in 1981. ABRECSA was a broad Reformed forum constituted by members of the black DRC, Presbyterians and the Congregational Church. ABRECSA reflected on Reformed faith and its implications for opposing apartheid within and outside the church. The members of ABRESCA also influenced the decisions of the DRMC and the DRCA on social justice issues during the 1980s. According to Kritzinger, the first and clearest influence of the BK Declaration on the Belhar Confession is the one found in article 4 of the Belhar Confession. For example: “As God’s property the church must be busy standing where God stands, viz. against injustice and with those who are denied justice” (BK Declaration), versus “We believe: that the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged” (Belhar Confession, Article 4). Chris Loff, as coordinator of the drafting team of the BK, presented the draft declaration to the plenary of the 1979 BK conference in Hammanskraal, for approval. Dr. Allan Boesak, one of the co-drafters of the Belhar Confession, was the chairperson of the BK at the time. The formulation by Chris Loff was approved at the BK’s meeting. Kritzinger maintains that although the influence of the BK Declaration on the Belhar Confession is in most cases not verbatim, there are indeed discernible influences to be seen in the Belhar Confession.

THE AUDIENCE OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

The next questions are: Was the Belhar Confession meant to be public or private? For whom was it written? What is known about the audience? The intended audience in the first instance were the DRMC congregants. With only a few small formal changes to the original formulation, the Confession and the accompanying letter

were officially adopted by the 1982 DRMC synod. The draft of the Belhar Confession was published in 1982 and distributed in a booklet to all the congregations of the DRMC, in order for the church councils of the DRMC to comment. A long judicial process of discernment by the local congregations of the DRMC, which took four years, followed in the church. The members of the DRMC were aware that they contributed in one way or another also to the situation, and together they accepted responsibility for that which they confess.

On 12 June 1986, three months before the DRMC synod where the Belhar Confession would be approved, the government extended the state of emergency to cover the whole country. The State of Emergency Act empowered the government to declare an organisation unlawful and to control the distribution of publications. Meetings of more than twenty persons were declared unlawful, unless authorised by the magistrate. Even some of the presbyteries of the DRMC and DRCA could not meet, due to the unrest in South Africa.³⁶ The apartheid government had the right to declare areas of “unrest” and to allow extraordinary measures to suppress protests in these areas. The state of emergency continued until 1990, when it was finally lifted by State President F. W. de Klerk. The General Law Amendment Act No. 37 of 1963, Section 17, authorised any commissioned officer to detain – without a warrant – any person suspected of a political crime and to hold them for 90 days without access to a lawyer. The Act also allowed for further declaration of unlawful organisations. The State President could declare any organisation or group of persons which had come into existence since 7 April 1960 to be unlawful. The delegates knew that under a state of emergency the Minister of Law and Order, the Commissioner of the South African Police or a magistrate or a commissioned officer could detain without trial any person for reasons of public safety. For example, the Reverends P. Moatse and K. E. Leputu were detained the same evening after a debate on apartheid in the regional synod of Northern Transvaal in 1986. Notwithstanding, the delegates at the 1986 DRMC synod approved the Belhar Confession. The acceptance of the Belhar Confession as an authority of faith in September 1986 can therefore be seen as an act of defiance. Boesak rightly stated that the Belhar Confession became the bedrock of theological reference and reflection, as well as a salient point of theological identity within the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.³⁷

Solemnly, on Friday 26 September 1986 in Belhar, 400 of the 470 delegates of the DRMC rose to express their endorsement of the Belhar Confession, and thereby

36 Submission of the URCSA to the TRC 1997, 2.

37 Boesak, A. A. 2008. To stand where God stands: Reflections on the Confession of Belhar after 25 years. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 34, (No. 1, July), 143-172.

adopted the Belhar Confession as the fourth confession of the DRMC.³⁸ Altogether 71 delegates voted against the adoption of the Belhar Confession, including Rev. Isak Mentor, ironically one of the co-drafters of the Belhar Confession. Mentor's proposal at the synod that the Belhar Confession should not be accepted, but should rather be referred, for the greatest possible unity, to all other Dutch Reformed churches in order to reach consensus with the other Reformed churches, was rejected with an overwhelming majority. The acceptance of the Belhar Confession held profound judicial implications for all clergy of the DRMC. Eventually it was expected of all ministers to sign the Belhar Confession. The synod, however, decided to accompany with pastoral sensitivity those who were not ready to accept the Belhar Confession. The writing as well as the ultimate adoption of the Belhar Confession was a risky business. For example, many clergy feared that their financial subsidies by the DRC could be revoked or declined.

Secondly, the DRMC also offered the Belhar Confession as a gift to the world. The 1986 DRMC synod requested the REC to include the Belhar Confession in the list of Reformed confessions in Article II of the REC constitution, to which all member churches have to subscribe. The REC's Harare assembly appealed to the member churches to consider accepting the Belhar Confession, and to report their decisions to the 1992 assembly. The REC member churches were requested to reflect upon the following: The history of the Belhar Confession; the purpose of the Belhar Confession; the question whether the Belhar Confession can stand alongside the classical confessions; the question whether the Belhar Confession is specifically South African in orientation, and whether that would be a hindrance; the question whether the Belhar Confession should be approved. The REC constituted a theological forum in order to promote discussion of the Belhar Confession, so that an enlightened decision could be made at the REC assembly in Athens.³⁹ Consequently, by 1990, the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) took official action on the request of the REC interim committee. The 1990 CRCNA synod declared that the Belhar Confession was in harmony with the Reformed faith as a body of truth as articulated in the historic Reformed confessions, and that it was in basic agreement with the REC and the CRCNA decisions on race made over the last decades, and therefore had no objection to its inclusion in the list of Reformed confessions in Article II of the REC Constitution.⁴⁰

38 Agenda en Handelinge NGSK 1986, 718-747.

39 Schrottenboer, P.G. 1991. The Belhar Confession 1986. *Theological Forum* 19, (No. 2, July 1991), 1.

40 Christian Reformed Church of North America Acts 1990. Grand Rapids: CRCNA, 625.

The 1987 DRCA synod referred the Belhar Confession to the Commission for Scripture and Confession in order to test the desirability of the acceptance of the *Confession* by the DRCA, and to determine to what extent the acceptance thereof by the DRCA may promote or delay the unification of the DRC family. The commission was tasked to table their findings during the recess to the federal council of the Reformed churches in South Africa, and to serve the next synod of the DRCA with proposals regarding the inclusion of the Belhar Confession in their confessional basis. On 1 October 1990, an extraordinary session of the general synod of the DRCA convened in Cape Town, with representatives from the six regional synods, i.e. Orange Free State, Phororo, Southern Transvaal, Northern Transvaal, Cape Province, and Natal. They approved the inclusion of the Belhar Confession in the confessional basis of the DRCA.⁴¹

Following the WARC decision in 1982, the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) rejected the theological justification of apartheid as unscriptural and any attempt to practically support it as unchristian. The synod refrained from labelling apartheid as heresy. The 1990 RCA synod declared that it could identify with the content of the Belhar Confession, but could not accept it as a confession on the same level as the standards of unity, due to the fact that the social issues to which the Belhar Confession was referring are continuously subjected to change. The Belhar Confession was more doctrinal in nature, according to the RCA.⁴²

At the 1990 DRC synod, the revised edition of *Church and Society* was adopted, with its call for confessing the DRC's role in establishing and practising apartheid. The synod decided to work towards the ideal of structural unity with the DRCA, DRMC and the RCA. On the matters of the status confessionis and the Belhar Confession, the DRC synod recognised the right of the DRMC to adopt the Belhar Confession, and concurred that the issues involved were of extreme importance to the DRMC.⁴³ On the one hand, the synod regarded the Belhar Confession not to be in conflict with the contents of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism or the Canons of Dort, but on the other hand, the synod ascertained that *Church and Society* (Kerk en Samelewing) contained the DRC answer to the paragraphs containing "rejections" in the Belhar Confession. Furthermore, the synod pointed out that after the DRC's adoption of the revised *Church and Society*, some of the accusations levelled against

41 Agenda en Handelinge NGKA 1987, 413-414; Agenda en Handelinge NGKA 1990, 28-30, 49-50, 142-149, 205-298.

42 Agenda RCA 1990, 3; Agenda RCA 1990, 40-41; Acts RCA 1986, 31.

43 Meiring, *The Confession of Belhar*, 18-23.

the DRC in the Belhar Confession were no longer applicable.⁴⁴ The 1990 DRC synod was of the opinion that some phrases in the Belhar Confession, such as parts of Article 4, could have been formulated differently. The DRC synod preferred the wording of *Church and Society* concerning the affirmation of the Lord being the God of the poor and the wronged. The synod also emphasised that in future deliberations between the two churches, both documents, the Belhar Confession and *Church and Society*, should be used as a basis for discussions.

ANALYSING THE BELHAR CONFESSION (INTERNAL ANALYSIS)

Main body of the document

The questions are: What were the authors trying to communicate to its audience? What are the objectives of the Belhar Confession? What is the argument/thesis in the Belhar Confession? The Belhar Confession is a treatise. The structure of the text informs the reader about the thesis and objectives. The structure of the Belhar Confession is based on defining and presenting a problem/solution on three issues, namely, unity, justice, and reconciliation. The Belhar Confession identifies unity, reconciliation and justice as problems in apartheid South Africa and tries to provide a solution for the problem, mainly by trying to persuade the reader in affirmation and rejections. The Belhar Confession tries to convince, persuade and to motivate the reader to reject apartheid and to affirm fundamental biblical truths. The Belhar Confession, however, does not straightforwardly present information and arguments with regard to apartheid, discrimination, racism, et cetera. It rather employs rhetorical devices, namely affirmation and rejections. The Belhar Confession confesses its belief in justice as opposed to the practice of apartheid. The Belhar Confession is a call to action in order to change ideas, beliefs and behaviours on unity, justice and reconciliation. The handwritten text of the Belhar Confession is consistent with the official version of the Belhar Confession as well as the version in the draft Belhar Confession which had been issued to the DRMC congregations. According to Foucault,⁴⁵ texts should subsequently be read as follows: What stands

44 Agenda van die Algemene Sinode van die Ned. Geref. Kerk te Kaapstad, 1986 (Agenda of the general synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town 1986); Agenda en Acta van die Algemene Sinode van die Ned. Geref. Kerk te Bloemfontein, 1990 (Agenda and proceedings of the general synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in Bloemfontein 1990).

45 Foucault, M. 1973. *The Birth of a Clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock, 50.

there and what does not stand there. In combination, this way of reading text provides a coherent structure. The very same applies to the Belhar Confession. In an important article, Christina Landman asks whether justice should be embodied in the Belhar Confession in sexist language. It seems as though the drafters and early recipients of the Belhar Confession were unaware of these biases or assumptions.⁴⁶

The argument and strategy utilised by the commission was to use biblical notions and words familiar to the members of the DRMC in order to achieve the goal of clearly stating that the DRMC is against the theological justification of apartheid. It seems as though the draft was first completed and thereafter the biblical references were inserted before it had been tabled to the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC). With these biblical references, the drafters of the Confession give support to their thesis on reconciliation, justice and unity.

The Belhar Confession consists of five articles and an accompanying letter. The Confession begins with God and also closes (in article 5) with laudation to God. Article 2 deals with the church and her role in the world as well as the unity of the church. Article 3 deals with reconciliation in church and society, and Article 4 concentrates on how to bring about peace and justice in the world.

From its beginning, the Belhar Confession was supported by an accompanying letter. This letter is an important indicator for understanding the Confession itself. The accompanying letter consists only of four paragraphs. At the beginning of each paragraph is a short explanation before the letter itself follows. The first paragraph emphasises the seriousness of the situation in which the Gospel came into play, and asks for a radical decision of faith in the form of the Confession. The second paragraph emphasises that the authority of the Confession – as any Reformed confession – is derived from the Bible as the Word of God. The third paragraph indicates that the Confession is not aimed at specific people, or groups of people, or a church or churches, but against a false doctrine that can emerge in the church in the present and in the future. The fourth paragraph points to the implications of the Confession, namely, reconciliation and justice, as well as the dismantling of unjust church and social structures. The letter ends with a prayer and the firm conviction that the Lord will bring true peace by his Spirit.⁴⁷ On the draft hand-written copy, the commission noted possible points which could be part of the envisaged point 4

46 Landman, C. 2003. Can justice be embodied in sexist language? A challenge to the Confession of Belhar. *Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif* 47, (Nos. 1 & 2, March/June), 283-291.

47 Belydenis van Belhar, Belhar Confession, IsiVumo SaseBelhar: Text and Commentary. 2006. Bellville: Konvent vir Eenheid Kaapland.

of the said letter, namely the relationship of the Confession with other confessions, the obligation or freedom to underwrite the Confession as well as the call to all to associate them and to embody the Confession. The commission, however, never wrote down a fully-fledged article on this issue. Today this seems to be one of the major critiques against the Belhar Confession.⁴⁸

EVALUATING THE EVIDENCE (*CONCLUSION*)

The Belhar Confession is a **product of a communal society** which was composed during the height of resistance against apartheid in South Africa. The Belhar Confession is first and foremost specifically South African in origin and is aimed at the country's historical context. Thus, the meaning of the Belhar Confession is bound up with its function within the community which produced it, and the social context. Taken out of its original context, the original meaning of a passage in the Belhar Confession can easily be lost.

Secondly, the Belhar Confession represents “a Christian view on racism ... and suffering from the perspective of those who suffered the realities of such inhumane conditions.”⁴⁹ Consequently, the above-mentioned historical evidence showcases that the Belhar Confession can be used as a discursive instrument in the reconciliation processes between different racial groups, minority groups, locally and abroad. The issues of racial inequality, discrimination, oppression, poverty and injustice which are being addressed by the Belhar Confession are timeless and universal themes. Thus, reading the Belhar Confession as a historical document allows us to interpret the past by providing the tools and evidence needed to make informed statements about the world around us, identify stated and unstated aspects, assumptions, presuppositions and possible motives not stated in the text.

48 Cooper, J. 2011. Why the Belhar Should Not Be a Confession,” *Banner*, June 2011. Online at <http://www.calvin.edu/library/database/crcpi/fulltext/banner/2011-0600-0037.pdf> [Accessed 22 June 2011]; Cooper, J. 2010. Reformed Matters: Context and Confusion: What Does the Belhar Confess?” *Calvin Theological Seminary Forum*, Fall 2010, 10-12. Online at <https://internal.calvinseminary.edu/pubs/forum/10fall.pdf#page=10> [Accessed 23 March 2012].

49 Botman, H. R. 2008. The Confession of Belhar and our common future. *Perspectives*, (May). Online at <http://www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=4048>. [Accessed 23 March 2012].

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KEY WORDS

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ABSTRACT

Calvin's views on the Lord's Supper

During the Calvin commemoration of 2009, the question was often asked whether his views on the Lord's Supper still hold ecumenical potential for today. A first section deals with the controversial question where exactly Calvin's views on the Lord's Supper should be found and how it should be described. In an attempt to respond to this question still challenging contemporary scholarship, a second section attempts to provide an answer in terms of Calvin's comprehensive understanding of the presence of Christ. His views regarding the Supper can only be construed as integral part of his views regarding Christ's presence. Five forms of Christ's presence are distinguished in Calvin's thought, namely a living presence, a spiritual presence, a sacramental presence, a eucharistic presence and an ecclesiological presence. A final section considers the contemporary ecumenical question whether these views could be appropriated today, in the light of several serious obstacles.

1 Hierdie voordrag is oorspronklik op uitnodiging voorberei vir 'n ekumeniese konsultasie in 2010 aan die Ekumeniese Navorsingsentrum van die Lutherse Wêreldfederasie in Strasbourg, wat dié geleentheid aangebied het saam met die ekumeniese navorsingsentra in Paderborn en Bochum. Die bedoeling was om 'n evaluering te maak van die wêreldwye verrigtinge tydens die Calvyn-herdenking in 2009 met die oog op die vraag welke ekumeniese potensiaal in Calvyn se werk en nalatenskap sigbaar geword het. Die spesifieke versoek was gevolglik om die ekumeniese potensiaal van sy nagmaalsbeskouing te ondersoek en te vra of enige konkrete ekumeniese voorstelle dalk daarin verskuil lê.



NUWE INSIGTE UIT DIE CALVYN-JAAR?

In 2009 het die wêreldwye herdenking van Calvyn se geboorte 500 jaar tevore 'n nuwe belangstelling in en bewustheid van sy lewe en werk in sowel Gereformeerde as in breër ekumeniese kringe gebring; baie referate, studies en publikasies het ontstaan, en party sou selfs reken in sommige opsigte het nuwe kennis en insigte beskikbaar geraak; kortom, dit het klaarblyklik waardering by baie mense verhoog vir sy bydraes tot die kerk, samelewing en teologie, hetsy vir die eerste keer of deur 'n hernude waardering – maar bied dit alles vir ons konkrete en konstruktiewe ekumeniese voorstelle wat ons werklik sal help op die weg na beter gemeenskap en meer sigbare eenheid? En baie spesifiek, sou dit ook van toepassing wees op sy verstaan van die nagmaal wat in die sestiende eeu so 'n groot deel gevorm het van die debatte wat die kerk van Jesus Christus verdeel het? Het ons enige nuwe insigte verkry in sy siening van die sakramente, spesifiek die nagmaal – en sou sy sienings vandag as 'n betekenisvolle ekumeniese voorstel gesien kon word?

CALVYN SE BEGRIP VAN DIE NAGMAAL?

Wat presies was Calvyn se siening van die sakramente – en waar vind ons dit? Verskeie geleerdes het onlangs aangetoon dat Calvyn in werklikheid nie van die begin af al 'n uitgebreide en volledig ontwikkelde standpunt oor die sakramente gehad het nie.² So 'n interpretasie pas natuurlik baie goed in by Calvyn se eksplisiete

Enkele van die bydraes tydens daardie konsultasie het in 2012 as 'n bundel verskyn en die voordrag is ook daarin opgeneem as "... wahrhafte Teilhaber an der wahren Substanz des Leibes und Blutes Jesu Christi ...' – Calvin's Verständnis von Eucharistie als ökumenisches Angebot?", in *Johannes Calvin ökumenisch gelesen*, A Birmele & W Thönissen (Hrsg.), Evangelische Verlagsanstalt/Bonifatius, 2012, 71-96. Later in dieselfde jaar is, eweneens op uitnodiging, 'n openbare voordrag oor dieselfde tema in Heidelberg, Duitsland, gehou, as "The real presence of Christ? – Calvin's views on the Lord's Supper", tydens die 17. Heidelberger Ökumenisches Forum oor die tema *Realpräsenz Jesus Christi im Abendmahl*, 3./4. Dezember 2010, Ökumenisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg. 'n Verkorte weergawe van dié voordrag het verskyn as "Calvin on the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper", *Lutheran Forum*, Spring 2012, Vol. 46/1, 40-46. Die stuk is in Afrikaans deur Ria Smit vertaal.

2. Sien byvoorbeeld die nuttige opsomming in Janse, 2008a en die historiese beskrywing in Janse, 2008b, maar ook Davis, 1995, wat Janse beskryf as 'n "epoch-makende dissertasie". Party mense beskou Calvyn se vroeë beskrywing in sy *Short Treatise on the Supper of our Lord* (geskryf in 1540, gepubliseer in 1541), ander die *Consensus Tigurinus*, die ooreenkoms met die predikers van Zürich in 1549, en nog ander sy latere beskrywing in die 1559 *Institusie*, wat vyf jaar voor sy dood gepubliseer is, as

begrip van lering en onderrig, by sy doelbewus retoriese teologie en sy bewussyn van en aanvoeling vir gehoor en historiese konteks, en ook inderdaad by sy ekumeniese passie en besorgdheid, naamlik om eenstemmigheid te vind, konsensus, harmonie, sigbare eenheid – en in die proses plooibaar, oop, aangenaam, selfs wanneer nodig stilswyend te wees. Sulke historiese beskrywings van sy veranderende uitdrukkings en beklemtonings illustreer immers juis Calvyn se verbintenis aan gemeenskap en die sigbare eenheid van die kerk dramaties, want hulle toon aan dat, deur sy standpunt oor die sakramente oor baie jare in verskillende kontekste en gesprekke te formuleer – soms in debat, selfs konflik en verdeeldheid – was hy meer as gewillig om tegemoet te kom, om kompromieë aan te gaan, om te aanvaar en te ondersteun en agterna heelhartig formulerings te verdedig wat nie sy eie keuse sou wees nie, omdat hy oortuig was dat ook die sluit van ooreenkomste rakende formulerings oor die sakramente die gawe van die eenheid van die kerk sigbaar moes laat blyk.³

die mees verteenwoordigende uitdrukking van sy standpunt oor die sakramente. Janse stem nie met hierdie pogings saam nie en demonstreer oortuigend dat Calvyn hom op baie komplekse en diverse maniere kon uitdruk oor die sakramente, afhange van sy gespreksgenote en lesers op 'n bepaalde tydperk (Janse, 2008a, 387).

- 3 Volgens Janse se leersame en goed-gedokumenteerde beskrywing is dit nuttig om ten minste drie fases in Calvyn se manier van dink oor en beskrywing van die sakramente te onderskei. Hy noem die eerste fase tussen 1536 en 1537 'n tydperk van Zwinglianisering. In verskeie bronne uit dié tyd kom Calvyn se formulerings naby die standpunte van die Zürich-teoloë, deur byvoorbeeld die herdenkings- en ekklesiologies-etiese aspekte van die nagmaal te beklemtoon. In 'n tweede fase, tussen 1537 en 1548, sien Calvyn die moontlikheid dat konsensus met die Lutherane sou kon realiseer, en daarom probeer hy – in 'n hele reeks publikasies wat sy kommentaar op 1 Korinthiërs insluit (in 1546) – die gawe-eienskap van die nagmaal beklemtoon en die werklikheid van die teenwoordigheid van Christus en van die eenheid met Christus, en onderbeklemtoon hy die herdenkings- en ekklesiologies-etiese aspekte. Nou beklemtoon hy dat deelname nie slegs met die gawes van Christus is nie maar met Christus self, dat die herdenking nie bloot as noëties gesien moet word nie, dat die teken (die werklike eet en drink van werklike brood en wyn) nie geskei moet word van die aangeduide saak (te wete geestelike verlossing) nie, dat die sakramentele eet en drink nie leeg en betekenisloos gemaak moet word (as bloot “bare and empty signs”) nie, dat die sakrament 'n instrumentele aard het deurdat iets waarlik en werklik gebeur – deurdat gelowiges ingelyf word, verenig word, geïnkorporeer word, hulle neem deel, hulle ontvang Christus self, Christus woon in hulle, ensovoorts. Natuurlik behou Calvyn nog steeds die sentrale besorgdhede van sy vroeë standpunte, maar sy ekumeniese bedoeling en strategie is ook baie duidelik deurdat hy probeer om uitdrukkings en beklemtonings te vind wat die Lutherse teoloë uit die Duitse noorde sou gerusstel, en hy probeer om enige eksplisiete konfrontasie met Lutherse standpunte te vermy. As dit na 1549 duidelik word dat, ten spyte van al hierdie pogings, die Lutherane nie bereid was om die ooreenkoms te sluit en die

Daar was natuurlik egter ook grense wat selfs Calvin nie bereid was om oor te steek nie, daar was formulerings wat hy nie kon aanvaar of waartoe hy nie kon instem nie (en hy kon dit, soos dit destyds gebruiklik was, soms in baie ruwe terme uitdruk), daar was sieninge oor die sakramente (beide die doop en die nagmaal) wat hy nie kon akkommodeer nie, en in daardie sin is dit sekerlik óók moontlik om wel te praat van Calvin se standpunte oor die sakrament – dit was ’n oop en plooibare siening, maar binne besliste grense. Daarom het baie geleerdes inderdaad ’n saak daarvoor uitgemaak dat Calvin se standpunte oor die sakramente, wat die nagmaal insluit, nie gesien moet word as bloot die resultaat van (strategiese en kerk-politieke) pogings om konsensus te bereik nie, selfs om kompromieë tussen uiteenlopende standpunte aan te gaan ter wille van eenheid nie, maar eerder as die gevolg van sy eie teologiese oortuigings, wat konsekwent was in terme van sy eie verstaan van die evangelie self.⁴

Consensus Tigurinus te aanvaar nie, lyk dit asof Calvin weer eens sy fokus verskuif, in ’n derde fase. In die 1550’s behou hy daarom steeds sy vroeë standpunte, maar nou versterk hy byvoorbeeld weer eens die beklemtoning van die rol van die Gees en ook die ekklesiologies-etiese aspekte van die nagmaal. Nadat hy in die 1540’s die werklike eenheid met Christus beklemtoon het (met die oog op die Lutherane), beklemtoon hy nou met ander woorde weer eens die sigbare eenheid met mekaar in die 1550’s (met die oog daarop om die konsensus wat hy alreeds met Zürich bereik het, te behou en te versterk). Baie van die bekende en aangrypende aanhalings oor die sigbare eenheid van die kerk en die belangrikheid van wedersydse liefde binne die kerk – as saam ingesluit in Christus behoort gelowiges ook onderling die gemeenskap te beoefen wat die nagmaal as band van liefde werklik tussen hulle tot stand bring – kom gevolglik uit hierdie tydperk, insluitende Calvin se (teen hierdie tyd baie uitvoerige) besprekings van die sakramente in die *Institusie* van 1559. Janse verwys trouens na ’n vierde fase, ná 1560, toe nuwe moontlikhede vir toenadering tot die Lutherane in Noord-Duitsland ontstaan het en “Calvin teruggekeer het na sy Luther-vriendelike deuntjie van die 1540’s” (Janse, 2008b).

- 4 Twee voorbeelde is voldoende. In haar baie leersame historiese studie oor *The Eucharist in the Reformation* (2006), ontwikkel Lee Palmer Wandel hierdie standpunt as haar tese. Sy verduidelik Calvin se sienings van die nagmaal as die koherente en konsekwente kulminasie van sy hele projek, sy “epistemologiese onderneming”, in haar eie woorde. Sy beskou dit as ’n mislukking in die bestudering van Calvin dat slegs weinig geleerdes sy standpunte eintlik vanuit hierdie perspektief verduidelik het, en haar eie werk is daarom juis ’n poging om so ’n noukeurige lees van die *Institusie* te bied wat tot ’n nuwe waardering by geleerdes sal lei vir die plek en funksie van sy standpunte oor die nagmaal binne Calvin se projek as geheel. “Calvin situated his own fullest formulation within the epistemological enterprise of the *Institutes*. As such, Calvin’s conceptualization of the Eucharist exists in important ways autonomous of either Zwingli or Luther ... To this day, few have approached Calvin’s conceptualization of the Eucharist, as in fact he intended, through the entire project of the *Institutes*, in which he sought to teach the faithful how to see the place of the Eucharist in God’s magnificent and ongoing project

Wat *was* dan hierdie verstaan van die evangelie self? Baie mense het probeer om hierdie komplekse vraag – wat natuurlik ewigdurend en kontroversieel is – te beantwoord deur te wys op die belangrikheid van die *teenwoordigheid van Christus* vir Calvyn. Die *Institusie* as geheel is ontwerp om gelowiges te help om die teenwoordigheid van Christus waar te neem, sê Lee Palmer Wandel.⁵ Om Calvyn se lering van die nagmaal vanuit die perspektief van die evangelie te benader, beteken ook vir Brian Gerrish om dit te bedink onder opskrifte wat almal handel oor die teenwoordigheid van Christus.⁶ Om sy voorstel verder te ontwikkel, sal dit dalk nuttig wees om kortliks tussen *vyf maniere van praat oor die teenwoordigheid van Christus* te onderskei en om te onthou hoe hulle volgens Calvyn se siening met mekaar verband hou.⁷

of self-revelation” (Wandel, 2006, 143, 147; vir haar volledige bespreking, sien 139-207).

In baie van sy gedetailleerde en insiggewende historiese bydraes oor baie jare het Brian Gerrish alreeds soortgelyke aansprake gemaak. In sy baie bekende opstel oor “John Calvin on the Lord’s Supper” argumenteer hy byvoorbeeld: “(A) further note of warning has to be added by reason of the highly controversial nature of eucharistic questions. During the sixteenth century, each party’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper was developed dialectically in conversation with rival interpretations; and conversation sometimes became bitter polemic. Hence it may be hard to approach the historical questions unmoved by confessional commitments ... But ... Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper is not adequately understood as, for example, a critique of medieval teachings; nor as a deviation from Lutheranism; nor as an attempt to formulate a compromise position among the various Protestant options. It would be easy to point at attempts at interpretation along these lines. But the only approach that does justice to Calvin himself must begin with his own chief theological concerns, and must ask how he saw the relationship between his gospel and his understanding of the Lord’s Supper. Calvin’s thought moves outwards from his apprehension of the gospel to his interpretation of the Eucharist. The inner coherence of his thinking is of far greater importance than its dialectical relationships, although no actual separation should or can be made between the inner and the outer concerns” (Gerrish, 1982, 107).

Konkreet beteken dit byvoorbeeld dat, volgens Gerrish, dit “geen sin het” om by die Marburg Colloquium te begin en dan die daaropvolgende nagmaalsdebatte waarin Calvyn betrokke was volgens daardie model te interpreteer nie. Hy spreek daarom sy “verbasing” uit oor hoe dikwels die debat van 1529 tussen Luther en Zwingli en hulle onderskeie volgelingen “geneem is as die paradigma vir die Luthers-Gereformeerde verskille oor die nagmaal” (Gerrish, 1982, 107).

5 Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*, 147.

6 Brian Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 107-117; sien ook sy *Grace and Gratitude*, veral 1-20.

7 In die spesifieke opstel gebruik Gerrish eintlik net vier opskrifte, naamlik die sentraliteit van Christus se teenwoordigheid, die manier waarop Christus teenwoordig is, die

Eerstens gaan die evangelie vir Calvyn oor die *lewende* en persoonlike aanwesigheid van Jesus Christus. Gelowiges is met Christus verenig, hulle het gemeenskap met Christus, hulle is geïnkorporeer in Christus. Tweedens is die aard van sy teenwoordigheid *geestelik*, dit gebeur deur die Woord en Gees en daarom deur geloof. Derdens, onafskeidbaar van hierdie geestelike teenwoordigheid is ook Christus se *sakramentele* aanwesigheid, die werklike en ware teenwoordigheid van dit wat deur die teken aangedui word. Vierdens, onafskeidbaar van die sakramentele teenwoordigheid is daarom ook Christus se *eucharistiese* teenwoordigheid en die gelowiges se ware deelname aan die egte substansie van sy liggaam en bloed. Laastens loop dit uit in 'n *eklesiologiese* teenwoordigheid van Christus in die kerk as sy liggaam en in die dankbare en liefdevolle lewe van hulle wat nie aan hulleself behoort nie, maar aan Christus.

Dit is teen die agtergrond van so 'n komplekse begrip van Christus se teenwoordigheid – lewend, geestelik, sakramenteel, eucharisties, eklesiologies – dat die kenmerke van Calvyn se eie standpunte hopelik duidelik sal word, ook die interne konsekwentheid van sy verstaan van die evangelie, sy vryheid wat betref taalgebruik en verskillende maniere om oor hierdie teenwoordigheid te praat, maar ook die beperkinge op denkwyses en uitdrukking wat hy as moontlik en legitiem beskou het. In die proses sal sy standpunte oor baie van die bekende kontroverse in sy tyd hopelik duideliker word, en die vraag of sy standpunte as 'n kontemporêre ekumeniese voorstel gesien kan word, weer gestel kan word.

Christus se lewende teenwoordigheid

In 'n belangrike monografie het die bekende Calvyn-geleerde Charles Partee onlangs die teologie van Johannes Calvyn ontleed met die stelling dat “eenheid met Christus” gesien kan word as die integreerende idee van die *Institusie* as geheel, 'n aanspraak wat hy dan verdedig teen baie uiteenlopende stemme in die Noord-Amerikaanse vakwêreld.⁸ In 'n soortgelyke trant het die vermaarde Reformasie-geleerde Randall Zachmann 'n kort maar helder oorsig van die struktuur van Calvyn se denke

teenwoordigheid in die nagmaal en uiteindelik Calvyn en die Gereformeerde lering van die nagmaal (Gerrish 1982, 107-117), maar die volgende uiteensetting sal ook op sommige van sy ander geskifte steun, waarin meerdere aspekte ter sprake kom. Vir 'n onlangse en baie nuttige bundel opstelle oor die teenwoordigheid van Christus, sien ook Thomas J Davis, *This is my body. The presence of Christ in Reformation thought*, 2008.

8 Charles Partee, *The theology of John Calvin* (2008).

gepubliseer wat hy beskryf as “*communio cum Christo*”.⁹ Kortom, vir baie is hierdie tema van die sogenaamde mistiese eenheid van gelowiges met Christus sentraal tot Calvyn se verstaan van die evangelie. Gelowiges het gemeenskap met Christus, hulle deel in Christus, hulle is verenig met Christus, hulle is een met Christus – en vir Calvyn is dit die hart van die Christelike geloof en lewe en ook die hart van die kerk. Gelowiges is een met Christus en behoort aan Christus want Christus het hulle ingelyf in homself, omdat Christus in hulle woon en hulle in Christus, omdat hulle deel het aan Christus, deel in Christus, gemeenskap het met Christus. “Dit is die doel van die evangelie”, sê Calvyn, “dat Christus ons s’n moet word, en dat ons ingelyf moet wees in sy liggaam.”¹⁰ Gerrish onderstreep dat dit van deurslaggewende belang is om te sien dat Calvyn praat oor die “teenwoordigheid van Christus in die hier en nou”. Volgens hom kulmineer Calvyn se denke in die “idee van ’n ‘geheime gemeenskap’ waardeur Christus-vir-ons Christus-in-ons word”. Dit is ’n lewende, *persoonlike* ervaring en gemeenskap – met die belangrike implikasie dat “ons alreeds die eucharistiese taal gebruik nog voor ons direk oor die nagmaal begin praat”. Terselfdertyd is party van die tradisionele teenstrydighede oor Calvyn se standpunte oor die nagmaal natuurlik alreeds hier aangedui, deur sy Christologiese oortuigings

9 Randall Zachmann, “*Communio cum Christo*” (2008). Baie ander studies wat aspekte van hierdie tema van eenheid met Christus behandel, het verskyn, en sommige daarvan word as baanbrekerswerk beskou. Die Rooms-Katolieke teoloog Dennis Tamburello het byvoorbeeld ’n bydrae gelewer wat dikwels bespreek word en waarin die vraag oordink word of en op watter manier, indien wel, Calvyn se siening van gelowiges se *eenheid met Christus* beïnvloed is deur die mistisisme van Bernard van Clairvaux (Tamburello, *Union with Christ. John Calvin and the mysticism of St. Bernard*, 1994). Todd Billings, wat die Templeton Prys vir Teologiese Belowendheid ontvang het vir sy doktorsale proefskrif getiteld *Calvin, participation, and the gift: The activity of believers in union with Christ* (2007), span die baie hedendaagse teoloë in wat die begrippe gawe (“gift”), ruil (“exchange”) en deelname (“participation”) ondersoek om die verhouding tussen God en menslike aktiwiteit te beskryf en wat in dié proses dikwels Calvyn as ’n negatiewe teenhanger gebruik en sy “ontoereikende teologie van menslike resiprositeit” kritiseer. Billings verwerp hierdie soort kritiek deur die tema van “deelname in Christus” te volg soos dit vanaf Calvyn se vroegste werk in 1536 ontwikkel het tot in sy laaste traktate in 1561, en bied in die proses ’n nuwe en nuttige invalshoek tot die tema van eenheid met Christus in Calvyn se denke.

10 Calvyn in ’n brief aan Peter Martyr op 8 Augustus 1555, wat dikwels deur Gerrish gebruik word om hierdie Christologiese teenwoordigheid in Calvyn te verduidelik, byvoorbeeld in *Grace and Gratitude*, 128-133; ook in *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 108-109.

en derhalwe sy voorveronderstellings, voordat die tema van die nagmaal selfs eksplisiet genoem is.¹¹

Christus se geestelike teenwoordigheid

“If there lies at the heart of Calvin’s gospel the thought of Christ’s real presence or his real self-communication, the next question concerns the manner of that presence: *How* does Christ communicate himself? What is the vehicle of the real presence?”¹² Volgens Calvyn se verstaan van die evangelie sou hierdie vraag beantwoord kon word vanuit drie verskillende perspektiewe, sê Gerrish, en hy redeneer dat dit noodsaaklik is om die drie antwoorde bymekaar te hou om ’n billike en geskikte beskrywing van Calvyn se lering te gee. Vanuit die gesigshoek van die menslike persoon, sê Gerrish, is Christus aanwesig in die daad van geloof. Vanuit die perspektief van die goddelike persoon is Christus aanwesig deur die aktiwiteit van die Heilige Gees. As ’n mens praat van eksterne middele, is Christus aanwesig deur die Woord. Hierdie drie, naamlik geloof, Gees en Woord, moet nie geskei word van mekaar as ons Calvyn probeer verstaan nie, sê hy.¹³ Dit is teen hierdie agtergrond dat baie van die bekende uitdrukkings van Calvyn verstaan moet word, wat soms die rol van geloof beklemtoon as dat dit Christus aantrek en ingelyf is in Hom – die aktiewe deelname en deelnemende rol van gelowiges wat opnuut deur Billings ondersoek is; wat soms die rol van die Gees beklemtoon wat die gawe van geloof oor ons uitstort, soms die rol van die Woord of evangelie beklemtoon as die instrument of middel waardeur die Gees werk deur Christus aanwesig en werklik in ons te maak. Dit is natuurlik ook hier waar sommige tradisionele teenstrydighede opgeduik het, byvoorbeeld wat Calvyn se verstaan van die geestelike teenwoordigheid betref en sy standpunte rondom die verhouding tussen geloof, Gees, Woord – en sakrament.

Christus se sakramentele teenwoordigheid

Want, waar pas die sakramente in? vra Gerrish, en antwoord dat vir Calvyn, in navolging van Augustinus se *verbum visibile*, dit ’n ander vorm van die Woord is, nou nie gesproke en gehoor nie, maar sigbaar. “Die identiteit van inhoud” – sê Gerrish – “tussen die sakrament en die verkondiging bied vir Calvyn die leidraad om baie

11 Daar kan byvoorbeeld melding gemaak word van sy standpunte oor die hemelvaart, die sogenaamde *extra calvinisticum*, die lokaliteit van Christus, die debatte oor die gekruisigde en verheerlikte Christus, sy menslike natuur en liggaam, en die kontroverse rondom sy sogenaamde menslike alomteenwoordigheid.

12 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 109.

13 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 109-110.

van die ou vrae oor hoe 'n sakrament werk, te beantwoord". Die sakramente is seëls van die verkondiging, hulle ondersteun ook die geloof, hulle is ook instrumente van die Gees – "the efficacy of the sacraments lies in that triple conjunction of Word, Spirit, and faith. Any attempt to break the unity of the conjunction can only lead to misunderstanding."¹⁴ Omdat die sakramente, net soos die Woord, Jesus aan ons aanbied en voorstel, is hulle ook die "medium van Christus se self-kommunikasie, van die werklike teenwoordigheid". Volgens Gerrish stam die gewilde misverstand "dat die sakramente vir Calvyn 'n suiwer simboliese en pedagogiese funksie het" uit "alleen maar die mees perverse verkeerd-lees van die bronne". Woord en sakrament het sekerlik 'n pedagogiese funksie, maar dit maak hulle "nie minder middele vir Christus se self-aanbieding nie" – hulle is ook "werklike middele van genade waardeur die ding wat gesimboliseer word, gekommunikeer word".¹⁵ Vir Calvyn se verstaan van die sakramente is dit van die allergrootste belang. Volgens Gerrish is dit "feitlik te veel om te beweer dat Calvyn se hele sakramentele teologie implisiet binne sy lering van sakramentele tekens lê (wat hy natuurlik aan Augustinus ontleen het)".¹⁶ Die teken en die ding wat aangedui word kan onderskei word, maar nie geskei word nie.¹⁷ Waar die teken is, daar is die werklikheid ook – en omdat Christus self die werklikheid is, die saak of die inhoud van die sakramente, is die tekens niks minder nie as beloftes van Christus se ware teenwoordigheid. "Hulle is middele waardeur Christus sy teenwoordigheid aan sy mense *in werking stel*. Die teken kan nie die werklikheid wees of dit word nie, maar dit is ook nie die simbool van 'n afwesige werklikheid nie."¹⁸ Dit is op die basis van hierdie verstaan van Christus se sakramentele aanwesigheid dat Calvyn oop en plooibaar sou wees om verskillende maniere van praat te akkommodeer en terselfdertyd so ernstig om uitdrukkings- en denkvorme te verwerp wat vir hom gelyk het of hulle op teenstrydige begrippe gebaseer is. Dit sou natuurlik in sy standpunte oor die nagmaal aangetoon kon word.

Christus se eucharistiese teenwoordigheid

Toe die idee van Christus se lewende teenwoordigheid wat deur die Gees bewerk word deur die Woord (en die sakramente) eers as die hart van Calvyn se evangelie

14 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 110.

15 Sien byvoorbeeld Plasger, *Johannes Calvins Theologie – Eine Einführung*, 2008, waar die sakramente bespreek word onder die opskrif "Goddelike algehele pedagogiek – sakramente as hulpmiddels", 117-125.

16 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 110-111.

17 Calvyn pas die taal van die Christologiese formules van Chalcedon toe op die sakramente.

18 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 111.

daargestel is, was sy lering van die eucharistiese teenwoordigheid reeds halfpad aangebied, sê Gerrish.¹⁹ Die gemeenskap van gelowiges met Christus is nie heel en volmaak van die begin af nie, maar is onderworpe aan groei, wisselvallighede en hindernisse, dit het voller inbesitname en genot nodig, dit het voeding nodig, handhawing, verdieping, toename, en dit is binne hierdie perspektief dat Calvyn die rol van die nagmaal in die lewe van die kerk sien.²⁰ In hierdie opsig wys Calvyn ’n diep agting, ’n spesiale ontsag, vir die sakrament van die nagmaal.²¹ Per slot van rekening “oorheers” die persoon van die lewende Christus sy denke oor die nagmaal. Vir hom bly hierdie teenwoordigheid van die Here uiteindelik “’n misterie wat slegs aanbid kan word en nie vasgevang kan word in teologiese verklarings nie” – sodat hy tevrede is om verwonderd te staan voor dit wat hy nie kan verstaan nie.²² Nogtans beweer Gerrish dat die “hoof trekke” van Calvyn se interpretasie van die nagmaal “maklik herken” kan word en bied hy op ’n hulpvaardige wyse so ’n opsomming in die vorm van *sewe stellings* wat die logika en innerlike konsekwentheid van Calvyn se standpunte illustreer:²³

Eerstens is die nagmaal ’n *gawe*. Dit is basies aan die hele oriëntasie van Calvyn se denke oor die sakrament, sê hy. Hier “skei Calvyn weë met Zwingli terselfdertyd as wat hy in onversetlike teenstand teen Rome staan”.²⁴ God *skenk* – die bewering wat Calvyn van Zwingli skei;²⁵ en God *skenk* – mense gee nie, ons ontvang, téén Rome, volgens Calvyn se begrip. Tweedens is die *gawe Jesus Christus self*, iets wat Calvyn nooit moeg word om te sê nie – nie slegs die weldade van Christus nie (soos wat

19 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 111.

20 Sien ook Gerrish se hele *Grace and Gratitude*, waar die tema van die heilige feesmaal en van voeding en voedsel ’n sentrale rol speel.

21 “The special reverence Calvin felt for the sacrament is too plain to be overlooked; nowhere is the man’s piety more clearly disclosed,” Gerrish, *The Old Testament and the New*, 112.

22 Gerrish, *The Old Testament and the New*, 112. Dit is weer eens ’n verwysing na Calvyn se brief aan Peter Martyr, maar ook na Calvyn se woorde en instelling in die *Institusie* IV/17.7, 10, 32.

23 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 112-115. In sy hoofstuk in *Grace and Gratitude* oor die nagmaal, wat die “The Eucharistic Offering” genoem word, bespreek hy net die eerste ses stellings, maar ontwikkel dan uitvoerig die sewende stelling oor dankbaarheid na die einde van dieselfde hoofstuk toe, 145-156.

24 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 112.

25 Die nagmaal is vir Calvyn *nie* bloot ’n geleentheid vir dankbare besinning nie. Die nagmaal is ’n *gawe*, dit herinner ons nie net bloot aan ’n *gawe* nie, Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 113.

hy dikwels uitgebeeld word), nie slegs die goddelikheid van Christus nie (waarvan hy dikwels beskuldig word), maar die hele Christus inderdaad, met sy liggaam en bloed, met sy menslikheid, met sy vlees,²⁶ met hom as geheel, “voed ons siele aan sy liggaam en bloed”²⁷ as werklike voedsel, is ons waarlik deelnemers aan “die werklike substansie van die liggaam en bloed van Jesus Christus”.²⁸ Derdens word die gawe *deur die tekens* gegee – weer eens teen sowel Zwingli as Rome, wat albei die aard van die teken volgens hom verdraai het. Rome omskep die teken in die ding wat dit aandui. Zwingli skei teken en werklikheid van mekaar. Vir Calvyn “is” die tekens dit wat hulle “verteenwoordig”: hulle is nie oop en leeg nie, maar “verbind met die werklikheid wat hulle aandui”.²⁹ Vierdens word die gawe geskenk *deur die Heilige Gees*, en is hulle middele of instrumente van die Gees wat die “eenheidsband” tussen gelowiges en die werklike, lewegewende vlees van Christus is. Die taal van “geestelike teenwoordigheid”, “geestelike voedsel”, “geestelike drank” of “geestelike eet” moet daarom nie gesien word as dat Christus “slegs in gees teenwoordig is of slegs in die verbeelding van die gelowiges nie”, sê Gerrish – hoewel albei hierdie standpunte verkeerdelik aan Calvyn toegeskryf is ten spyte van sy eksplisiete en konsekwente ontkenning in al sy belangrike werke oor die nagmaal.³⁰ Vyfdens word hierdie gawe gegee *aan almal wat deelneem*, vroom en oneerbiedig, gelowiges en ongelowiges.³¹ Die waarheid en effektiwiteit van die sakrament bly onverminderd, sê Calvyn; as sommiges uit die hoogte die gawe weier en verwerp, is dit “die volheid van die sakrament wat die wêreld in sy geheel nie kan skend nie: dat die vlees en bloed van Christus nie minder werklik aan die onwaardiges gegee word as aan God se verkose gelowiges nie”.³² In die sesde plek word die weldaad van die gawe *in geloof ontvang*, teen enige onpersoonlike verstaan van die sakramentele effektiwiteit in. Vir Calvyn is die sakramentele Woord wat die sakrament vergesel volgens Gerrish “nie ’n beswering nie, maar ’n belofte” en “die gebeurtenis waarin die werklike teenwoordigheid geskied is nie die inseëning van die elemente nie, maar

26 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 113.

27 Calvyn, “Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper”, *Tracts and Treatises*, Vol. II, 170.

28 “In his Sacred Supper (Christ) bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them,” *Institusie* IV/17.32. Oor die begrippe van nuttigting en deelname, sien veral Billings, *Calvin, participation and the gift: The activity of believers in union with Christ*.

29 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 113.

30 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 113.

31 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 114.

32 Calvyn, *Institusie* IV/17.33.

die ontvang van die elemente in geloof onder die werking van die Heilige Gees”.³³ Hierdie ontvangs kan daarom ook plaasvind in die lewe van die gelowige selfs ná die sakrament self. In die sewende plek bewerk die gawe *dankbaarheid*. Hoewel die sakrament in eintlike sin die werk van God is, is dit in breër liturgiese sin ook die werk van die kerk.³⁴ Nie alleen gee dié insig betekenis aan die term “eucharistie” nie³⁵ – as die kerk se danksegging vir die gawe wat gegee word – maar dit maak dit ook betekenisvol en eintlik belangrik om te praat van “offer”, hoewel nie in die sin van ’n versoenende offer nie. ’n Eucharistiese offer, in die sin van ’n “loffer,” ’n “eucharistiese offerande,” ’n “dankbare selfopoffering deur die heilige priesterdom”, vorm ’n onlosmaaklike deel van die liturgie en van die deelname en respons van die gemeente op die gawe.

Kortom, die nagmaal is ’n gawe – die gawe van die lewende Jesus Christus self, wat gegee is deur die tekens, deur die Gees, aan almal wat deelneem, ontvang in geloof en wat dankbaarheid en dankbare selfopoffering bewerk. Dit sou waarskynlik dus Calvyn se “ekumeniese voorstel” aangaande die nagmaal kon wees.

Christus se ekklesiologiese teenwoordigheid

Dog *waarom* sou hy besorg wees oor ’n “ekumeniese voorstel”? Ander bydraes tydens hierdie konsultasie sal in groter besonderhede op sy ekklesiologie en sy ekumeniese passie wys,³⁶ maar enige respons op dié vraag behoort ook sy standpunte oor die aard van die nagmaal en hierdie werklike en persoonlike teenwoordigheid van die lewende Christus te noem – geestelik, sakramenteel, eucharisties. Vir Calvyn lei hierdie werklike gemeenskap met Christus ook tot gemeenskap met mekaar.³⁷

33 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 114.

34 Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 114.

35 In die eerste uitgawe van die *Institusie* het Calvyn die terme “nagmaal” en “eucharistie” as sinonieme gebruik, maar later het hy “nagmaal” (soos ook in ander tale gebruiklik in avondmaal, laaste avondmaal, Supper, The Lord’s Supper) verkies, omdat dit beter met sy siening van die sakrament ooreengekom het.

36 Sien *Johannes Calvin ökumenisch gelesen*, Hrsg. André Birmele & Wolfgang Thönissen, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012, veral die bydraes van Michael Weinrich en Eva-Maria Faber.

37 In sy kommentaar op 1 Korinthiërs 10:16 verduidelik Calvyn byvoorbeeld: “Paul says, that the cup which has been blessed in this manner is *koinonian* – the communion of the blood of the Lord. It is asked, in what sense? It is true, that believers are united together by Christ’s blood, so as to become one body. It is also true, that a unity of this kind is with propriety termed *koinonia* (communion). I make the same acknowledgement as to the bread, observing what Paul immediately adds, as it were, by way of explanation

Deelname aan die liggaam van Christus bind gelowiges saam as die liggaam van Christus. Hulle eenheid met Christus maak hulle een met mekaar. Vir Calvyn kom die teenwoordigheid van Christus en die gemeenskap met Christus dus ook na vore in gelowiges wat mekaar aanvaar en met mekaar deel. Hierdie aspek, wat soms die “ekkesiologies-etiese” implikasies van die nagmaal genoem word, was vir hom van uiterste belang. Sy sterk taal in die 1559 *Institusie* maak dit baie duidelik. Alreeds in die openingsparagrafe van *Boek IV*, wanneer hy die kerk as gemeenskap van heiliges bespreek, onderstreep Calvyn die eenheid in gemeenskap en die noodsaaklikheid om hulle seëninge met mekaar te deel in wedersydse liefde.³⁸ By die bespreking van die sakramente, veral die nagmaal in *IV/17*, kom hierdie “ekkesiologies-etiese” beklemtonings baie passievol na vore.³⁹ As sodanig maak hierdie “ekkesiologiese teenwoordigheid” van Christus dus ’n ekumeniese verlanse vir sigbare eenheid

– that we all become one body, because we are together partakers of the same bread. *But whence, I pray you, comes that koinonia between us, but from this, that we are united to Christ in such a way that we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones (Ephesians 5:30)? For we must first of all be incorporated (so to speak) into Christ, that we may be united to each other. Paul is not disputing at present merely in reference to a mutual fellowship among people, but as to the spiritual union between Christ and believers”* (effens verkort, en my beklemtoning).

- 38 “Moreover, this article of the Creed relates in some measure to the external Church, that every one of us must maintain brotherly and sisterly concord with all the children of God, give due authority to the Church, and, in short, conduct ourselves as sheep of the flock. And hence, the additional expression, the ‘communion of saints’; for this clause must not be overlooked, as it admirably expresses the quality of the Church; just as if it had been said, *that saints are united in the fellowship of Christ on this condition, that all the blessings which God bestows upon them are mutually communicated to each other ... For if they are truly persuaded that God is the common Father of them all, and Christ their common head, they cannot but be united together in brotherly and sisterly love, and mutually impart their blessings to each other”* (*IV/1.3*, my beklemtoning). Volgens Peter Opitz (2009a) fokus die sentrale begrip agter Calvyn se standpunte oor kerklike bestuur en praktiese orde rondom die nagmaal, en is dit die motief vir versoening, en hy beweer dat dit ook waar is van Calvyn se sosiale etiek – en hy begrond dit op Calvyn se begrip van die *communio sanctorum*.
- 39 Gelowiges word gemaak tot liefdadigheid, vrede, harmonie en eenheid sonder verdeling. “The Lord intended it (this is my body, take eat) to be *a kind of exhortation*, that which no other could urge or animate us more strongly, both to purity and holiness of life, and *also to charity, peace, and concord*. For the Lord there communicates his body so that he may become altogether one with us, and we with him. Moreover, since he has only one body of which he makes us all to be partakers, we must necessarily, by this participation, all become one body. This unity is represented by the bread which is exhibited in the sacrament. As it is composed of many grains, so mingled together, that

one cannot be distinguished from another; *so ought our minds to be so cordially united, as not to allow of any dissension or division*" (IV/17.38, my beklemtoning).

In die sterkste moontlike bewoording maak Calvyn gevolgtrekkings van hierdie eenheid met Christus in die nagmaal vir ons onderlinge eenheid. Vanweë dit wat gebeur in die sakrament kan ons eintlik nie langer Christus liefhê sonder om ons naaste lief te hê nie, en kan ons nie langer ons naaste kwaad aandoen sonder om vir Christus kwaad aan te doen nie. "We shall have profited admirably in the sacrament, if the thought shall have been impressed and engraved on our minds, *that none of our brethren is hurt, despised, rejected, injured, or in any way offended, without our, at the same time, hurting, despising, and injuring Christ; that we cannot have dissension with our brethren, without at the same time dissenting from Christ; that we cannot love Christ without loving our brethren; that the same care we take of our own body we ought to take of that of our brethren, who are members of our body; that as no part of our body suffers pain without extending to the other parts, so every evil which our brothers and sisters suffer ought to excite our compassion. Wherefore Augustine not inappropriately often terms this sacrament the bond of charity. What stronger stimulus could be employed to excite mutual charity, than when Christ, presenting himself to us, not only invites us by his example to give and devote ourselves mutually to each other, but inasmuch as he makes himself common to all, also makes us all to be one in him*" (IV/17.38, my beklemtoning).

In harde, byna siniese woorde beskryf Calvyn die aksies van gelowiges wat die nagmaal vier en voel dat Christus hulle lewe is en beweer dat hulle met Hom verenig is terwyl hulle geen ywer vir liefdadigheid toon nie en vervreemd en verwyderd van hulle naaste lewe – hulle lewer getuienis teen hulleself, sê hy, en hulle ruk en skeur Christus se liggaam aan stukke. "Moreover, as we see that this sacred bread of the Lord's Supper is spiritual food to the pious worshippers of God, on tasting which they feel that Christ is their life, are disposed to give thanks, and exhorted to mutual love; so, on the other hand, it is converted into the most noxious poison to all whom it does not nourish and confirm in the faith, nor urge to thanksgiving and charity. For *people who, without any spark of faith, without any zeal for charity, rush forward like swine to seize the Lord's Supper, do not at all discern the Lord's body*. For, inasmuch as they do not believe that body to be their life, they put every possible affront upon it, stripping it of all its dignity, and *profane and contaminate it by so receiving; inasmuch as while alienated and estranged from their brethren, they dare to mingle the sacred symbol of Christ's body with their dissensions*. No thanks to them if the body of Christ is not rent and torn to pieces. By this unworthy eating, they bring judgment on themselves. They bear witness against themselves. *Being divided and separated by hatred and ill-will from their brethren, that is, from the members of Christ, they have no part in Christ, and yet they declare that the only safety is to communicate with Christ, and be united with him*" (IV/17.40, my beklemtoning).

Dit is die rede, sê hy, waarom Paulus die kerk oproep om hulleself te ondersoek, of hulle inderdaad daarna strewe om hulle naaste as lede van hulle eie liggame te sien soos wat hulle deur Christus gesien word. "For this reason Paul commands everyone to examine themselves before they eat of that bread and drink of that cup. By this, as I understand it, he means that everyone should descend into themselves, and consider ...

onafskeidbaar deel van enige ware begrip van en deelname aan die nagmaal.⁴⁰ Die nagmaal self is ’n oproep om die gawe van eenheid te beliggaam, ’n oproep tot ekumeniese gemeenskap. Hierdie begrip mag daarom deel uitgemaak het van Calvyn se eie passie. Sy eie verstaan van die nagmaal laat geen ander respons toe nie – deelname in die lewende, persoonlike teenwoordigheid van Christus, Christus se geestelike, sakramentele en eucharistiese teenwoordigheid, roep om aktiewe en deernisvolle gemeenskap met mekaar in die liggaam van Christus, die kerk.

’n EKUMENIESE VOORSTEL?

Sou Calvyn se begrip van die nagmaal gevolglik gesien kon word as ’n konstruktiewe ekumeniese voorstel vir vandág? Per slot van rekening is die kort opsomming wat hier gegee is tog glad nie nuut nie? Miskien kan *drie afsluitende opmerkings* help om die vraag en ons besprekings verder te fokus.

Eerstens was dit in Calvyn se eie denke inderdád reeds bewustelik óók ’n ekumeniese voorstel, in hedendaagse terminologie. Eva-Maria Faber het onlangs sowel Calvyn se teologiese nadenke oor die kerk as sy aandag aan die uiterlike ontwikkeling van die kerk, onderstreep, en aangetoon hoe sy diepe besorgdheid oor die eenheid van die kerk sowel teologies as prakties was.⁴¹ Daar kan geen twyfel bestaan omtrent sy hoop dat sy begrip van die nagmaal baie verskille en konflikte in die kerk van sy tyd kon en sou oorkom nie. Baie illustrasies sou gegee kon word van hierdie ekumeniese verlange, wat die manier waarop hy sy eie standpunte oor die nagmaal aanbied, insluit, byvoorbeeld in die *Short Treatise on the Supper of our Lord* (gepubliseer in 1541) en in die verskillende weergawes van die *Institusie*, sy positiewe

whether with zeal for purity and holiness they aspire to imitate Christ; whether, after his example, they are prepared to give themselves to their brethren. And to hold themselves in common with those with whom they have Christ in common; whether, as they themselves are regarded by Christ, they in their turn regard all their brethren as members of their own body, or like their members, desire to cherish, defend, and assist them, not that the duties of faith and charity can now be perfected in us, but because it behooves us to contend and seek, with all our heart, daily to increase our faith” (IV/17.40, my beklemtoning).

40 Die term is weer eens van Gerrish afkomstig. “This striking imagery of an ‘ecclesial presence’ of Christ, as we may call it, is a fundamental theme in Calvin’s theology. Engrafting into Christ coincides so completely with entrance into the church that, when he writes of the body of Christ, it is not always possible to tell whether he means the glorified or the ecclesial body,” Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 187-188.

41 Faber, “Mutual connectedness as a gift and a task: On John Calvin’s understanding of the church”, 2009.

verhouding met Melanchton en sy pogings om Luther se eie goedkeuring te wen,⁴² sy voortdurende pogings om wedersydse instemming met betrekking tot sakramente tussen die Switserse kerke te vind,⁴³ sy positiewe houding jeens en ondertekening van die *Augsburgse Konfessie*,⁴⁴ en ’n mens sou miskien selfs die driftige respons in sy later jare op sy Lutherse kritici kon interpreteer in terme van sy diepe teleurstelling dat hulle ’n moontlike ekumeniese ooreenkoms verbete teengestaan het, optrede wat natuurlik volgens hom onnodig was.⁴⁵

Tweedens, aangesien sy toegewyde pogings in sy eie tyd onsuksesvol was, waarom sou hulle vandag enige belofte inhou? Weliswaar sou dit miskien moontlik kon wees omdat sommige van die baie misverstande, selfs karikature, met verloop van verwyder is? Miskien omdat daar vandag ’n dieper waardering vir sy standpunte is in Katolieke en Lutherse kringe? Miskien omdat die tye verander het, wat wydverspreide filosofiese en ander aannames insluit wat sommige van Calvyn se sienings meer aanvaarbaar maak vir sommige mense? Miskien het dit inderdaad vandag moontlik geword om die debatte van die Reformasie weer anders te voer, om ander lyne van skeiding te trek soos wat sommige juis voorstel, in navolging van Calvyn se standpunte oor die nagmaal?⁴⁶ Weer eens het party al reeds hierdie weg ingeslaan, en het hulle inderdaad geredeneer dat hy ’n konstruktiewe ekumeniese

42 Vir Calvyn en Melanchton, sien byvoorbeeld Mathison, *Given for you*, 69-73; vir Calvyn en Luther, sien byvoorbeeld Gerrish, “The Pathfinder: Calvin’s image of Martin Luther”, in Gerrish 1982, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 27-50, en Oberman, *The two Reformations*.

43 Vir die teks en Calvyn se korrespondensie oor die hele proses, Calvyn, *Tracts and Treatises, Volume II*; vir ’n insiggewende interpretasie, sien Paul Rorem, “The Consensus Tigurinus (1549): Did Calvin Compromise?”, ook onlangs Peter Opitz, *Leben und Werk Johannes Calvins*, 2009, veral 114-128; en Campi en Reich, *Consensus Tigurinus. Heinrich Bullinger und Johannes Calvin über das Abendmahl*, 2009.

44 Sien byvoorbeeld Nijenhuis, “Calvin and the Augsburg Confession”, Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 248-263.

45 Vir Calvyn se response, sien *Tracts and Treatises, Volume II*; vir ’n bespreking en interpretasie, sien byvoorbeeld Steinmetz, “Calvin and his Lutheran critics”, Gamble, “Calvin’s controversies”.

46 In ’n opstel getiteld “Sign and reality. The Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Confessions, in *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 118-130, probeer Gerrish die lyne van skeiding op so ’n manier anders trek. As die belangrikste kwessie ter sprake die vraag was of die sakramente gawes of instrumente of middele van genade is, is die skeidslyn nie tussen Luthers en Gereformeerde nie, redeneer hy, maar binne die Gereformeerde gemeenskap self, met Luther aan die kant van Calvyn. Die gevolg is dat die debatte dikwels debatte oor minder sentrale kwessies was en nog steeds is. Hy kom tot die slotsom: “(T)he heart of Luther’s own position seems clear: the sacrament is a gift, and the gift is Jesus

voorstel bied, maar skynbaar ook sonder sukses.⁴⁷ In 'n interessante opstel getiteld “Strasbourg Revisited: Reformed Perspectives on the Augsburg Confession”, redeneer Brian Gerrish inderdaad dat die kerke van die Reformasie steeds terug kan gaan na “Strasbourg” om party van hulle verskille heel te maak, waarmee hy bedoel dat Calvyn se ekumeniese benadering tot die nagmaal wel sou kon dien as 'n weg vorentoe, maar hy voeg terselfdertyd by dat ander en miskien meer dringende skeidings ondertussen na vore getree het wat dwars déúr kerke van die Reformasie sny, en wat hulle dus op nuwe maniere onderling verdeel.⁴⁸

Ander soek klaarblyklik op ander plekke na konstruktiewe ekumeniese voorstelle omtrent die nagmaal. Drie onlangse bydraes deur Gereformeerde teoloë sou ter illustrasie gebruik kon word. George Hunsiger, in *The Eucharist and Ecumenism*, en spesifiek ook in die eerste hoofstuk wat handel oor die “werklike teenwoordigheid”, kyk skynbaar eerder na Oosters-Ortodokse standpunte in sy poging om 'n pad vorentoe te vind.⁴⁹ Bram van de Beek, in *God doet recht. Eschatologie als christologie*, gaan skynbaar nog verder terug, na die vroeë kerk, vóór die teenstrydighede van die sestiende eeu die begrippe op maniere gevorm het wat nou lyk asof dit so moeilik is om ekumenies te oorkom.⁵⁰ Michael Welker, in *Was geht vor beim Abendmahl?*, gaan skynbaar nóg selfs verder terug, na die evokatiewe bybelse beskrywings van die nag van verraad, om nuwe en konstruktiewe maniere te vind om te praat en te vier.⁵¹ Hoewel hulle almal nog steeds in die tradisie van Calvyn staan, suggereer hulle benaderings skynbaar dat dit moeilik mag wees om oplossings te vind vir die konflikte van die sestiende eeu binne daardie eeu self, selfs met Calvyn – per slot van rekening kon hulle nie hulle verskille tóé oorkom nie? Wat boonop van die konsensus, ook oor die ware teenwoordigheid van Christus, tussen Lutherse en Gereformeerde perspektiewe, wat alreeds in die 20^{ste} eeu bereik is – 'n konsensus waarvan Welker kan beweer dat juis die feit dat Calvyn se lering van die nagmaal 'n “bemiddelende posisie” gebied het “gehelp het om die kerke van die Reformasie

Christ. If that is what was dearest to Luther in his reverence for the sacrament, then the Calvinist confessions are on Luther's side of the line,” 130.

47 Slegs een so 'n herinnering sal voldoende wees. G.C. Berkouwer, in sy bespreking “De tegenwoordigheid van Christus in het Avondmaal” in *De Sacramenten*, 294-326, bied 'n gedetailleerde argument waarin hy Calvyn se standpunte verdedig as 'n bydrae tot ekumeniese dialoog, en verwys uitvoerig na beskikbare literatuur waarin hierdie kwessies ook vroeër in die 20^{ste} eeu gedebatteer is.

48 Gerrisher, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, 248-263.

49 Hunsiger, *The eucharist and ecumenism*.

50 Abraham van de Beek, *God doet recht. Eschatologie als christologie*, 322-393.

51 Welker, *What happens in holy communion?*

te verenig”?⁵² En wat van die ekumeniese stelling in die konsensus-dokument van “Faith and Order”, naamlik *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*? Moet ons dan nog verder as dit soek, by Calvyn self?

Is dit ooit eintlik realisties om nuttige ekumeniese voorstelle omtrent die nagmaal te soek in die lig van die ontwikkelings in en sedert die tyd van die Reformasie, die verharding van standpunte en die vanselfsprekende aard van oortuigings en praktyke, van bediening en orde, van liturgiese tradisies en diepgewortelde maniere van aanbidding, van spiritualiteit en vroomheid – maar ook van maniere waarop ons ander sien? Lee Palmer Wandel se *The Eucharist in the Reformation* opper byvoorbeeld sulke skeptiese besorgdhede op ’n dramatiese wyse as sy doodeenvoudig die verhaal vertel van hoe hierdie uiteenlopende begrippe en praktyke ontwikkel het, en wat die kerk uitmekaar geskeur het.⁵³ Dit opper natuurlik vrae oor ekumeniese visie en metodologie, oor wat ons hoop om te bereik, en wat ware gemeenskap vandag sou kon beteken en vra. Moet ons byvoorbeeld ’n leerstellige ooreenkoms nastrewe, of wedersydse erkenning, of iets anders?

Derdens is dit natuurlik so dat Calvyn self nie meer deel van die ekumeniese proses is nie, net Calviniste – en in baie opsigte stem hulle nie altyd saam met sy standpunte oor die nagmaal nie. Dit beteken dat, selfs al sou sy eie begrip meer konstruktief lyk vir ander ekumeniese gespreksgenote, hulle mag vind dat hulle in werklikheid te doen het met Gereformeerde gemeenskappe wat op baie maniere van Calvyn se standpunte afgewyk het. Weer eens is hierdie glad nie nuwe kennis nie; geleerdes het eintlik altyd van hierdie dikwels diep en radikale verskille geweet. Die relevansie is eenvoudig dat in ’n tyd waarin daar ’n nuwe bewustheid van en belangstelling in en selfs waardering vir Calvyn se siening oor die nagmaal is, hierdie standpunte dalk nie meer aanwesig is in werklike ekumeniese gesprekke nie. Daar is baie studies beskikbaar wat hierdie saak beredeneer. Keith A. Mathison bied byvoorbeeld ’n dramatiese en gedetailleerde beskrywing in *Given for you. Reclaiming Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper*. Hy is skerp in sy oordeel, en dek die vroeë ontwikkelings in die 1500's en party van die vroeë belydenisse, latere ontwikkelings in die 1600's en 1700's, en uiteindelik ontwikkelings in die 1800's en 1900's.⁵⁴ Hy twyfel nie daaraan

52 Welker neem byvoorbeeld konsensus baie ernstig op. Hy redeneer dat dit gebou is op die “persoonlike teenwoordigheid” van Christus, en dat hierdie begrip dit moontlik maak om aan die kernbegrippe van albei tradisies vas te hou wat dikwels as onderling uitsluitend beskou is, sien 87-110, met die verwysing op 91.

53 Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*.

54 “Beza’s scholasticism provides a bridge to the era of seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy, in which Calvin’s doctrine began to be altered, but he himself did not participate in the alteration (62) ... Calvin’s view (and even Bullinger’s view) has

dat die Gereformeerde kerk as geheel ver weg beweeg het van die eucharistiese lering van Calvyn nie, en baie geleerdes sal oor die algemeen saamstem met so 'n

actually faded out of the picture in Reformed churches over the last few centuries and been largely replaced by memorialist views (68) ... Calvin's doctrine was gradually rejected and replaced in the Reformed churches by views that sometimes go farther than Zwingli's in denying the true presence of Christ in the Supper and true communion with his flesh and blood (91) ... In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a gradual move away from the eucharistic doctrine of John Calvin and the majority of the sixteenth-century Reformed confessions (93) ... In Turretin we see a noticeable shift away from the eucharistic doctrine of John Calvin and the late sixteenth-century Reformed confessions. While not abandoning it completely, there are significant alterations and omissions. The central theme of the union with Christ that is at the heart of Calvin's doctrine is only peripheral in Turretin. Turretin rejects Calvin's instrumentalism. He also rejects Calvin's concept of 'spiritual presence', replacing it with something that would be better termed a subjective 'mental presence'. This last idea seems to be one of the key ideas that have influenced Reformed sacramental theology to this day (119) ... When we turn to the writings of Reformed theologians in eighteenth-century New England, we begin to feel the full force of the shift away from Calvinist sacramental theology (122) ... By the time we reach mid-eighteenth-century New England, there is little left of the original eucharistic theology of Calvin because the emphases of Zwinglian theology have become dominant (128) ... By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Calvinistic doctrine of the Lord's Supper had been largely abandoned in many segments of the Reformed church (129) ... (Charles Hodge) says that Calvin's doctrine (on the body and blood of Christ as received in the sacrament) is an 'uncongenial foreign element' that 'had no root in the system and could not live' (150) ... The sacramental controversy in the nineteenth century was not confined to the North. The Southern Presbyterian Church experienced it as well ... Robert Lewis Dabney was the most influential theologian in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in the latter half of the nineteenth century ... Dabney explicitly rejected Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper ... Dabney goes to great lengths to discredit Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist ... (F)or Dabney, the 'eucharistic communion became little more than a didactic message designed to produce an inward comprehension of doctrinal truths with correspondingly appropriate emotional reactions' (156-158) ... (T)he gradual movement away from the Calvinist doctrine of the sixteenth century became an explicit rejection of that doctrine in the latter half of the nineteenth century (166) ... (T)he movement away from Calvin reached something of a zenith in the late nineteenth century ... There can be no doubt that the Reformed church as a whole has moved far from the eucharistic doctrine of Calvin and the Reformed church of the sixteenth century (76)," Mathison, *Given for you*.

standpunt.⁵⁵ Dit is sekerlik baie wydverspreid waar van populêre aanbidding en vroomheid in Gereformeerde en Presbiteriaanse gemeentes.⁵⁶

Miskien sou 'n mens selfs kon redeneer, op grond van die bogenoemde vyf vorme van teenwoordigheid van Christus by Calvyn, dat die Gereformeerde geloof dikwels ál vyf uit die oog verloor het – dat Christus se lewende en persoonlike teenwoordigheid meermale verruil word vir idees oor Christus; dat Christus se geestelike teenwoordigheid vervang is deur slegs ons subjektiewe gedagtes en gevoelens; dat Christus se sakramentele teenwoordigheid verminder word tot blote herinnerings; dat Christus se eucharistiese teenwoordigheid verwar word met bloot ons eie mentale aktiwiteite; dat Christus se ekklesiologiese teenwoordigheid verlore gaan in eintlik slegs 'n genootskap van eenders-denkende individue.⁵⁷ Hoewel daar 'n

55 Die komplekse verhouding tussen Calvyn en Calvinisme wat alreeds in sy eie tyd, maar meer nog in latere ontwikkelings bestaan het, is natuurlik 'n belangrike tema op sy eie. Geleerdes stem nie saam oor sy standpunte omtrent die nagmaal nie, en dit begin alreeds met uiteenlopende oordele omtrent die rol van Calvyn se denke in die vroeë Gereformeerde belydenisskrifte. Breedweg gesproke stem die meeste geleerdes egter saam met die siening dat sy standpunte dikwels verlore geraak het, veral ten opsigte van die ware teenwoordigheid van Christus. Sien byvoorbeeld Jan Rohls, *Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi im Abendmahl*. Van besondere belang is die standpunte van belangrike Gereformeerde teoloë soos Hodge, wat Calvyn se eie lering oor die nagmaal as 'n teenstrydige vreemde element in Gereformeerde teologie beskou wat gedeeltelik uit Lutherse invloed afgelei is, en iemand soos Gerrit Hartvelt in Nederland wat in sy belangrike studie *Verum Corpus. Een studie over een centraal hoofdstuk uit de Avondsmaalsleer van Calvijn* tot soortgelyke gevolgtrekkings kom, naamlik dat die vreemde idee van Christus se lewegewende vlees wat in die hart van Calvyn se sienings gesetel is, 'n gevaarlike indringing in Gereformeerde teologie is.

56 “It is interesting to observe that while a belief in the real or true presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord’s Supper is critical for all the traditional theological statements in the Reformed tradition regarding the sacrament, this fact is not at all well known among members of the Reformed Churches, including both clergy and laity. Many in the Reformed churches assume that the doctrine of the real presence of Jesus Christ is uniquely Roman Catholic and that it has never had a place in their own tradition,” Shelton, “A theology of the Lord’s Supper from the perspective of the Reformed tradition.” Vir 'n beskrywing van ontwikkelings in Nederland gedurende die 20^{ste} eeu, sien Brinkman, “Het sacrament in de gereformeerde geloofsbeleving”.

57 'n Nuttige sleutel tot so 'n benadering word in die heel laaste woorde van Gerrish in *Grace and Gratitude* gebied, 190: “It is not at all surprising that stalwart Reformed divines have sometimes been not merely puzzled but offended by Calvin’s talk about the communication of Christ’s life-giving flesh. They may choose to reject it as a perilous intrusion into Reformed theology and insist that Christ’s body is life-giving only because it was crucified. But in so doing they should note that Calvin’s view of

noue verband tussen dié vyf prosesse onderling is, kan die verhare van al vyf hierdie ontwikkelings waarskynlik ook afsonderlik vertel word. In die Suid-Afrikaanse ervaring van apartheids-teologie en -eklesiologie en die gevolglike stryd om sigbare eenheid van die kerk, het hierdie misverstand rondom Calvyn se standpunte oor die nagmaal sekerlik 'n sentrale rol gespeel. Die verhaal van apartheid was ook letterlik die verhaal van die nagmaal wat die pad byster geraak het. Die eintlik kritiese vraag is gevolglik of dit wel sinvol is om Calvyn se eucharistiese teologie as 'n belowende ekumeniese voorstel te sien terwyl groot dele van die Gereformeerde familie die eintlike hart van hierdie siening oor die teenwoordigheid van Christus reeds êrens langs die pad verloor het.

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the Lord's Supper was bound up with a total conception of what it means to be saved and of how the historical deed of Christ reaches out to the present. *It is impossible to read Calvin's ideas on Baptism and Eucharist in their own historical context and not to notice that they were developed in part as a warning against what he took to be another peril: a mentality that reduces sacred signs to mere reminders, communion with Christ to beliefs about Christ, and the living body of the church to an association of likeminded individuals.* Only a careful study of later Reformed history can show which has turned out to be the greater of the two perils. But this much, I think, can fairly be said in conclusion: even if the Calvinists have the greatest difficulty in expressing what exactly that something *more* is that they experience in the holy banquet, ecumenical theology will always have need of them to throw their weight in on Calvin's side of the Reformed boat," (my beklemtoning). Dit is leersaam dat hy afsluit dat dit in ekumeniese teologie vir Calviniste nodig sal wees om Calvyn se denke in hierdie opsig te volg.

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Konstansie en verandering in God se verlossingsplan

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ABSTRACT

Constancy and change in God's plan of salvation

Our everyday experience is well acquainted with the reality of constancy and change. Persistence over time (continuity) is normally accompanied by an awareness of change (discontinuity). This article wants to highlight the underlying ontological issues and distinctions required to gain a better understanding of the familiar term *identity*. In order to achieve this goal the idea of identity is related to the nature of an entity and its properties. Plato's account of identity and change paved the way for an enduring philosophical wrestling with this problem. In the Dooyeweerd tradition, acknowledging the more-than-functional and multi-functional nature of the identity of an entity helps us to understand the distinction between conceptual knowledge and concept-transcending knowledge.

In the first part of the article the problem of constancy and change is epistemologically investigated and described. The second part deals with the identity or theme of God's plan of salvation in both the Old and New Testament. It is argued that this theme entails an implicit awareness of the foundational relationship between constancy and change – especially in Romans 9-11, where it is used as hermeneutical strategy to explain Israel's role in salvation history, thereby providing a complementary perspective on the exegesis of this important theme in Paul's letter. Thus the article is by definition multidisciplinary. It also includes a few remarks on rhetoric and Bible translation.



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1. INLEIDING

Die vraag na identiteit het die Westerse denkgemeenskap deur die eeue heen besig gehou. Daar is vandag nie een wetenskaplike konteks waarin die vraag na identiteit nie sinvol gestel kan word nie. Wanneer eksegete byvoorbeeld wil stilstaan by hierdie onvermydelike gegewe van ons ervaring van die werklikheid, ontmoet ons daarin slegs 'n besondere gestalte van die aard van identiteit – of dit nou gaan oor die identiteit van 'n Nuwe Testamentiese geskrif, of oor die identiteit van 'n bepaalde teologiese tema, of selfs oor die identiteit van 'n skrywer.

Die vraag na *identiteit* duik nooit in isolasie op nie; dit word gewoonlik minstens gekoppel aan die ewe-grondliggende probleem van *verandering*. Van die vroegste tye is die vraag immers gestel of daar te midde van 'n voortdurend-veranderende werklikheid hoegenaamd enige plek kan wees vir die besef van identiteit. Selfs wanneer daar pogings aangewend is om tot 'n positiewe waardering van identiteit en verandering te kom, wil dit lyk asof die een slegs sinvol verantwoord kan word indien tegelyk ook rekening gehou word met, en rekenskap gegee word van, die ander een. Identiteit en verandering skyn onverbreeklik met mekaar saam te hang.

In die artikel word die problematiek van identiteit en verandering allereers aan 'n breër epistemologiese ondersoek onderwerp. Daarna word die identiteit of tema van God se verlossingsplan aan die hand daarvan beskryf. In die proses word aangetoon dat die identiteit van dié belangrike tema in die teologie ten nouste saamhang met die fundamentele verhouding tussen konstansie en verandering – veral in Romeine 9-11, waar Paulus dit as hermeneutiese strategie gebruik om Israel se rol in God se verlossingsplan te verduidelik. Deur dié filosofiese benadering word 'n aanvullende perspektief op die eksegete van die brief gebied, terwyl enkele opmerkings oor retoriese middele en Bybelvertaling ook deel vorm van dié multidissiplinêre studie.

2. KENTEORETIESE RAAMWERK I.S. IDENTITEIT

Studente wat in die jare dertig van die vorige eeu by prof. N. Diedericks filosofie gestudeer het, vertel dat hy altyd die voorbeeld van 'n trapfiets gebruik het om twee sake duidelik te maak:

- die geheel is meer as die som van die dele en
- die wisseling van die dele hef nie die identiteit van die fiets op nie.

Die binnebande, buitebande, wiele, raamwerk, stuurgedeelte – en noem maar op – kan almal opeenvolgend verwissel word en nog steeds word van *dieselfde* fiets gepraat. Die fiets besit klaarblyklik die vermoë om te midde van die *wisseling* van

bepaalde onderdele 'n intrinsieke *duursaamheid* te vertoon – te midde van (en ongeag) alle veranderinge bly dit “dieselfde” fiets.

In sy dialoog *Kratylos* (402A) worstel Plato reeds met die probleem van konstansie en verandering, en wel na aanleiding van Herakleitos se opmerking dat ons nie twee keer in dieselfde rivier kan instap nie, aangesien die watermassa voortdurend wissel. Later sou Plutarchos dieselfde probleem illustreer aan die hand van die skip van Thesius: in die loop van jare het die Ateners uiteindelik elke plank waaruit die skip opgebou is, vervang; wat die vraag laat ontstaan of ons nog sinvol van dieselfde skip kan praat.

Plato was veral besorg oor die implikasies wat die stelling dat alles voortdurend verander, inhou, want wanneer iemand sou beweer dat iets in kennis vervat is, het dit die volgende oomblik reeds in iets anders verander – wat die moontlikheid van kennis prinsipieel ophef. Gevolglik postuleer hy, ter wille van die kenbaarheid van dinge, die staties-onveranderlike “eie wese” (“*auto to eidos*”) van dinge, dit is, hulle bo-sinnelike en ewig-onveranderlike wese, hulle ideë. Laasgenoemde is slegs verstandelik te bedink, terwyl die sigbare (veranderlike) met die sinne waargeneem kan word. Hierdie onderskeiding hang natuurlik saam met die dualistiese inslag van die Griekse grondmotief van vorm en materie, waarvolgens die werklikheid by Plato verdeel is in die ryk van die sigbare dinge (bestempel as die ryk van wording: *genesis*) en die ryk van die selfstandig-bestaande dinge (*ousiai*) (Strauss 1978:122).

Die belangrike gesigspunt in Herakleitos se probleemstelling is gegee in die klaarblyklike gesamentlike teenwoordigheid van verandering én duursaamheid. Die unieke en onverganklike bydrae van Plato is gegee in sy insig dat verandering alleen vasgestel kan word op basis van konstansie (duursaamheid) (Strauss 2004:564-5). Hierdie insig strook met ons alledaagse lewenservaring, want wanneer ons na 'n foto van iemand kyk wat 20 of 30 jaar gelede geneem is, kan ons maklik sien dat daar veranderinge ingetree het. Op grond waarvan kan hierdie veranderinge egter vasgestel word? Die antwoord is veelseggend: op grond van die feit dat ons steeds van *dieselfde persoon* praat!

Plato het dus ingesien dat verandering slegs op die basis van konstansie (soos gegee in sy ryk van ideë) vasgestel kan word. Later sou Aristoteles hierop reageer deur Plato se ideë “af te trek” na dit wat hy bestempel het as die universele wesensvorme van dinge. In sy *Metaph* (1039b, 22-26) stel hy byvoorbeeld dat wanneer hierdie huis vergaan, dit nie huis-wees is wat vergaan nie: in die huis-wéés van elke huis tóón daardie huis op 'n universele manier dat dit gekoppel is aan dit wat geld vir huis-wees in die algemeen. Waar Plato dus die *orde vir* die werklikheid ontdek het – 'n orde wat as die wet-vir-skepsel-wees die konstante kader vorm waarbinne konkrete

dinge hulle variabele bestaansruimte vind, daar het Aristoteles *die ordelikheid van die dinge* raakgesien – wat as korrelaat van die orde vir die dinge dien (Strauss 2009:176-177).

Laasgenoemde opmerkings bring ons binne die kader van die christelik-reformatoriese wysbegeerte as nog 'n voorbeeld van hoe wysgere met die onderskeiding tussen konstansie en verandering werk in 'n poging om ons kennis-ervaring van 'n gegewe in die werklikheid te verklaar. Christelik-wysgerig beskou kan die duursame voortbestaan van enige gegewe, waarin dit behoue bly te midde van al die veranderinge wat dit ondergaan, slegs benader word deur die toegangspoort van die modaliteite. Voortbouend op Dooyeweerd (1997, Vol. III:65) se teorie van die modale aspekte van die werklikheid (soos getal, ruimte, beweging, die fisiese, die logiese, ens.) verduidelik Strauss (2009:179) ons ervaring van identiteit aan die hand van die veelsydigheid (menigvuldige aspekte) waarin ons dinge en gebeurtenisse in hulle duursaamheid beleef. Sy konklusie is dat ons moet onderskei tussen die gebruik van aspek-terme as ons verwys na iets wat binne die grense van die betrokke aspek funksioneer en die gebruik van aspek-terme waarin hulle benut word op 'n wyse wat ons tot buite die grense van die betrokke aspek heenvoer. Die eerste soort gebruik van aspek-terme noem hy 'n begrips-gebruik daarvan, die tweede 'n begrips-transenderende gebruik daarvan. Begripsvorming berus normaalweg op 'n veelheid universele kenmerke, wat saamgebind word in die eenheid van 'n begrip. Ons besef van die identiteit van dinge en gebeurtenisse berus nou enersyds op hierdie veelheid van universele kenmerke wat die grense van begrips-vorming oorskry, en andersyds berus dit op die rol wat die funderende samehang tussen die kinematiese (bewegings) en fisiese aspekte van die werklikheid in ons identiteitservaring speel.

Hoewel vanuit radikaal-verskillende gesigshoeke, kom bogenoemde denkrigtings ooreen dáárin dat die identiteit van 'n geskrif of teologiese tema bepaal word deur die nosies van kontinuïteit (duursaamheid, konstansie) én diskontinuïteit (verandering). Ons besinning oor 'n tema wat konstant of duursaam aanwesig is, kan dus veranderende of variërende interpretasies hê. Danksy die onderliggende konstansie kan ons egter die veranderinge vasstel. Wanneer dergelike veranderinge nie die konstansie van 'n gegewe ophef nie, ontmoet ons 'n verantwoorde besef van die identiteit daarvan. Dan ken ons dit.

3. GOD SE VERLOSSINGSPLAN WYSGERIG BESKOU

Ten einde God se verlossingsplan te verstaan, word vervolgens aandag gegee aan konstansie én verandering.

3.1 Konstansie

Daar is konstansie t.o.v.

- God se plan met die nasies, en
- diegene wat die objek van verlossing is.

Eerstens: konstansie in God se verlossingsplan. Die Here wou hê dat Israel naby Hom moes leef – nie net ter wille van hulleself nie, maar ook ter wille van al die ander nasies. As God van die hele wêreld, wou Hy deur Israel al die heidennasies bereik (König 2001:20-21). Dit was deel van sy oorspronklike plan toe Hy die verbond met Abraham gesluit het: “En Ek sal jou ’n groot nasie maak en jou seën en jou naam so groot maak dat jy ’n seën sal wees. En Ek sal seën diegene wat jou seën en hom vervloek wat jou vervloek; *en in jou sal al die geslagte van die aarde geseën word*” (Gen. 12:2-3). Dié seën hou dus eerstens in dat Abraham en sy nageslag ’n groot volk sal word, ’n nuwe en afsonderlike volk, wat sy bestaan tot by hom sal terugvoer. Tweedens spreek die belofte daarvan dat Abraham ook vir ander volkere tot ’n seën sal wees, dat in hóm al die ander nasies op aarde geseën sal word (Aalders 1963:17-18). Veral laasgenoemde is vir ons doel belangrik: die seën is nie beperk tot Abraham en sy nageslag nie, maar dit is bedoel vir al die nasies.

Dat God deur Abraham en sy nageslag (Israel) die heidennasies wou bereik, blyk ook uit Miga 4:1-4, wat feitlik woordeliks aangehaal word in Jes. 2:2-4: “ Daar kom ’n tyd dat die berg waarop die huis van die Here is, ’n blywende plek sal hê bokant die bergtoppe en sal uitstaan bo die heuwels. Die volke sal daarheen stroom, baie nasies sal daarnatoe gaan en sê: ‘Kom, laat ons optrek na die berg van die Here toe, na die huis van die God van Jakob, sodat Hy ons sy wil kan leer en ons daarvolgens kan lewe, want uit Sion kom die openbaring, uit Jerusalem die woord van die Here’”. Volgens König (2001:20-21) was dít God se verlossingsplan: As Israel in sy weë sou wandel, sou Hy hulle só voorspoedig maak dat al die volke na Jerusalem sou stroom en sou erken dat hiérvan die enigste ware God aanbid, volgens Wie se wil hulle begeer om te lewe. Só wou God die wêreld verlos: deur Israel te seën en op dié wyse die heidennasies jaloers te maak en nader te trek na Hom toe. ’n Wesenlike deel van dié seën was dat alle oorloë sou ophou (Miga 4:3-4) en die Here Israel van al sy vyande sou bevry.

Ongelukkig was Israel ontrou aan die Here en het die nasies nie na Jerusalem toe gestroom nie. Het dit meegebring dat God van sy verlossingsplan afgesien het? Nee. Die gevolg van Israel se ontrou was dat Hy vir Jesus as ’n tipiese Ou-Testamentiese profeet gestuur het om hulle tot bekering te roep, sodat Hy steeds sy plan deur Israel met die heidene kon uitvoer. Die feit dat God vir Jesus juis na Israel toe gestuur het en só die heidene wou bereik, bevestig die konstansie in God se verlossingsplan. Met

verskeie bewyse uit Matteus, Lukas en Handelingte beredeneer König (2001:22-24) hierdie punt op oortuigende wyse. Reeds by Jesus se geboorte sê die engel vir Josef: “Sy sal ’n Seun in die wêreld bring, en jy moet Hom Jesus noem, want dit is Hy wat sy volk van hulle sondes sal verlos” (Matt. 1:21). “Sy volk” verwys na die volk Israel. Later gee Jesus self die volgende opdrag aan sy twaalf dissipels: “Moenie met ’n pad na die heidennasies toe afdraai nie en moenie in ’n dorp van die Samaritane ingaan nie. Gaan liever na die verlore skape van die volk Israel toe. Gaan verkondig: ‘Die koninkryk van die hemel het naby gekom’ “ (Matt. 10:5-7). En toe die dissipels Hom vra waarom Hy nie reageer op die smeking van die Kanaänitiese vrou nie, antwoord Hy reguit: “Ek is net na die verlore skape van die volk Israel toe gestuur” (Matt. 15:24).

Dieselfde toespitsing op Israel vind ons in die lofsange op die geboortes van Jesus en Johannes die doper, soos Lukas dit beskrywe in hoofstuk 1:46-55 (die loflied van Maria) en 1:68-79 (die lofsang van Sagaria). Uit Handelingte 3:26 en 5:31 is dit duidelik dat Petrus dit ook so verstaan het dat Jesus se bediening aanvanklik net op Israel gerig was. Selfs ná die uitstorting van die Heilige Gees het Petrus nog steeds ’n probleem gehad om in die huis van ’n heiden in te gaan (Hand. 10). Veel later het ook Paulus in elke stad allereers na die sinagoge toe gegaan om die Jode te probeer oortuig dat Jesus die Messias is voordat hy hom tot ander mense en take gewend het.

Daar is dus duidelik konstansie tussen die Ou en Nuwe Testament (by name die Evangelies en Handelingte) t.o.v. God se verlossingsplan. Tydens sy aardse optrede was Jesus getrou aan die opdrag wat die Ou-Testamentiese profete ontvang het: sy werk was allereers op Israel gerig, nie op die heidennasies nie. En so het die apostels ook hulle taak verstaan. Want: deur Israel te sien wou God die heidennasies jaloers maak en hulle nader trek na Hom toe.

Tweedens is daar konstansie t.o.v. diegene wat die objek van God se verlossing is. Van die begin af het die ware Israel nie uit al die nasate van Abraham bestaan nie, maar slegs uit die gelowiges in Israel. Die Israeliete in die ou bedeling, wat nie in God geglo het nie, was nooit deel van sy verlose volk nie; daarom was dit die taak van die profete om die ongehoorsame Israeliete telkens te waarsku dat God hulle sal verwerp as hulle hulle nie bekeer nie, dat Hy hulle as heidene (“Kussiete” in Amos 9:7) sal beskou. In Rom. 9:6-8 verwoord Paulus hierdie belangrike onderskeiding soos volg: “Immers, nie almal wat van Israel afstam, is werklik (= die ware) Israel nie; en nie almal wat nakomelinge van Abraham is, is werklik kinders van Abraham nie ... Dit is nie die kinders wat in die gewone gang van die lewe (= op natuurlike wyse) gebore is, wat kinders van God is nie; dit is die kinders wat kragtens die belofte (= op bo-natuurlike wyse) gebore is, wat as Abraham se nageslag gereken word”. In die 1983-vertaling hier aangehaal, is daar slegs by implikasie ’n kontras

tussen die twee soorte kinders. Die Grieks merk die kontras egter uitdruklik met die teenstellende ἀλλά (“maar”), wat tereg in die *Nuwe Testament en Psalms. ’n Direkte Vertaling* (2014) so vertaal is. En die frase “die belofte van God”, beskryf Lenski (1961:594) as “the covenant promise, the gospel or Christ promise, which brings forth children of God by faith and by faith alone”. Slegs hulle wat op dié wyse gebore is, is die ware Israel.

Met ’n reeks aanhalings uit die Ou Testament (Gen. 21:12; 18:10,14; 25:23; Mal.1:2-3; Eks. 33:19 en 9:16) bring Paulus nou bogenoemde waarheid oor kinders, wat volgens die belofte van God gebore is, tuis in die res van sy argument (9:7b-18). Hieruit blyk dat God se uitverkiesing en barmhartigheid bepaal wie sy kinders is, en nie natuurlike afstamming of menslike handeling nie. Tolmie (2005: 96, 109-124, 194-195) beskryf sulke aanhalings as *argumente gebaseer op die gesag van die Skrif*. Hulle is retories effektief, omdat hulle deur die gehoor as gesaghebbend aanvaar word. Die aanhalings versterk die band tussen Paulus en sy gehoor, hulle bind albei partye aan die God van Israel en word deur Paulus in goed-gestruktureerde beredenerings ingebed – dikwels nadat hy hulle ietwat aangepas het om die verband tussen die sitaat en sy argumentasie duidelik te maak (Stanley 1998:712-716).

Kinders wat volgens die belofte gebore is, sluit die heidene wat tot geloof in die God van Abraham kom, in. Hulle is deel van die ware Israel. Dit was juis die doel van God se verbond met Abraham in Gen. 12:3: dat in hom al die geslagte van die aarde geseën sal word.

In God se verlossingsplan is daar dus duidelik konstansie t.o.v. wie verlos word. Hulle is die ware Israel, die uitverkorenes uit die Jode en die heidene – almal van wie Abraham die vader is. Wat die Jode betref, is dit die oorblyfsel wat God in sy genade uitverkies het. In die oorspronklike Grieks van 11:5 is die woord “genade” in die genitief en verbind aan “verkiesing”, wat in effek neerkom op vrye toegang tot God en bepaalde voordele, wat onverdienstelike mense slegs deur Christus se soenverdienste ontvang (Harrison 2003:224-225). Die kern van die saak is dat God net één volk het: die ware Israel, wat uit al die nasies versamel word op basis van geloof alleen – en dit van die begin af tot by die wederkoms van Christus (König 2001:30-31).

3.2 Verandering

Naas konstansie is daar ook verandering in God se verlossingsplan. Die verandering word duidelik uitgespel in Rom. 9-11. In sy gevolgtrekking oor die uitverkiesing skryf Paulus in 9:30-33: “Heidene het nie God se vryspraak gesoek nie, maar dit wel gekry – die vryspraak deur die geloof. Israel, daarenteen, het ’n wet gesoek waardeur

hulle God se vryspraak sou kon kry, maar by so 'n wet het hulle nie uitgekóm nie. Waarom kon hulle die vryspraak nie kry nie? Omdat hulle nie op die geloof wou bou nie, maar op hulle eie prestasies. Hulle het oor die struikelblok gestruikel, soos daar geskryf staan ...” En dan volg weer 'n *argument gebaseer op die gesag van die Skrif* as Paulus aanhaal uit Jes. 8:14.

Bogenoemde vertaling van 9:30-33 kom uit die 1983-vertaling. Die vertaling “vryspraak” vir δικαιοσύνη is egter nie korrek nie. Louw en Nida (1988: 744) definieer δικαιοσύνη as “the act of doing what God requires”, met as vertalingsekwivalente: “righteousness, doing what God requires, doing what is right “. Die *Nuwe Testament en Psalms. 'n Direkte Vertaling* (2014) het δικαιοσύνη in die drie verse telkens met “geregtigheid” vertaal, wat die oorspronklike tot sy reg laat kom.

In hoofstuk 11 brei Paulus nou uit op die struikeling in 9:30-33 as hy in 11:11 vra: “Het Israel se struikeling hulle finale val beteken?” Sy antwoord is: “Beslis nie (μὴ γένοιτο). Maar deur hulle val het die redding na die heidennasies toe gekom om die Jode jaloers te maak”. En in 11:13-14 praat hy spesifiek met die gelowiges uit die heidennasies as hy sê dat sy taak as apostel is “om op een of ander manier (εἴ πως) my eie mense (= die Jode) jaloers te maak en sommige van hulle te red” (1983 vertaling). Jewett (2007:679) wys op die versigtige wyse waarop Paulus sy taak in die oorspronklike Grieks formuleer. Die werkwoorde παραζηλώσω (“jaloers maak”) en σώσω (“red”) kan albei verstaan word as futurum indikatief of aoristus subjunktief, wat 'n belangrike verskil aan die vertaling daarvan maak. Jewett kies vir die aoristus subjunktief, en wel in die lig van die versigtige formulering εἴ πως, wat die werkwoorde voorafgaan, sowel as die “sommige” wat gered kan word. Sy motivering oortuig en gevolglik steun ek sy vertaling van die aoristus subjunktiewe met “might make jealous” en “might save”. So verstaan, erken Paulus dat die verlossing van Israel ten diepste God se werk is en nie syne nie. Op die wyse laat hy die oorreding van die Jode, wat steeds weerstand bied teen die evangelie, in God se hande. Hy strewes slegs daarna dat sy werk op een of ander manier sy eie mense jaloers kan maak en sommige van hulle kan red.

Hierdie versigtige formulering kom tot sy reg in die *Nuwe Testament en Psalms: 'n Direkte vertaling*, wat lees: “ (ek heg groot waarde aan my bediening as apostel van die heidene) in die hoop dat ek dalk my eie mense jaloers kan maak en sommige van hulle tot verlossing kan bring” (11:13-14).

Waar God se verlossingsplan dus aanvanklik daarin bestaan het om die (gehoorsame) Israeliete ryklik te seën en op dié wyse die heidennasies jaloers te maak en na Hom toe te trek, daar hoop Paulus nou dat die gelowige heidene, op hulle beurt, die ongelowige Jode jaloers sal maak sodat hulle Jesus as Verlosser sal aanvaar. Kortom:

die verlossing van die ongelowige Jode is die resultaat van hulle jaloesie op die gelowige heidene (Louw 1979:111). Volgens Paulus is dit die enigste toekoms vir die Jode: dat hulle jaloers gemaak kan word op hulle eie Messias en Hom in die geloof kan aanvaar. En in die proses het hy as apostel 'n beskeie funksie. Die oorreding van die Jode, wat soveel weerstand bied teen die evangelie, is in eintlike sin God se werk.

Bogenoemde verandering in God se verlossingsplan word in 11:16-24 verduidelik aan die hand van die beeld van 'n olyfboom: die ongelowige Jode is soos takke wat uitgekap is uit die mak olyf (= die ware Israel), terwyl die gelowige heidene as takke van 'n wilde olyfboom op die mak olyf geënt is – slegs omdat hulle glo. Op dié wyse kry hulle deel aan die lewensap van die mak olyf (11:17). Die metafoor van die olyfboom is die kragtigste oorredingsmiddel wat in 11:11-24 gebruik word (Maartens 1997:1007-1009; Witherington 2004:240) en kan gedefinieer word as 'n skuif in verwagting m.b.t. die kommunikasieproses – gewoonlik van 'n letterlike na 'n figuurlike betekenis, soos hier in 11:16-24 (Nida, Louw, Snyman, Cronje 1983:186). Op die wyse word die gehoor voorsien van 'n nuwe, ongewone kyk op 'n saak, wat hulle aandag skerper daarop fokus (Tolmie 2005:99).

Benewens die funksie van die metafoor, is die volgende twee punte ook belangrik vanuit 'n oorredingsperspektief. Die eerste is weer die passief “is uitgekap” (ἐξεκλάσθησαν), wat deur Dunn (1988:660) gedefinieer word as 'n *passivum divinum*. Wat taalkundiges en eksegete tereg só definieer, kan vanuit retoriese hoek beskou word as 'n *argument gebaseer op goddelike betrokkenheid*. Die soort argument is effektief, omdat dit God, as die hoogste gesag vir spreker en hoorder, betrek by die handeling en dus die einde van alle teenspraak beteken. Dit oorreed, omdat gelowiges God se gesag aanvaar en in sy beskikking berus. In die gang van die argument in hoofstuk 11 is dit ook belangrik dat God net “party van die takke” afgebreek en nie sy volk as geheel verwerp het nie. Tweedens skakel Paulus in 11:17 van die derde persoon meervoud in 11:11-16 oor na die tweede persoon enkelvoud, wat impliseer dat hy elke individuele heiden-christen direk wil aanspreek: jý, as 'n wilde olyf, is tussen die ander takke op die mak olyf geënt. Op die wyse word 'n christen uit die heidendom as gespreksgenoot ingevoer, wat as verpersoonlikte tak van die wilde olyfboom op die mak olyfboom van Israel ingeënt is (Tobin 2004:363). Die gesprek tussen die twee gespreksgenote (“jy” en “hulle” = die ongelowige Jode) word voortgesit tot by 11:24. Die tweede persoon enkelvoud σý, wat in vers 17 ingevoer word, staan aan die begin van die betrokke sinsdeel in 'n beklemtoonde posisie en die gespreksvennoot verleen 'n lewendige effek aan die argument (Anderson 2000:237-8; Witherington 2004:179).

Die inenting van die wilde olyf “tussen / onder hulle” (ἐν αὐτοῖς in 11:17) verwys binne konteks na die takke wat nie afgebreek is nie, d.w.s. na die Joodse christene.

Die werkwoord “geënt” (ἐνεκεντίσθης) is in die tweede persoon enkelvoud en die passief is weer ’n *passivum divinum*, wat goddelike betrokkenheid impliseer.

Ten slotte is dit duidelik dat die Jode ’n besondere plek in God se verlossingsplan inneem. In God se oorspronklike plan het Israel ’n sentrale rol gespeel: Hy wou hulle só ryklik seën dat die heidennasies na Jerusalem sou stroom om Hom daar te kom dien. Selfs Jesus, as die grootste van alle profete, se bediening was allereers toegespits op die welsyn van die Joodse volk. Toe Israel egter ontrou word, en veral toe hulle vir Christus verwerp, het God sy plan verander. Christus se kruisdood was die keerpunt. In die hersiene plan neem Israel weer ’n sentrale plek in: nou is die apostels na die heidene toe gestuur sodat hulle vir Israel jaloers kan maak op hulle eie Messias. In dié sin is die redding of verlossing van die Jode die diepste motivering vir Paulus se taak as heidenapostel.

Deur verskeie retoriese middele probeer Paulus in Rom. 9-11 sy hoorders oorreed om sy standpunt oor die posisie van Israel in God se verlossingsplan te deel. Dit is die enigste toekoms wat hy vir Israel sien.

4. KONKLUSIE

Die hermeneutiese strategie wat in die Skrif gebruik is om die identiteit of tema van God se verlossingsplan te ontwikkel, is dié van konstansie en verandering. In die artikel is die onderskeiding eers wysgerig begrond, waarna dit gebruik is om die verlossingsplan te beskryf. Die konklusie van dié multidissiplinêre studie is dat daar konstansie en verandering in God se verlossingsplan is en dat albei die momente verreken moet word as ons ’n greep wil kry op die tema van God se omvattende verlossingsplan vir die wêreld. Wysgerig beskou, geld die nosies van konstansie én verandering immers vir ons verstaan van enige gegewe in die werklikheid.

Enkele ooredingsmiddele is in Rom. 9-11 geïdentifiseer en hulle funksies binne konteks beskryf. Uit die studie het ook ’n paar opmerkings voortgevloei, wat Bybelvertalers mag interesseer. Dit is duidelik dat die nuwe 2014 Afrikaanse vertaling voorsien in die behoefte van ernstige Bybelstudente, omdat dit alles wat die bronteks kenmerk, so getrou moontlik weergee.

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TREFWOORDE

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Die Algemene Sinode van 2007 en die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk

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ABSTRACT

The General Synod of 2007 and the reformed identity of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Apparent dissension on core ecclesiastical issues prompted the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of 2007 to take decisions on the reformed identity of this church. A study by one of its commissions on the subject was accepted. In this study, matters such as salvation through grace, faith, Scripture and Christ alone (the so-called 4 solas); the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit, the content of the reformed confessions and a distinction between church and kingdom, are explained.

The Synod also accepted that the solas should be reinterpreted in each period of time. Church unity does not imply that members should think or behave in the same way in all facets church life.



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INLEIDING

In sy verslag aan die Algemene Sinode van 2007 van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) wys sy Taakspan/Kommissie vir Leer en Aktuele Sake op die besef onder gemeentedele dat NG-dominees oor sake soos die rol van die vrou in die samelewing, homoseksualiteit, aborsie, saamwoon, ewolusie en die model van gemeentewees “nie meer so seker is nie en in elke geval nie meer eenstemmig is nie” (NGK 2004A:130). Hy bevestig sy stelling egter nie met ’n verantwoordbare opname nie. Die blote bestaan van ’n verslag van dieselfde kommissie of taakspan aan die Algemene Sinode van 1998 oor die wyse waarop die NG Kerk sy geloofsbelydenisse aanvaar, skep die moontlikheid dat verskille oor die saak tot hierdie verslag aan die Algemene Sinode van 2007 aanleiding kon gegee het (NGK 1998A:60-62)¹. In sy finale voorlegging aan die Algemene Sinode van 2004 praat die parallelle sessie oor Leer en Aktuele Sake wel van ’n “ingrypende meningsverskil in die NG Kerk” oor die gesag, inhoud en verstaan van die gereformeerde belydenis en spiritualiteit (NGK 2004H:353).

Ek besit ’n harde kopie (getikte voorstel) van ’n “amendement” van dr Lourens Erasmus en ds Lectus Steenkamp by die Algemene Sinode van 2004 wat hierdie presiese woorde gebruik. Die amendement word gestel op ’n voorstel van die Kommissie/Taakspan vir Leer en Aktuele van 2004 waarin die saak voorkom maar die woorde nie gebruik word nie (NGK 2004H:303). Die parallelle sessie op die Leer en Aktuele Sakeverslag neem die bewoording in sy voorlegging aan die Sinode waarskynlik by hierdie twee here oor. Weer is die “ingrypende meningsverskil” gegrond op hulle persoonlike waarnemings en nie ’n wetenskaplike opname nie.

Hoe dit ook al sy, ’n “ingrypende meningsverskil” in 2004 oor kernsake soos die gereformeerde belydenisse van die NG Kerk, verhoog die nodigheid van besluite by dié Algemene Sinode oor die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk. ’n Geskiedenis van die NG Kerk op algemene sinodale vlak wys hierdie verskil as ’n fenomeen in veral die 21^{ste} eeu – dus na 2000 – uit (Strauss 2013:69,148) ’n Skynbaar groeiende fenomeen wat nie noodwendig met ’n enkele studiestuk en die daaruit vloeiende besluite uit die weg geruim sou word nie.

Die bestaan van meningsverskille oor belydeniskwessies kom in Mei 2005 andermaal na die oppervlakte toe die Moderamen van die Algemene Sinode (ASM) hom genoodsaak ag om op berigte oor ’n moontlike kerkskeuring te reageer.

1 Onder gereformeerde kerkregtelikes is daar ’n breë eenstemmigheid dat die belydenisse van die kerk die akkoord van kerklike gemeenskap is, Smit 1984:64.

Die berigte spruit uit 'n rubriek en opmerkings van Erasmus – die destydse voorsitter van die Vrystaatse Moderamen – in 'n Vrystaatse oggendblad. Die gebeure loop uit op 'n klag teen Erasmus op 28 Junie 2005. 'n Klag wat eventueel by die Vrystaatse Sinode in Oktober 2005 bygelê word (NGK in die OVS 2005:429).

In sy persverklaring wys die ASM daarop dat hy gesprekke in die NG Kerk oor sy gereformeerde identiteit, die rol van sy belydenisskrifte asook Skrifgesag en -hantering nog altyd aangemoedig het. Hy is egter verontrus deur die uitsprake van kerkskeuring. Die ASM en baie NGK-lidmate verwelkom gesprek oor hierdie sake, maar “soek” nie skeuring nie. Gebrekkige inligting oor die wyer debat en die NG Kerk se (amptelike) standpunte skep 'n probleem (NGK 2007A:10).

In sy verslag oor die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk aan die Algemene Sinode van 2007 meld die taakspan vir Leer Aktuele Sake dat hy dit in opdrag van die Algemene Sinode van 2004 doen. Die opdrag behels 'n “inklusiewe” ondersoek waarby die insette van kerkrade, ringe en sinodes asook studiegroepe na aanleiding van beskrywingspunte wat ontvang word, betrek word. Die opdrag is toegespits op die gereformeerde belydenis en spiritualiteit van die NG Kerk, maar die taakspan oordeel dat hy dit breër moet rig naamlik op die aard van die gereformeerdwees van die “lidmate”² van die NG Kerk. Die verslag moet die werklikheid maar ook die ideaal waarom dit hier gaan, omskryf (NGK 2007A:11).

Verder oordeel die taakspan dat daar 'n diversiteit in oortuigings in die NG Kerk groei waar alles nie oral dieselfde is nie. Die eenheid van die NG Kerk is nie 'n eenvormigheid in alles nie, maar 'n gemeenskaplike kern te midde van 'n diversiteit. Die Algemene Sinode moet dus helderheid kry oor die kernidentiteit of saambindende kern van die kerk van waaruit sy diversiteit as rykdom gevier kan word.

Die NG Kerk kom uit die Protestantse tradisie waarin die Bybel normatief en sentraal staan en aanvaarde belydenisskrifte normatief is. As 'n gereformeerde kerk spruit die NG Kerk uit die 16e eeuse Protestantse Europa van Luther en Calvyn. Die boodskap van die Christelike geloof moet egter telkens in eietydse terme vertaal word. Die gereformeerde vaders het hierin stemreg of inspraak, maar nie 'n vetoreg nie (NGK 2007A:11-12).

Die dogmatikus Dirkie Smit sluit by hierdie gedagte aan. Hy verwys na die karakter van gereformeerdwees en vervolg:

2 Die NG Kerk het natuurlik nie lidmate nie. Hulle is lidmate van die gemeentes van die NG Kerkverband, kyk voetnoot 3.

...Reformed churches live from their understanding of the gospel, of their understanding of the message of the Scriptures, but this gospel is to be heard anew, again and again, in ever-changing socio-historical circumstances. For the Reformed vision, this gospel is a formative and transformative power, it calls for embodiment in social and concrete forms... both in church and in society... this embodiment is never completed... (but an) ongoing discernment of the claims of the gospel and the concrete forms it should take... the church... (is) called to a critique of destructive powers... (in) the church itself, but also in social and public life(2009:443).

Vir Smit is die gereformeerde kerke se hantering van die boodskap of die implikasies van die Bybel vir kerk en samelewing 'n uitstaande kenmerk van gereformeerdwees: een van die karakteronderskeidings tussen “*Calvinist*” en “*Lutheran views*” (2009:423).

Teen hierdie agtergrond moet die inhoud van die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk na aanleiding van die reaksie van die Algemene Sinode van 2007 op die verslag van sy taakspan vir Leer en Aktuele Sake, verstaan word.

Twee kwalifiserings is op hierdie punt nodig.

Die eerste is dat die omskrywing van die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk in hierdie verslag eerder kerklik as akademies moet wees. Dit gaan hier om sinodebesluite in die kerk as 'n Christelike geloofsverband wat deur nie-teologiese lidmate verstaan en aanvaar word. Sinodebesluite wat hulle geloofsoortuigings – vanuit hulle eie verstaan van sake – vertolk. Die taakspan self noem dit 'n “inklusiewe” ondersoek waarby kerkrade, ringe, sinodes en studiegroepe van gelowiges of “gewone” lidmate ook betrek word (NGK 2007A:11).

Die tweede kwalifisering is dat dit hier eerder om positiewe stellings wat jou kerklike en geloofskarakter verwoord, as 'n volledige akademiese relaas van ondermeer verskille met ander standpunte of afwykings, moet gaan. Dit moet om verduidelikende tetiese stellings van gereformeerdwees gaan.

DIE SOLA'S

Ter inleiding wys Leer en Aktuele Sake daarop (NGK 2007A:13-17) dat die eerste woord oor die identiteit van die NG Kerk nie “gereformeerd” kan wees nie. So iets is juis nie gereformeerd nie.

Volgens die taakspan is die lidmate van die gemeentes van NG Kerk³ (“ons”) in die eerste plek nie gereformeerdes nie, maar Christene. Mense wat aan God behoort. Die Latynse uitdrukking *coram Deo* is ’n kernagtige weergawe waaroor dit eintlik vir gereformeerdes gaan, naamlik ’n lewe voor of gerig op God.

Simbole van gereformeerde kerke gee aan hierdie opvatting uitdrukking. Die vertikale kerktoering, die sakramente van die doop en die nagmaal, die kruis en die oop Bybel op die kansel “gaan oor God” (De Klerk 1982:129-130). Alle formulerings in verband met ’n gereformeerde kerklike identiteit “wentel” hierom heen.

Hierdie opmerkings van die taakspan is in die kol. Die kern is die stelling dat ’n lewe voor God die kern van gereformeerdwees is. Met hierdie stelling voorkom die taakspan die indruk dat hy Christenwees en gereformeerdwees teenoor mekaar stel. Meer nog, hy gee ook uitdrukking aan ’n gereformeerde oortuiging dat dit om die volle lewe as ’n offer aan God gaan. Dit word later weer bespreek.

Volgens die taakspan is die bekende “solas” van die Reformasie ’n bondige manier om die kernsake van gereformeerdwees uit te druk. Dit gaan oor die *sola scriptura* (deur die Woord alleen) wat destyds veral teen die beweerde gesagvolle Roomse kerklike tradisie van leeruitsprake en beheer oor Skrifuitleg gemik was. ’n Tradisie wat hierdie uitsprake as gelyk met en ewe gesagvol as die Bybel gestel en die leerstuk oor die verlossing van die mens deur die genade (*sola gratia*) en die Woord alleen verduister het. Vir die Reformasie kon natuurlike kennis van God nie opweeg teen die Skrifopenbaring van God nie. Daar is geen “natuurlike kennis” waardeur ’n mens gered word nie. Teenoor die bemiddeling van die Roomse priester het die Reformasie *solus Christus* (Christus alleen) gestel. Dit is alleen moontlik as die boodskap van Christus as Verlosser deur die *sola fide* (geloof alleen) gevat word. Goeie werke laat jou nie kwalifiseer vir God se genade en verlossing nie (Pont 1999:53).

Die taakspan plaas hierdie vier solas onder ’n vyfde: *solus Deo Gloria*. Vir hulle is dit die dak waaronder die ander vier inpas. Die solas was destyds handig teen die Rooms-Katolieke wanpraktyke van die 16e eeu, maar hulle glo dat dit telkens “kontekstueel” hersien moet word. Hierdie begrip gee volgens die taakspan gestalte aan die idee dat

3 Kleynhans wys daarop dat die gemeentes die plek is waar die gelowiges bymekaar kom of waarby hulle inskakel, 1982:80. Die kerk is nie ’n soort vrywillige vereniging met lede waarvan die gemeentes die ondergeskikte takke is nie. ’n Kerkverband soos die NG Kerk bestaan uit gemeentes as volledige kerke wat op hulle beurt uit lidmate bestaan, Keet 1963:42vv. Op sy beurt wys die taakspan daarop dat die gemeente in gereformeerde taal volledig kerk is, maar nie die hele kerk nie, NGK 2007A:14. Hierdie uitdrukking is van Heyns 1977:169-170.

'n gereformeerde kerk gedurig reformeer. 'n Verstokte gereformeerde kerk noem hulle 'n innerlike teenstrydigheid.

Twee kritiese waarnemings tref by hierdie formulerings.

Die eerste is die byna onafmanier waarop die solas omskryf word. Om 'n kern kwessie te noem: hoe moet 'n sola “kontekstueel” hersien word? Of is dit die toepassing van die bekende (ou) vyf solas in 'n nuwe konteks wat hersien moet word? Is die solas konstantes of is hulle “kontekstueel” of konteksgebepaald en moet hulle dáárom telkens hersien word? Is die idee agter elke sola konstant, maar die formulering daarvan oop vir hersiening?

Betekén hierdie kontekstuele hersiening in nuwe tye dat die solas hulle sola-karakter kan verloor? Watter deel van die bondige formulering van die solas is konteksgebepaald? Gee die solas meer as 'n konstante kern, of is dit self die konstante kern? Indien die solas as solas hersien moet word, is die gereformeerde voorvaders uit die hoek van die behoud van voortgaande reformasie in die kerk en die samelewing nie dalk geregtig op 'n vetoreg nie? Dit gaan hier immers om reformasie gemeet aan die solas as konstantes.

Tweedens stel die taakspan die sola gratia teenoor natuurlike Godskennis as die middel tot verlossing, terwyl dit in die literatuur eerder teenoor die doen van “verdienselike” goeie werke of werkheiligheid gestel word (Schulze 1978:133; De Jong 1987:161; Jonker 1994:32-33). Natuurlik kan natuurlike godskennis as 'n “goeie” werk kwalifiseer. Dit was egter nie die kern van die historiese konteks van die *sola gratia* en *sola fide* in die tyd van die Reformasie nie. In 1520 – net nadat sy bekende 95 stelling teen die kerkdeur in Wittenberg wat die Reformasie sneller – publiseer die Hervormer Martin Luther juis 'n boekie *Oor goeie werke*. Dit kom binne die raamwerk van sy stryd teen die Roomse aflate en biege en die Liepzig-debat teen Johannes Eck (Kuiper 1995:157-181).

Daarby waag die taakspan hulle nie aan wat die lidmate van NGK-gemeentes van die solas maak nie. Ten spyte van die feit dat dit een van hulle verklaarde doelstellings is. Hulle gee ook nie voorbeelde van hulle eie “kontekstuele” hersiening van die solas nie.

DIE HEILIGE GEES

Met sy stelling dat Calvyn baie “klem” op die werk van die Heilige Gees lê, bevind die taakspan hom in goeie geselskap. Jonker (1994:38) en Van Wyk (1983:5) gebruik die uitdrukking dat Calvyn “die teoloog van die Heilige Gees” genoem kan word, met groot instemming. Vir beide is die werk van die Gees onlosmaaklik van die

van die Vader en die Seun. Hulle noem Hom die Gees van God en Christus wat die verlossing in ons bewerk.

Die taakspan beskryf die klem op die werk van die Heilige Gees as tiperend van die gereformeerde teologie. Die lewe voor God is 'n lewe in die kragveld van die Gees. Die opkoms van die Pentekostalisme in die laat twintigste eeu met hulle opvattinge oor die persoon en werk van die Heilige Gees vra 'n duideliker onderskeid op hierdie punt tussen hulle en die gereformeerdes. Tipies van die NG Kerk vandag erken die taakspan egter dat gereformeerdes “veel” van dié rigting kan leer: hulle sterk bewussyn van God se krag, gees van aanbidding en ywer vir getuienis.

Wat die taakspan nalaat om te sê is dat hierdie aanbidding en getuienis in 'n konteks en met 'n inhoud plaasvind wat vreemd is aan getoetsde gereformeerde uitgangspunte (Strauss 1995:13-36). Die taakspan noem ingrypende verskille in Skrifuitleg en -aanpak met die tradisionele Pentekostalisme óók net “klemverskille”. Die voorbeelde wat hulle ophaal, dui egter op meer as net klemverskille.

Die taakspan wys op die noue verbintenis by gereformeerdes tussen die Woord en Gees van God. By gereformeerdes is daar “minder ruimte” vir bonatuurlike visioene en “vrye profesie” as by die Pentekostalisme. Gereformeerdes handhaaf 'n soberder nadenke oor die Woord in elke nuwe konteks. Oor die gawes van die Gees verwerp hulle die uitlig van ongewone tale of klanke (spreek in tale) as dié teken van vervulling met die Gees. Hulle beklemtoon alle gawes wat die gemeente opbou en die liefde as die “allerbeste gawe”.

Oor die doop met die Heilige Gees aanvaar gereformeerdes die Bybelse opdrag dat ons heiligheid moet najaag, maar ook dat niemand kan sê dat Jesus die Christus is sonder die Heilige Gees nie (Van't Spijker 1991:121). Daar is nie mense met “meer” en “minder” van die Gees nie, omdat die Gees 'n persoon en ondeelbaar is. Die doping met die Gees as 'n tweede of derde ervaring na bekering word afgewys (Strauss 1995:13-17). Met die gereformeerde tradisie van die mens as “gelyktydig sondaar en geregverdig” (afkomstig van Luther se *simul justus ac peccator*, De Jong 1987:170) is daar natuurlik verskille in gehoorsaamheid en 'n wandel in die Gees. Mense kan uit ongehoorsaamheid die Gees weerstaan of uitblus.

Die taakspan behou die gereformeerde kern van sy betoog wat hy bondig en duidelik stel. Tog klink hy op sekere punte nog onaf.

As 'n teoloog van die Gees en die Woord van God as 'n onlosmaaklike tweeling, as 'n inisieerder van die uitdrukking “deur Woord en Gees”, sou Calvyn onmiddellik by die taakspan wou weet of enige werklike openbaring van God – natuurlik of bonatuurlik – los van die binding en kontrole van die Woord kan bestaan? Bestaan die vrye profesie as 'n werklike vrye profesie nie eers in gebondenheid aan die Woord

nie? Of is die enigste regstelling op die Pentekostalisme hierin net dat dit vaagweg “minder” moet wees?

Is minder openbarings en profesieë net omdat hulle “minder” is, gereformeerde of “meer” gereformeerde?

Die nalatige omruiling van Luther se *justus en peccator* as ’n bekende dogmahistoriese sêding skep die vraag van hoe naby aan die “bronne” die taakspan in sy verslag beweeg het. Die verslag gee geen Skrifgebaseerde uiteensetting van die doping óf vervulling met die Gees nie, terwyl ’n verduideliking op hierdie punt noodsaaklik is. Al twee begrippe kan met ’n positiewe Bybelse inhoud gevul word, terwyl die debat oor die doping met die Gees oor veel meer as heiliging – dit wat die verslag impliseer – gaan (Strauss 1995:13-22).

KERK EN KONINKRYK

Die taakspan wys met reg daarop dat die kerk ’n belangrike plek inneem in die lewe van gereformeerde gelowiges. Dit is een van die kenmerke van die gereformeerde kerkbegrip dat die geloof nie “volledig” opgaan in kerkwees nie. Die koninkryk is groter as die kerk. Die taakspan beskou die kerk as ’n teken van die koninkryk. Lidmate wil nie hulle lewens verkerklik nie, maar ver-Christelik.

Smit beklemtoon dat die gereformeerde Protestantisme verskil met die Lutheranisme oor die implikasies of effek van gehoorsaamheid aan die Woord en wil van God buite die kerk in die res van samelewing. Hierdie vertrekpunt het gelei tot

...far-reaching historical significance, for it decisively affected the political and social evolution of the lands that came under the sway of Calvinistic churchmanship and preaching (2009:423).

Met “geloof” soos hier gebruik deur die taakspan, beoog hulle om die volle Christelike lewe of ’n koninkryksomvattende lewe uit te druk. ’n Lewe wat strukture soos die kerk én ander samelewingstrukture binne die koninkryk insluit. ’n Lewe wat gehoorsaamheid of ’n Christelike lewenstyl op alle terreine vra. Waaroor dit hier duidelik nié gaan nie, is die omskrewe geloof in antwoord 21 van die Heidelbergse Kategismus (NGK 1982:44) of die spreekwoordelike “heilige, algemene Christelike geloof” soos verwoord in die NG Kerk se algemene én gereformeerde belydenisskrifte (Jonker 1994:18-19).

Volgens die taakspan het die kerk sy bestaan aan God te danke. Dit behoort aan die Here wat dit die wêreld instuur. Die kerk is verbind aan die Woord as identiteitsdokument en die viering van die genade van God deur die bediening van

die sakramente en die handhawing van sy belydenis⁴. In sy struktuur komplementeer twee begrippe mekaar: die gemeente as volledig maar nie die hele kerk nie, en die gemeente met ander gemeentes in kerkverband (Heyns 1977:169-170).

Die vervulling van die ampte en leierskap in die kerk moet gepaardgaan met diens. Die erkenning van die gelykwaardigheid van die ampte sluit hiërargie en heerskappy uit (vgl Kleynhans 1984:1; Strauss 2008:279; Strauss 2010:40). Dit gaan om die heerskappy van die Woord waaraan alles getoets en waarmee alles gekontroleer word en nie van mense nie (Jonker 1965:27).

Die ideaal van die vestiging van God se koninkryk op aarde beteken dat die gelowiges op elke “duimbreedte” van die lewe tekens van die koninkryk of gehoorsaamheid aan die Koning moet oprig (Kuyper 1930:32)⁵. Die lewe voor God (die coram Deo van die lewe) is ’n roeping: van piekniek hou tot preek.

LITURGIE EN BELYDENISSE

Die taakspan is kort en bondig as hy sy verslag oor die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk en die liturgie in hierdie gemeentes inlei. “Die liturgie is ’n uitdrukking van hoe ’n kerk die Evangelie verstaan”.

Volgens die taakspan is die gereformeerde tradisie ’n hoor-tradisie wat ’n groot klem op die lees en uitleg van die Bybel plaas. Daarom is die prediking as kontekstuele Skrifuitleg ’n sentrale oomblik in die erediens. Liedere, gebede en getuienisse versterk die rol van die Bybel en die sakramente is die “sigbare Woord”. Die belydenisskrifte stem ooreen met die Bybel en behoort “integraal deel van elke erediens te wees”. Hoewel die kerke in die gereformeerde tradisie vanuit hulle anti-Roomse oorsprong “effe huiwerig” vir ’n oormatige fokus op rituele en simbole is, kan dinge soos kruise, kanselklede en salwing die Woord bevestig en versterk (De Klerk 1982:43, 121-124).

Verantwoorde liturgiese vernuwing soos nuwe liedere in die idioom van die tyd en ander begeleidingsinstrumente as die orrel kan ’n uitvloeisel van die reël semper reformanda wees mits dit nie lei tot die prysgawe van liturgiese middele wat die toets van die tyd deurstaan het nie.

4 ’n Uiteensetting van die implikasies van die merktekens of kenmerke van die ware kerk in artikel 29 van die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis sou in hierdie geval tot ’n meer afgeronde (volledige) resultaat gelei het. Vir Calvyn se invloed op hierdie artikel van die belydenis, Praamsma sa:264.

5 Die taakspan skryf die woordjie “duimbreedte” aan Willie Jonker toe sonder om enige verwysing te gee. Dit is egter Abraham Kuyper wat dit in die 19e eeu in gereformeerde kringe inburger, Strauss 1993:10.

Gereformeerdes glo dat die erediens uit 'n paar kernelemente bestaan soos Skriflesing, die wet, skuldbelydenis, genadeverkundiging, voorbidding en lofprijsing. Vaste credo's of belydenisse en formuliere is nie dwangbuise nie, maar daar om aan die band met mekaar en die wyer ekumeniese kerk uitdrukking te gee (De Klerk 1982:67-88; Strauss 2013:77).

As die taakspan verwys na die erkende belydenisskrifte van die kerk gebruik hy die besluite van die Algemene Sinode van die NG Kerk van 1998 oor die wyse waarop hierdie kerk sy belydenisskrifte aanvaar. Die NG Kerk se drie algemene belydenisskrifte naamlik die Apostolicum en Belydenisse van Nicea en Athanasius en die Drie Formuliere van Eenheid naamlik die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis, Heidelbergse Kategismus en die Dordtse Leerreëls is gesagvol in die gereformeerde geloofsoortuiging of die saak wat hulle (quia) volgens die Skrif bely. Hierdie oortuiging sluit nie die wysiging of aanvulling van hierdie belydenisse uit nie. So iets moet egter op 'n kerkordelike wyse geskied.

Die belydenisskrifte is historiese dokumente wat die tekens van hulle tyd en van hulle menslike ontstaansgeskiedenis vertoon. Hulle is egter gesagvol in die kernwaarhede van die Evangelie of die Christelike geloof wat hulle bely (NGK 1998A:60-62; Strauss 2013:50-52).

'n Kerk in die gereformeerde tradisie wat tot dieselfde slotsom as die NG Kerk gekom het en volle kerklike verhoudinge met die NG Kerk handhaaf, is die Christian Reformed Church of North America. Vir hierdie kerk beteken instemming met die belydenisskrifte instemming met "*those doctrines which are confessed*" omdat (*quia*) dit in die Bybel geleer word (Engelhard en Hofman 2001:51).

Die taakspan maak gewag van 'n sombere, sobere mensbeeld wat gevoed sou word uit die gereformeerde belydenisskrifte met hulle klem op sonde en genade.

Die kern van die gereformeerde mensbeeld hou egter verband met die antwoord op vraag 1 van die Heidelbergse Kategismus: Wat is jou enigste troos in lewe en in sterwe?

Die antwoord van die taakspan: dat ons nie meer aan onself behoort nie, maar aan God. Dat ons aan ons getroue Verlosser en Saligmaker Jesus Christus behoort.... (NGK 1982:39) 'n Antwoord wat 'n verantwoordelikheid en omvattende dissipelskap impliseer. Dit spruit immers uit 'n verbondsverhouding waarin die Here belowe om ons God te wees maar eis dat ons sy gehoorsame kinders sal wees. Elke verbond waarby die Here betrokke is, bevat beloftes en eise (Calvyn sa:320) .

BALANS

As hierdie verslag met sy omskrywing van die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk deurgewerk word, moet die vraag gevra word: het dit sy oogmerke soos deur homself aan die orde gestel, bereik? Gaan dit hier om die gereformeerde wees van “gewone” lidmate en ampsdraers, gemeente-aktiwiteite en vergaderings, om die NG Kerk in sy geheel? En is die “ideaal” van ’n gereformeerde identiteit behoorlik omlyn?

Gaan dit hier inderdaad om die sogenaamde “werklikheid” én die ideaal? Die bewoording van sy taak soos deur die taakspan self gekies.

Wat meer is, is hier ’n deeglike ondersoek na ’n groeiende diversiteit te midde van ’n saambindende kern waarvan aan die begin melding gemaak is? Het die verslag ook die “ingrypende meningsverskil” hanteer wat ’n groot rol by die gee van die opdrag gespeel het? ’n Meningsverskil wat ook in belydenisverskille teenwoordig kan wees?

Die feit dat die verslag uit ’n inklusiewe ondersoek waarby lidmate oor ’n breë spektrum betrek word, moes spruit, speel in op hierdie doel van die ondersoek. Die verslag self gee inhoudelik egter geen aanduiding van watter stellings van watter groep af kom nie.

Oor sy werkswyse meld hy dat hy van publikasies, die bydraes van teoloë en van sinodale studiestukke gebruik gemaak het. Die konsep- of werksdokument is met ’n groep lidmate wat in vyf sessies gesien is, deurgewerk, terwyl die Algemene Diensgroep vir Gemeente-ontwikkeling ook insette en kommentaar gelewer het.

Kortom, nie-teoloë het eers by die konsep van die verslag bygekom en nie van die begin af nie. Dit laat die vraag ontstaan of die onverwerkte of outentieke bydraes van lidmate in die verslag gehoor word? Die groep lidmate wat wel betrek is: hoeveel is hulle en hoe verspreid in die kerkverband – byvoorbeeld geografies en ouderdomsgewys – is hulle? Was so ’n verspreiding prakties moontlik indien dit oor vyf sessies versprei is?

Is hierdie werkswyse die rede waarom die verslag meer ’n teologiese as ’n gewone-lidmaat-inslag vertoon? Waarom daar nie spesifieke verwysings is van wie gegewens kom nie? Selfs die insette van die NG-teoloë kom nie uit ’n wye kring nie. Is dit die rede waarom die geykte “ingrypende meningsverskil” en ’n “groeiende” diversiteit nie in besonderhede behandel word of glad nie aan die bod kom nie? Waarom die paar teoloë én dominees soos – volgens die verslag – geraadpleeg, skynbaar hulle eie stempel op die stuk afgedruk het?

'n Tweede punt van kritiek – veral in die Suid-Afrikaanse en Afrikakonteks van die NG Kerk – is sekerlik die vraag watter rol die aanvaarde gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk in sy houding oor apartheid voor en na 1986-1990 gespeel het? Watter rol hierdie identiteit in sy aanvaarding van die apartheidkritiese dokumente *Kerk en Samelewing-1986 en -1990* gespeel het? In sy besinning oor gereformeerdwees in Suidelike Afrika noem Smit hierdie 'n kernsaak van die NG Kerk se gereformeerde identiteit: hoe gereformeerdes die implikasies van die Woord op die samelewing toepas (2009:218vv).

Hy haal Jonker aan wat dieselfde koppeling doen en dan 'n volgende, hieraan relevante, kwessie opper:

Waar die stryd in die afgelope veertig jaar hoofsaaklik om die deurbreking van die volkskerkkarakter van die NG Kerk gegaan het, sal dit in die volgende dekades waarskynlik... (ondermeer gaan) om die bewaring van die gereformeerde karakter van hierdie kerke en hulle profetiese roeping in die samelewing (1998:220-221).

Hoe breed 'n verslag oor die gereformeerde karakter van die NG Kerk egter kan word, word ook uit die gebruik van die drie merktekens van die ware kerk in die Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis (artikel 29) duidelik: die suiwere bediening van die Woord en die sakramente en die handhawing van die kerklike tug.

Die belydenisse van die NG Kerk word in die verslag “normatief” genoem. Dit beteken dat die handhawing van sy gereformeerde belydenisskrifte 'n bepalende element is van die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk. In hierdie geval raak dit die tug in die NG Kerk. Het die NG Kerk 'n tuglose kerk geword en is hy so gesien nog gereformeerd?

Die vraag na die effek van die normatiewe belydenisskrifte van die NG Kerk in dié kerk self kan nie sonder 'n afbakening en keuse van temas in 'n sinodale verslag soos hierdie gepeil word nie. Daar is eenvoudig te veel sake in die bestaande belydenisskrifte vir net een so 'n verslag!

Die probleem is egter dat die taakspan dit skynbaar nie eers oorweeg het nie. Anders gestel: as 'n ingrypende meningsverskil om belydeniswaarhede draai, draai die diversiteit van die NG Kerk soos in die verslag genoem, nie ook hierom nie? As belydeniswaarhede afgestem is op die kernwaarhede van die Evangelie (Jonker 1994:6), is “ingrypende” verskille in die NG Kerk nie per definisie juis belydenisverskille of verskille met belydenisimplikasies nie? Kan verskille hieroor nie ook die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk beïnvloed nie?

As die gereformeerde belydenisskrifte volgens die taakspan 'n integrale rol in elke erediens moet speel, hoekom figureer dit inhoudelik en eksplisiet nie sterker in dié verslag nie? As dit hier gaan om die gereformeerde belydenisskrifte en die gereformeerde identiteit van die NG Kerk: is dit genoeg om net te vermeld dat eersgenoemde normatief moet inwerk op laasgenoemde? Kan die vier solas – byvoorbeeld – eksplisiet gekoppel word aan die Drie Formuliere van Eenheid?

SLOT

Die verslag van sy Taakspan vir Leer- en Aktuele Sake oor sy gereformeerde identiteit aan die Algemene Sinode van 2007 van die NG Kerk, bring helderheid oor sommige sake, maar laat vrae oor ander aspekte.

Die kwessie van 'n gereformeerde kern wat die NG Kerk bind of bymekaar hou te midde van aksent- en ander verskille, is verhelderend. Ook die stelling dat die solas vir die NG Kerk 'n bondige manier is om die kernsake van sy gereformeerdwees te verwoord, is 'n wins. 'n Gereformeerdwees wat bepalend beïnvloed word deur die belydenisskrifte van die NG Kerk en die genadeverbond van God met die mens. Voeg hierby die verskil wat die taakspan maak tussen die kerk en die koninkryk met die stelling dat hy kies vir 'n verchristeliking en nie 'n verkerkliking van die samelewing nie. Gereformeerdwees word tereg as 'n “hoor”-tradisie en die erediens as 'n uitdrukking van hoe die kerk die Evangelie verstaan, beskryf. Onder soli Deo Gloria bring die taakspan die kern van die gereformeerde tradisie van die NG Kerk tuis.

Daar is egter ook dinge in hierdie verslag wat hinder of onaf is.

Die eerste is die onbeantwoorde vraag of die nie-teologiese lidmate van NG-gemeentes as die oorgrootte meerderheid 'n aanduibare rol in die verslag gespeel het. Die tweede vraag is wat met 'n gereelde kontekstuele hersiening van die solas, in sigself kernwaarhede, bedoel word? Die kwessie van die Gees, die Woord, vrye profesie en die Pentekostalisme word vaag en onbevredigend hanteer.

Tog word hiermee 'n verteerbare gereformeerde identiteit vir die NG Kerk aangedui.

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TREFWOORDE

Gereformeerde identiteit
 Alleen die genade, geloof, Skrif en Christus
 Calvyn teoloog van die Heilige Gees
 Belydenis het gesag in geloof wat bely word

KEY WORDS

Reformed identity
 Only through grace, faith, Scriptures and Christ

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Creeds have authority in the faith it confess.

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*Christ and Creation – Early Christian theologians
on Christ’s ownership of creation*

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ABSTRACT

Confessing a good creation was not an independent issue for early Christian theologians. They stressed creation because according to their opinion only an independent Creator can be truly God (Athenagoras). The eternal God can deal with temporal things because He is acting by his Word and Spirit (Irenaeus). The core of the doctrine of creation, however, is its Christological focus: if Christ would not be the Creator He would not have come to his own and thus would be taking someone else’s property. That would not be salvation but a crime (Irenaeus). Only after the conflicts on creation had been settled could Christian theology deal with the topic in a more relaxed sphere. That is the case in the catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem who teaches his pupils to enjoy the beauty of creation in the freedom of Christ. The early Christian approach might be an eye opener for Christians’ dealing with creation nowadays.



Christian faith is about Christ. Christ is the very core of Christian belief. And thus the earliest form of the Creed is a simple Christological statement: “Jesus is Lord.” This basic confession is extended by referring to his birth, his death and his resurrection. In all classical creeds is the Christological section their core.

Soon, however, such Christological statements are preceded by an article about God the Creator. Nowadays, it may seem obvious to speak about God as Creator, but in antiquity that is not the case. From such a perspective it is interesting to consider why it is that Christians so emphasized creation; even more so since Christ – as the focus of their faith—is said to have come as a judgment over the world. In this article we explore three discourses on creation that are exemplary for early Christian understanding of creation. They show how church fathers argued for believing in God as the Creator of a good universe and what the consequences are for Christians’ attitude towards nature.

1 ONLY A CREATOR IS A TRUE GOD

We find the first extensive discourse on the Creator in Christian literature in Athenagoras’ *Plea for the Christians*. Athenagoras argues that the gods of the Greek have a beginning. Zeus, who is born from Saturn and Ouranos, has a beginning as well.¹ It was common sense in Greek philosophy that what has a beginning has also an end. It is therefore Athenagoras’ argument that the gods of the Greek are not eternal. These gods are not being but belong to the sphere of becoming.² They are part of the world of all phenomena that have an origin in time and an end in time. “How can the constitution of these gods remain, who themselves are not self-existent, but have been originated?”³

Christians confess a God who is different. Their God is not a part of this world. This God is the Creator of the world.⁴ God has no beginning and will have no ending. God

1 “If Kronos is time, he changes; if a season, he turns about; if darkness, or frost, or the moist part of nature, none of these is abiding; but the Deity is immortal, and immoveable, and unalterable: so that neither is Kronos nor his image God. As regards Zeus, again: If he is air, born of Kronos, of which the male part is called Zeus and the female Hera (whence both sister and wife), he is subject to change; if a season, he turns about: but the Deity neither changes nor shifts about” (*A Plea for the Christians* 22). See also *Plea* 17.

2 Athenagoras (*Plea* 6) assentingly quotes Plato: “Whatever is compounded can be dissolved.”

3 Athenagoras, *Plea* 19.

4 “The multitude, who cannot distinguish between matter and God, or see how great is the interval which lies between them, pray to idols made of matter;” but “we do

is eternal. Only a Creator who is totally different from the world can be everlasting and thus truly be God. We “distinguish God from matter, and teach that matter is one thing and God another, and that they are separated by a wide interval because the Deity is uncreated and eternal, to be beheld by the understanding and reason alone, while matter is created and perishable.”⁵ Thus the first interest of Christians in confessing the Creator is to guarantee God’s divinity, in contrast to the perishing pagan gods.⁶

The Creeds of the early church do not refer explicitly to the eternity of the Creator. Yet it is indicated by the word “Father”. Because Christ lived on earth, is born and has died, Christ could be considered to be one of the dying and reviving gods of the antique world, a mere expression of coming and leaving, leaving and coming as the world goes. The Creed says that Christ is the Son of the Creator of heaven and earth: He belongs to a different category. His coming is anchored in the eternity of the Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore his birth is not a beginning but an acting and coming. The confession of the Father is a guarantee for the belief that Christ is really God.⁷

Christians did not invent this idea of an eternal Creator. They lived with the Old Testament, and the prophets of Israel already made the same claim about the God in Whom they believed.⁸ The gods of the gentiles are creations of human beings, even the handiwork of them. They cannot help human creatures because they are not

distinguish and separate the uncreated and the created, that which is and that which is not...” “They are at the greatest possible remove from one another – as far asunder as the artist and the materials of his art” (*Plea* 15).

5 Athenagoras, *Plea* 4.

6 Christian theologians are more positive about Plato who not only stresses that true divinity is one and thus everlasting, but also once speaks about God as Creator. See Meijering 2004:187, 296f. Athenagoras refers also to other Greek philosophers and poets, who have at least some idea of what real divinity should be, “even against their will” (*Plea* 7). “For poets and philosophers, as to other subjects so also to this, have applied themselves in the way of conjecture, moved, by reason of their affinity with the afflatus from God, each one by his own soul, to try whether he could find out and apprehend the truth; but they have not been found competent to apprehend it fully, because they thought fit to learn, not from God concerning God, but each one from himself” (*Plea* 7). See also Justin the Martyr, *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* 5: “For God alone is unbegotten and incorruptible, and therefore is God, but all other things after God are created and corruptible.”

7 Cf. Athenagoras, *Plea* 10: “The Son of God is the Logos of the Father, in idea and in operation.”

8 Cf. Athenagoras. *Plea* 9.

gods. Only the almighty Creator who has no beginning or ending and who does not get tired is a true Saviour.⁹

2. GOD'S HANDS

If God is eternal and the world is becoming, how is it possible to say that both interact? How can an eternal Being even create transient beings? The problem of the relation of being and becoming has haunted Greek philosophy from its very beginning. The church father Irenaeus has a simple answer to this problem: it is because God is acting, for God has hands, namely the Son and the Spirit.¹⁰ God is not a *Deus otiosus* without any motion. On the contrary, acting belongs to God's very identity. This God is the living God, as the prophets taught. Irenaeus likes the metaphor of the Son and the Spirit as God's hands. They are the way God is acting. They are God's *own* hands. Therefore they are not different beings, and thus there are not three Gods. When my hands act it is I myself who acts. When the Son and the Spirit act it is the very same God who is acting as the Father is acting. It is precisely because the Father is living and acting that they act.

The doctrine of Trinity is not an unsolvable mystery but an expression of the belief that God is a living God, who creates, cares, saves, makes alive. It is the translation of the belief of the prophets into Greek language. It is not a philosophical construct as the solution of the philosophical problem of being and becoming but an expression of the experience of Israel and early Christianity: God is acting, interfering in human affairs. God gives victory to his people, and God gives salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ, through his own coming into the world, and by his indwelling in human beings through his Spirit. Athenagoras stresses the eternity of God the Creator, and Irenaeus God's acting in the Son and the Spirit. Both belong intrinsically together in Christian faith.¹¹

3. TO HIS OWN

Irenaeus pushes the Christological interpretation of creation further. Because Christ is God's acting presence to the world, the world is Christ's own creation. This becomes Irenaeus' core argument against the Gnostics and against Marcion.

9 This argumentation is predominant in Deutero-Isaiah, but present in the whole Old Testament. Athenagoras and other *patres* could build on a long tradition.

10 Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* IV, Preface 4; IV,20,1; V,6,1; V,28,4.

11 Athenagoras refers to God's acting in the Spirit and the Son also (Plea 10) and Irenaeus also claims God's eternity in contrast to created transitory being (*The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*4; see also Fragment 33).

Christian Gnostics taught that Christ saved people from a lower level existence in the material world, and Marcion considered Christ as a stranger God who saved human beings from the creation of a lower demiurge. If this were true, argues Irenaeus, Christ would be a thief.¹² Christ would be taking creations of a demiurge for himself, those who were not owned by Him. That would not be justice and righteousness but a crime. Thus the salvation theory of Gnostics and Marcionites is a criminal doctrine about injustice. They confess an evil god, precisely when they claim to teach salvation of people by Christ.

Irenaeus confronts these ideas with orthodox Christian faith: because Christ is the Creator of the world, Christ came to his own.¹³ Those powers that intruded upon the world and kept it in captivity are evil spirits and this Christ is faithful by coming and saving his own creatures from these powers. “The Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by such violent means as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own.”¹⁴

Here Irenaeus comes to the core of his doctrine of salvation. We cannot play off creation and salvation, because salvation is liberation of Christ’s own creation. Because He created the world and He is faithful, He did not leave his people in the power of dark spirits, sin and death. Precisely because there is no injustice in God Christ has come and saved his own people. Christians confess this just and good God. Therefore they confess God as both Creator and Saviour. Irenaeus does not get tired from stressing that the world is Christ’s own creation and that He saves his own handiwork.

12 *Against heresies* V,2,1: “And vain likewise are those who say that God came to those things which did not belong to Him, as if covetous of another’s property; in order that He might deliver up that man who had been created by another, to that God who had neither made nor formed anything, but who also was deprived from the beginning of His own proper formation of men. The advent, therefore, of Him whom these men represent as coming to the things of others, was not righteous; nor did He truly redeem us by His own blood, if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God; not snatching away by stratagem the property of another, but taking possession of His own in a righteous and gracious manner.” See also *Against heresies* III,11,2; IV,18,4; V,18,1.

13 *Against heresies* IV,20,2. See also *Proof 3*: “God is not ruler and Lord over the things of another, but over His own.”

14 *Against heresies* V,1,1.

It is in the conflict with the Gnostics and Marcion that the Christian doctrine of creation reached its apex. The doctrine of creation and providence is not a mere general idea about the power of a caring or a capricious God, as it was often conceived in later times – especially in Reformed circles. Creation has to do with the legitimacy of salvation. Salvation would be injustice – and thus not salvation at all – if Christ is not the Creator and Owner of the universe.

Irenaeus did not invent this relation of Christ and creation. It is very much rooted in the New Testament and is broadly present in the main New Testament *corpora*. Because Irenaeus himself claims to stand in the Johannine tradition,¹⁵ it is obvious to first look in the Johannine corpus of the New Testament. This begins immediately with the theme of Irenaeus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”¹⁶ John continues: “He came to that what was his own.”¹⁷ He is not a stranger, but the expression and revelation of the Father. “No one has ever seen God, but the only begotten God ... has made him known.”¹⁸ The expressive language of the Apocalypse tells us that only the Lamb is worthy to open the seals of world history and the identity of creation.¹⁹

However, it is not his reference to John that has become Irenaeus’ most famous theological contribution in the history of theology. That contribution is his concept of recapitulation. “For the Lord, taking dust from the earth, molded man; and it was upon his behalf that all the dispensation of the Lord’s advent took place. He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original handiwork of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished.”²⁰ The idea of recapitulation finds its roots in the Pauline tradition, especially in Ephesians 1: It was God’s good pleasure “to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth.”²¹ Colossians 1 stresses the same theme: “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.16 For in

15 *Against heresies* IV,33,4; Fragment 2.

16 John 1:1-3 (NIV).

17 John 1:11.

18 John 1:18. The Greek tekst has *monogenestheos*. Most translations do not like this expression and opt for a minimizing translation.

19 Revelation 5:5.

20 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V,14,2. The concept of recapitulation occurs often in Irenaeus’ work.

21 Eph. 1:10 (ASV).

him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”²²

The texts from Ephesians and especially from Colossians are often used as *alocus probans* for the theologoumenon of the cosmic Christ. As such, there is nothing against this concept. However, it does depend on the way it is elaborated. If it develops from a cosmic theory – into which Christ fits as the apex stone and as the human being that is the fulfilment of everything human beings are longing for – it is contrary to the New Testament argumentation. The latter is instead about Christ who came to save human beings, about Christ in Whom we have salvation by his death on the cross, in his blood.²³ Subsequently the letters confess that He is the head of all, just like the prophet Isaiah argues that the salvation is certain because God is the almighty Creator.²⁴ Salvation is first in the argument, and the cosmic power of Christ thereafter. It is not even about the guarantee of salvation but is the very expression of its comprehensiveness.

The synoptic tradition has the same sequence in a somewhat different perspective. Matthew relates the doctrine of creation to providence. Providence is not a general idea for him. Jesus says: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”²⁵ The Kingdom comes first – and the Kingdom is Christ, the *autobasileia*.²⁶ First of all, people should be in Christ and follow Him – and the rest is a giveaway. In the Kingdom, which is Christ, nobody will be in want.

If we think about creation, it has to be in the perspective of salvation – or better it is in the perspective of Christ. Because He is our Saviour, He is good and just. Christ is light and no darkness is in Him. The world is his own world and we belong legitimately to Him. When Christ shed his blood as a ransom for many²⁷ was it not because the devil has any claim on us that Christ should have to pay. It is only for the

22 Col. 1:15-17.

23 Col. 1:20.

24 Is. 40:12-31.

25 Matt. 6:33.

26 Origenes, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* XIV,7: “For He is the King of the heavens, and as He is absolute Wisdom and absolute Righteousness and absolute Truth, is He not so also absolute Kingdom?”

27 Mk. 10:45.

sake of God's own justice, because we were sinners. Therefore, Irenaeus speaks of a re-capitulation: the new creation is the restoration of God's own creation.

In the confrontation with pagans, Christians argue for God as Creator, as the only true God, and they give a Christological and pneumatological deepening as an argument that this eternal God is able to create beings in time and space who are limited, with a becoming and an ending. In the confrontation with heretics they stress that the world is Christ's own. So for the internal debate of the church, a Christological approach is essential in order to keep salvation and creation together. At the front-line in the second century were people who denied the good creation, while presently often an independent doctrine of creation is developed, without any Christological influence. Therefore it is urgent in our time to stress once again the unity of creation and salvation, and to consider that the doctrine of creation is developed from a soteriological (that means: a Christological) perspective. It is not about emphasizing creation as such, but about the world that God loved so much that he sent his one born Son for its salvation. If we speak about creation without taking the concept of recapitulation into consideration we get in great trouble. We then enter into the dark providence of an unknown God, or in a flat idealism of a caring Father – which does not at all fit the many dimensions of hard reality. It is in the perspective of Christ that the world gets its perspicuity: without Christ it is a dark mystery or an existence of mere coincidence.

4. THE BEAUTY OF CREATION

The doctrine of creation entered a new phase in the fourth century. An apology against the pagans was no longer required after the Constantinian turn. Now the pagans themselves were in the defence. That God is the almighty Creator was no longer a contested matter of debate. Heretics continued to roam in the church but it was no longer creation that was the burning issue. It was now about Christ Himself. Gnostics and Marcionites were silenced during the third century when the cultural climate changed. Now that apology and refutation of heresies about creation were no longer urgent Christian theologians could reflect on creation in a more relaxed atmosphere.²⁸ It is this approach that we find in the catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem in the middle of the fourth century. Cyril's lectures display mainstream orthodox theology of that time, summarizing earlier Christian thought for a new generation of Christians. He is a major source for discovering what Christians of the

28 It is remarkable that Augustine (*Confessions* XI-XIII) after his connection with the Manicheans reopens the debate on creation. He once again puts the question how an eternal God can create temporal beings.

first centuries thought and taught when they were not challenged by fierce external or internal debates. It is an expression of a relaxed orthodox Christian faith – the good life of Christians in the community of Christ.

Cyril's ninth lesson deals with creation. He tells his catechumens about the beauty of plants and animals and the wonders of nature. It is as if he goes into the fields with them and points to flowers and birds: "Look at that!" "Observe, I pray you, the spring, and the flowers of every kind in all their likeness still diverse one from another; the deepest crimson of the rose, and the purest whiteness of the lily: for these spring from the same rain and the same earth, and who makes them to differ? ... Admire also the great thickness of the knots, which run round the reed, as the Artificer has made them. From one and the same earth come forth creeping things, and wild beasts, and cattle, and trees, and food; and gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and stone. The nature of the waters is but one, yet from it comes the substance of fishes and of birds; whereby as the former swim in the waters, so the birds fly in the air."²⁹

What the observations of Cyril make specifically Christian is the context of his teaching. It is teaching about God. When he points to a rose or a bird, he points to God at the same time. "Look at that, how wonderful God made it!" "Is not then the Artificer worthy the rather to be glorified?"³⁰ The admiration of nature urges to adoration of the Creator. We do not live in a neutral nature with beautiful things but in a wonderful work of a Maker. Enjoying his work is enjoying Him. Though I am fully part of the community of all created beings, they are also given to me as a wonderful gift of God – and we believe that Godself also enjoys this creation. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."³¹

The context of Cyril's teaching on creation is his teaching about God. It is, however, even more specific: it is about God in Christ. Before Cyril gave his lesson on creation he taught about baptism.³² Baptism is at the beginning of all his teaching. It is only in the perspective of living in the community of the body of Christ that one can discern what is best. When Cyril continues his teaching after the lesson on baptism he begins by quoting Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world."³³ That is

29 Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture 9,10. See also 9,11-13.

30 Catechetical Lecture 9,14.

31 Gen.1:31.

32 Catechetical Lecture 3.

33 Catechetical Lecture 4, heading.

also the case for the doctrine of creation. We cannot develop it without the wisdom of Christ. Cyril is fully in line with his famous predecessors such as Paul, John and Irenaeus. We look to the world through the lenses of Christology and in the reality of a new being through baptism. The teaching of Cyril is an expression of this approach. It breathes the sphere of freedom, which is characteristic for Christian life.

At this point Cyril can give us a major contribution to present day theology of creation – much like Paul and John and Matthew, and Irenaeus can do also. Recent theology of creation is often in the perspective of responsibility. Stewardship is a core concept. This creates stress for people. They are responsible for being good stewards, and do not know how to do it – or they are not willing to do so and feel guilty. Responsibility has to do with the law – and the law makes us guilty, for one does never attain the goals that the law requires. Nobody is able to secure the integrity of creation. The very existence of any human being contributes to the overpopulation of the globe and to exhausting its resources. Modern theology of creation lacks the relaxed atmosphere of Cyril's lessons. Is this due to his naïveté? I do not think so. It rather has to do with his basic paradigm: being baptized into Christ. It is the freedom about which Luther writes in his *On the Freedom of a Christian*. Luther states: "A Christian man is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."³⁴ That is not only in relation to human beings but also with regard to all living and non-living beings. Stewardship is a burden, freedom is enjoyment. That makes all the difference. It is the difference someone can experience when taking care of flowers. I could be asked to take care of the plants of neighbours who are on holiday – or it can even be my job to do so as a gardener. I am responsible for the plants doing well. Actually, I cannot enjoy them because I am always in fear that they might decay – due to lack of water or too much water, or to too much sun or shadow. I am relieved when the owners return from their journey – or happy when the owner praises me for the garden doing well.

There is also a different perspective of caring for flowers. My partner may have given them as expression of love and unity. She will never blame me if the plants will decay, for it was not about the plants but about the gift. She gave love, and love cannot decay. The flowers were merely an expression of it. In giving herself she has already given me everything. The flowers are just additional – a *donum superadditum*. Nothing depends on them. In talking care for the flowers I enjoy the love of the giver – which does not change when the flowers inevitably decay. And precisely therefore, I try to keep them as long as possible, for I love them because I love the one who brought them. That is the way Cyril enjoys nature and teaches his catechumens to enjoy it.

34 Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian* 1.

They live in the Kingdom of God, and much is added to it by Him who created the world and saved the world. He created us in a garden and we dwell in a garden that reflects his glory.

Cyril's considerations are not naïve. If we dwell in creation in the paradigm of Christ we are not shocked by death and broken flowers. We live in the world that the Crucified One created. It is *his* own and displays Christ's love: through death, through the thorns of his crown. We see beauty, not only in the crimson of the rose, but also when its petals fall away, for that is the beginning of the fruit – and when the pruner cuts the branches, or the frost kills the shrub, we know that new life will grow from death. That is life – that is life in the paradigm of Christ. It is a view on creation wherein even the behaviour of a shrike does not surprise us,³⁵ for its belongs to the creation of the One who was nailed on the wood. We do not understand the meaning of all beings but we enjoy them as creations of our good Lord.³⁶

CONCLUSION

Why is the article on creation added to the basic confession of Jesus as Lord? It is not in order to have another avenue to God and to play off Christology over against creation. It is added in order to express that Christ is the eternal God who saves his own and gives them freedom and joy – and signs of his love all along the way that Christians go in God's creation.

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35 During a series of debates of Christian theologians, agnostics and atheists, Christian apologists pointed to the beauty of creation as an argument for a good Creator. The agnostic Henk Versnel replied by referring to what shrikes do: they catch a big beetle or other insect and prick it on a thorn in such a way that it stays alive. If due to bad weather insects do not fly the birds are guaranteed of fresh food. See more extensively Theron 1996:43f.

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*On hospitality in 3
John An evaluation of the response of Malina to
Malherbe*

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Abraham Malherbe

ABSTRACT

Abraham Malherbe wrote an article on hospitality in 3 John in which he describes the situation and conflict that arose when Diotrefes chose not to show hospitality. He approached the problem from a social perspective. Bruce Malina responded by criticizing Malherbe on theoretical and other levels. In this article the aforementioned ‘debate’ is evaluated.

OPSOMMING

Abraham Malherbe het ’n artikel oor gasvryheid in 3 Johannes geskryf waarin hy die situasie en konflik beskryf wat uit die weiering van Diotrefes om gasvryheid te bewys gespruit het. Hy benader die probleem vanuit ’n sosiale perspektief. Bruce Malina het op die artikel gereageer met skerp kritiek teen Malherbe, beide op teoretiese en ander vlakke. In hierdie artikel word hierdie “debat” geëvalueer.

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In 1977 Abe Malherbe published an article as his contribution to the *Festschrift* of Nils Dahl entitled, *The inhospitality of Diotrephes*. This article proved to be significant in subsequent research on 3 John.² The influential Johannine scholar, Raymond Brown, for instance, was in general agreement with Malherbe's thesis, following it with some minor changes in his commentary on the Letters of John (1982:730-732, 738).³ The article also invited a controversial response from Bruce Malina (1986), criticizing Malherbe's social approach as inadequate, particularly in the light of insights gained from the social-scientific approach practiced by the 'Context Group'. In this tribute to Abe Malherbe I would like to consider some of the most important insights gained from this 'discussion' between Malherbe and Malina. Unfortunately, Malherbe purposefully never responded to Malina in writing.⁴

Before continuing it must be mentioned that these two articles were published in the 70'a and 80's of the previous century. My analysis will therefore focus on a debate that took place within that historical context and must be read as such. This article reflects on that portion of history. Since the 1980's the Context Group, of which Malina was to my mind the most influential member, addressed several of the criticisms levelled against them by the New Testament guild. Some of these issues are thus still evident in this article from Malina. Some of these criticisms also form part of my analysis, reflecting on what happened in the 1980's, although these criticisms were later addressed by Malina and the Context Group. Where I refer to Malina in

2 As examples, see Painter in his commentary (2002:362); Koenig (1985: several references); Von Wahlde (2010:268); Elliott (2000:753); Hock (1980:79); Mitchell (1998:299-320); Rensberger (2006:278-291) and many others. A Google search also reveals that Malherbe's article is frequently cited in commentaries and books on hospitality.

3 Malherbe responded to some of Brown's criticisms in his addendum to the reprint of the original article in *Social aspects of Early Christianity*, 1983.

4 Malherbe did discuss the issues involved in private discussions with me. I will, in the critical assessment of the different arguments, try to indicate as accurately as I can, some of his responses as I understood them. A point that is necessary to make here is that I know both Abe Malherbe (as academic and close friend) and Bruce Malina (having published a book together) well and respect both of them. Discussing this debate is therefore not an easy task for me, especially in dealing with the sharp rhetoric chosen by Malina. I will try to present both views as accurately as I can and would likewise try to be even-handed in my evaluation of the material. If preference for one or the other position is evident, then it is an academic preference rather than a personal one.

this article, the ‘earlier’ Malina is in focus.⁵ In order to reflect on this ‘debate’, it would be anachronistic to read either of the two authors as if they wrote today.

1 MALHERBE ON HOSPITALITY IN 3 JOHN⁶

Malherbe’s article was partly stimulated by the state of research into 3 John at the time of writing his article.⁷ Different scenarios were proposed regarding the situation suggested in 3 John, ranging from Zahn’s (1953:375-378) view that Diotrephes, the opponent of the Elder, used his authority negatively, to Harnack (1897:3) opining that on a broader level we have a clash between the older provincial missionary system (that tried to exercise authority by means of traveling missionaries) and the establishment of authority in local congregations, of which Diotrephes was an example. This would make Diotrephes the first local monarchic bishop whose name we know. Walter Bauer (1971:93-94) made efforts to interpret the events in 3 John as theological issues, understanding Diotrephes as representative of heresy against the orthodoxy represented by the Elder. Käsemann (1951:292-311) was of a different opinion. He saw Diotrephes as the traditional orthodox Christian who excommunicated the Elder. Considering these different opinions, Malherbe contends that the lack of clear evidence only allows for recognizing ‘possibilities’ and nothing more. In order to get some clarity he approaches the problem from a different angle, namely, the practice of hospitality, which is the major issue in the Letter, hoping to gain fresh insights through the social dynamics evident in the Letter.

Malherbe outlines the practice of hospitality in the ancient world in order to create a framework within which he could interpret the events described in 3 John. He points out that the ancient practice of hospitality was common in ancient times and was practiced actively by Christians, by receiving people in their homes.

5 The developments within the Context Group should be applauded for critically substantiating their views with proper reference to ancient textual evidence, refining their own method and approaches, broadening their theoretical bases, etc. Without the fresh, original and innovative approach that characterized Malina and some of his colleagues New Testament scholarship would have been poorer today.

6 Since what follows is an overview of Malherbe and Malina’s positions taken in their respective articles I am not going to refer to the articles or pages from the articles in my description, except in cases of direct quotation. The reader could assume that the positions described are taken from the relevant articles.

7 The 1983 article was published in substantially the same form as the original 1977 article. All references are made from the original 1997 article except where there are references to the addendum, which was added to the article in 1983.

This practice of using houses for meetings as well as for receiving fellow Christians were not without its complications. It must be remembered that a house inevitably had a head (the father), who stayed the head of the house even if people with their own leader met in his house. Malherbe considers the possibility whether this would imply that the head of the house would by default also have been the bishop or leader of the church. Although he regards this as a tempting possibility, he does not find sufficient evidence in the New Testament, or 3 John for that matter, to come to such a conclusion. Being the head of the house, or offering hospitality, does not automatically qualify a person to be the head of the church simply because they are meeting in his or her house. The authority of the leader of the church is grounded elsewhere. This information proves to be important to Malherbe, since it leads him to put forward the argument that Diotrephes need not be a bishop of the church to exercise his authority over his own house and the people meeting there. As head of the house he could refuse certain people entry (just as was the case in 2 John 10-11). The issue in 3 John needs not be church authority, but simple power – Diotrephes refusing people entry into his home and forcing others to oblige, since they may also be refused entry into his house if they do not follow suit. This gives Diotrephes considerable power over the people gathering in his house.

Malherbe develops the picture by investigating the relationship between Gaius, to whom 3 John was addressed and Diotrephes who is criticized in the Letter. A major question in determining the power relationships is whether Gaius was part of the congregation of Diotrephes. In 3 John 9 a letter addressed to the congregation is referenced, of which Gaius apparently knew, leading many to conclude that Gaius was part of the congregation under Diotrephes' leadership. Malherbe argues that this need not be the case, since letters were often addressed to a group with the assumption that it should be passed around for others to read (see also 3 John 15). Gaius could have learned of the letter in this way. Looking at the available information about Gaius, there is no evidence that he had an official position in the church, rather that he was influential among his beloved (v. 15). The actions of Diotrephes apparently did not affect him directly, since he was still in a position to receive travellers without being excommunicated. Malherbe therefore concludes that there were at least two groups, Gaius and his beloved and Diotrephes and the group over which he exercised authority. According to Malherbe it is not clear what the relationship between these groups was exactly, but it is improbable that Gaius was part of the Diotrephes group, or that Gaius was excommunicated by Diotrephes. There were rather multiple (at least two) groups, as is attested in other areas of the same time, such as Corinth or among the Colossians.

Another important question Malherbe considers is the nature of the relationship between Diotrephes and the Elder, since the Elder obviously assumes that there was and will be social interaction between them (3 John 10). Scholars like Bauer (1971) and Käsemann (1951) argued that the conflict was theological in nature. Malherbe doubts this. The evidence points in a different direction. The fact was that Diotrephes refused to receive or extend hospitality to traveling missionaries even though they carried letters of recommendation from fellow Christians. This was not a theological but a social act of power. Most probably Diotrephes saw this practice with the letters as a threat to his authority and position in his circle or congregation. Receiving such a letter with its carrier is a social act of goodwill, showing acceptance of the person, his supporters and the situation. It would imply that Diotrephes is part of this missionary circle. By not showing hospitality towards these travellers Diotrephes rejects not only the travellers, but also the whole system of which the Elder was part. He openly illustrates his bad attitude towards the Elder by rejecting his authority and aggravates the situation by spreading false charges against the Elder and forcing others to follow his example.

The question is of course what Diotrephes' reasons for this decision were. It is not clear from the letter why he acted in this way. Malherbe notes that expelling people from the church certainly lies within the power of a bishop. Whether he indeed was a bishop is not clear from the text itself; that could have been the case, or it could have been that he aspired through these actions to be acknowledged as a bishop. Malherbe warns that the situation should not be over-interpreted. For him the weight of the evidence points to an individual who wanted to exercise his own power rather than acting with ecclesial authority. Malherbe reminds us that gathering in a house gave the owner of the house power to welcome or refuse people entry into his home. This did not automatically qualify him as head of the church or entitle him to any ecclesial power. People who challenged his power could be refused entry into his house, as is evident from 2 John 10-11. This again has social implications – not being with the group (i.e. not being in the house) means that you are socially cut off from the group. It should therefore not be automatically assumed that Diotrephes was a bishop and that the quarrel was theological.

2. MALINA'S REACTION TO MALHERBE

In 1986 Bruce Malina⁸ wrote an article in *Semeia* (pages 171-194) entitled: 'The received view and what it cannot do: III John and hospitality.'⁹ Rhetorically it is a 'sharp' article aimed at the so-called 'Received View', which as a 'label' is regarded as a sarcastic and unfriendly term in the article (p. 171). The term 'Received View' 'is a philosophy of science label to characterize the prescribed way of asking and answering questions in a given academic discipline' (p. 171). This 'View' 'dictates the criteria that are to control "convincing" and "unconvincing" contributions to the field' (p. 171). Malina's article is aimed at critically dismantling this view 'because it is not adequate to its aims and claims, i.e. to interpret texts historically'. He chooses Abe Malherbe – according to him an advocate of the 'Received View' – as his 'straw man' (p. 176), and specifically the above-mentioned article on hospitality in 3 John. He motivates his reasons for choosing Malherbe as follows: 'Malherbe offers all the hallmarks of the *au courant* advocates of the updated Received View: a disdain for theory; a remarkable unconcern for defining the terms under discussion (here hospitality); a passion for up-to-date historical bibliography, the more soteric the better; a sort of hand-count assessment of previously published work generally beginning with the historical "stars" of the past who most often turn out to be German in training and/or primary en-culturation'. This maps out the 'academic frame' Malina reacts against in his response to Malherbe.

In his discussion of the inadequacies of the 'Received View' Malina remarks that the appreciation of the social systems within which texts were produced is of crucial importance in historical analyses. According to him proponents of the 'Received View' are generally unaware of or unconcerned with these social *systems* – the important word is *systems*. On the other hand – and this was true for the 80's of the previous century – literary theories tended to approach texts in an ahistorical way. As a position of compromise the so-called 'social history' developed, which according to Malina had its weaknesses, especially the tendency of being arbitrary and unsystematic. Malina distinguishes between making texts understandable on the one hand and making them interpretable on the other. In the former case one will understand what the text says, but will not be able to interpret the meaning

8 Bruce Malina was a leading member of the Context Group at this stage, which was very active and creative. In this 1986 article one still reads an 'earlier Malina'. Certain criticisms leveled at the Context Group at this stage – inter alia their focus on models that were not 'developed' from ancient material – were addressed later on.

9 Since the following part of the article will focus on the arguments of Malina references will not be constantly made to his article.

within a social system. It is with the help of social science that the latter can be attained, since the prevailing social system should be spelled out in order to provide the interpreter with the meaning it yielded to the original recipients. For this some social science models are needed. Malina then uses what he calls ‘the social system scenarios within which the original communication took place’ (p. 176), based on social science theories and models (for which the Context Group of Malina and others became known).

In dealing with 3 John, Malina agrees with Malherbe that it is a letter of recommendation. Such letters assume mobility and consequently the need for hospitality. This Malherbe points out, by noting the dubious nature of inns, which made the use of hospitality of acquaintances by travellers popular. According to Malina this description of Malherbe is ‘replete with ambiguity’, ‘the interpretative model being applied is left at the implicit and impressionistic level... the resulting observations are simply ethnocentric’ (p. 177). This, of course, represents Malina’s view and not everybody will agree with his evaluation. Malina motivates his view by pointing out that within social analyses different types of mobility are distinguished, something Malherbe overlooks according to him.¹⁰ He also criticizes the focus on ‘office’ by Malherbe, asking whether this was really the concern of the first century Christian or whether it is more suitably a concern of the 20th century churchman? To Malina this question is irrelevant and misleading, since it was a non-issue in the first century Mediterranean world. ‘Moral brokerage, ability and honour’ were chief issues in this regard. Malina also complains about Malherbe’s superficial treatment of other terms, leaving central terms like hospitality undefined and undescribed and not explaining why a good testimony in ancient times was of any value. Malina continues by arguing that Malherbe’s terms like ‘theological’ or ‘personal’ reasons used in explaining the difference between the Elder and Diotrophes hide dogmatic presuppositions and concludes: ‘It is important to underscore the fact that such opinions for the most part are rooted in implicit assumptions and impressionistic models’ (p. 180). This makes the ‘positions generated by the Received View... simply untestable’ (p. 181). From the short summary above it is clear that Malina’s analysis of Malherbe is indeed not friendly. We will return to this.

10 In trying to understand Malina’s critique it remained unclear to me why he discusses the ‘four dimensions’ of mobility in such length and detail (p. 178), since three of these dimensions do not really apply to the situation under discussion. The type of mobility which is in focus here, namely, a missionary on a trip, is so clear from the text that it scarcely requires, or warrants, such a long discussion as the one presented by Malina (p. 178).

The bulk of the rest of Malina's article is spent answering the question what hospitality in the Mediterranean world meant. This is intended to show the 'alternative view' that should serve as correction to the 'Received View'. He defines *hospitality* 'as the process by means of which an outsider's status is changed from stranger to guest... the outsider is "received" and socially transformed from stranger to guest' (p. 181). Since 'the human tendency is to treat outsiders as simply non-human' (p.182) strangers are either eliminated (physically or socially) or shown hospitality. The process of hospitality would have three stages to it: a) evaluating the stranger, b) the liminal phase where the stranger is a guest, c) movement from guest to transformed stranger.

The first stage of testing the stranger 'is undoubtedly to know where the stranger fits into the purity arrangements of the world' (p. 182). Hospitality puts a person in an intermediary position on the inside, but not as an insider since the person must return to the outside. Based on the practice of patronage the 'protégé/client' is received as a guest. Offending the protégé/client is to offend the patron. The host acted as protector and patron of the guest. Obviously this would imply that the guest acts according to the expectations the receiving group has of a guest.

In the second phase, where the stranger is given the status of a guest, acting in accordance with one's role becomes important. A guest may infringe on the requirements of hospitality by insulting the host or showing hostility towards the host, by 'usurping the role of the host' (p. 185), or by refusing what is offered. The host may infringe by insulting the guest or showing hostility towards him; by not protecting the honour of the guest, or not properly attending to the guest's needs. So, hospitality involves a whole system of expectations. Malina therefore notes that hospitality 'can nevertheless be viewed as a reciprocal relationship between communities' (p. 185), which was expected and practiced among Christians. He concludes: 'Such a society required a law of hospitality: do as you would be done by, receive the stranger so you be well received' (p. 186).

The third phase is when the guest leaves the host either as a friend or as an enemy, with accompanying praise or dissatisfaction.

Functionally, Malina places letters of recommendation within this framework, pointing out that rejecting the recommendation implies a challenge to the honour of the recommender, a challenge that must be answered. Malina then argues that 3 John is an effort by the Elder to seek some satisfaction for the dishonour and indeed regain some honour by recommending Demetrius and any others he might send to Gaius. In this way Malina argues that both understanding and interpretation of 3

John takes place, since broader attention is given to the social system within which the letter was written.

3. TWO VIEWS: CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE

Comparing these two articles is not an easy task, although Malina's is in a way a response to Malherbe's article. There are several reasons for that. The nature of the articles differs considerably. Malherbe's article is based on a thorough discussion of the Greek text of 3 John, while Malina barely mentions or refers to the text at all. Malherbe departs from certain, for him, basic textual questions that should be addressed, while Malina wants to degrade one approach in favour of an alternative view that should, according to him, be much better. This impacts on the rhetoric of the articles. Malherbe's article concentrates on arguing the issues that seem to relate to the text, while Malina's article is strongly polemic, resulting in a rhetoric that is (unpleasantly?) sharp for what is intended to be an academic article.¹¹ Apart from that the categorizations he uses are very broad to the point of being an oversimplification, as if there are only two main groups¹² of academics or academic approaches. This constantly plagues his analysis, since what he says may be categorized as a very broad abstraction of reality that is certainly prone to many exceptions. This weakens the integrity of his intended attack on the 'Received View' as well as on the position of Malherbe. The lack of real engagement with the position of Malherbe by illustrating how his approach would yield better results than that of Malherbe is also problematic, since it makes it difficult to pinpoint the advantages of the one approach in relation to the other. A lot of what Malina discusses in connection with hospitality does not seem to be that relevant to the situation of 3 John and no clear effort is made to illustrate how this information leads to a better understanding.

One of Malina's main concerns seems to be that Malherbe did not define his terms well enough and is consequently unable to interpret the text properly. He should rather have used a social *system* to categorize what he says, since he would then

11 Remarks like the one referring to Malherbe's '*chutzpah* [= audacity; self-confidence in a negative sense] makes him a good illustration' (p. 181), as well as several other personal remarks, do not belong in an academic discussion where respect and dignity should be part of our moral behaviour.

12 His distinction between the 'Received View' and the literary approaches that influenced the social historical approach is also factually wrong (Malherbe wrote some of his seminal works before the awareness of the literary methods dawned on New Testament scholars and therefore was not a merger of the two approaches) and analytically incorrect. Most of the 'Received View' scholars also became practitioners of the literary methods, since there was a natural development in that direction within New Testament science.

have succeeded in penetrating the *meaning* of the text. Interestingly enough Malina also treats just one or two words, namely, mobility and hospitality, although he embeds these in the social dynamics he regards as typical for ancient Mediterranean societies. Although much of what he says is not directly relevant to the text of 3 John, it seems to broaden the picture of what hospitality is all about in the ‘ancient Mediterranean world’. It is however a question whether the material Malherbe discusses does not pointedly suggest the same, even though it would seem to do so without the unnecessary ‘extras’.

Let us evaluate some specifics from the two articles. Since Malina’s article is a response to that of Malherbe, it influences this evaluation in the sense that Malina’s article will usually serve as the point of departure.

I. Malina’s descriptions of mobility (p. 176) and hospitality (p. 181-187) make for interesting reading. He gives an overview of the social aspects that should be considered in each case. Malina criticizes Malherbe for ambiguity, for using an interpretative model that is impressionistic resulting in observations that are ‘simply ethnocentric’ (p. 177). As an illustration he underlines that Malherbe does not define what he means by mobility or the quality of mobility to which he refers. Malina then remarks: ‘Presumably he means physical mobility’ (p. 177). This is indeed the case and Malherbe is very clear about it. Mentioning all the other possibilities of mobility would thus be unnecessary. Weighing the critique of Malina, he falls short, for several reasons. With such a rhetorically strong attack one would assume that Malina would point to the advantages of his own approach with equal strength. Unfortunately this does not happen. He discusses ‘four “mobility” dimensions’ (p. 178) without any substantiation of his views, neither by argument nor by referring to any ancient or modern sources (with the exception of two secondary sources when he discusses the so-called first dimension). The question is of course: Why should we believe this elaborate construction of mobility in the 1st century Mediterranean’ world (p. 178)? Malina gives us no help in this regard. Most of his description seems irrelevant to me for the issue at hand, namely, the understanding of 3 John. Malina also does not show how this material would help us with a better understanding of the textual meaning of 3 John. Like Malherbe he focuses on physical mobility and does not really move beyond what Malherbe maintained.¹³ It is surprising that Malina did not explore his own model further

13 Malina implicitly blames Malherbe for not giving ‘culturally specific meaning’ to the mobility in 3 John. He mentions that mobility could be for pilgrimage, business travel, mass exile, etc. which would then determine the cultural meaning of the movement.

in this case by analysing the social dynamics of the relationship between the Elder and Diotrephes. For instance, it seems to me that a lot of up-down mobility (another category of mobility) was going on – Diotrephes regarding himself as more important than what he ought to, the elder coming to talk to him to rectify the ‘placement’, Gaius being moved up in the ranks through the letter, etc.

- II. This brings us to a next point. The negative and often degrading way Malina deals with the ‘Received View’ as well as the ‘straw man’ Malherbe, unfortunately weakens Malina’s contribution considerably, again for several reasons. Malina creates high expectations, not the least by very critically pointing out what he regards as the weaknesses of the ‘Received View’. Yet he leaves the reader disappointed in the end by not really addressing the problems the text offers, also not illustrating how his ‘alternative view’ would help to better understand the meaning of the text. He, for instance, maintains that Malherbe does not define the words he is using, for example, mobility, office, and hospitality. Malina then discusses hospitality in the ‘Mediterranean world (sic)’ at length (pp. 181-187). This effort leaves one both with excitement and disappointment. One is left excited because of the interesting discussion; yet at the same time disappointment because of the lack of any evidence that supports the proposed notion that this system was operative in ancient times. It is an unproven construct (at least in this article) and as such it remains a construct of Malina, nothing more and nothing less. As a result, every conclusion will only be as valid as Malina’s unmotivated construct of the system of hospitality. By saying this I am not implying that what Malina assumes is necessarily wrong, but it is not substantiated. It is also a bit simplistic in places, for instance, that when a guest leaves he leaves as either a friend or an enemy who will either offer praise or seek satisfaction (p. 186). Were these the only two options? What happened to *parresia* that was part of friendship, which could and should also criticize a friend? Malina made a poor defence for his alternative reading, since there is virtually no reading of the text of 3 John, except for presenting what seems to be an unmotivated structure, which he then assumes should be applied to the text of 3 John.

It is unclear to me why Malina insinuates that Malherbe sins in this regard by being ambiguous, impressionistic, ethnocentric, etc. (p. 177), since Malherbe is more than clear about the nature of the mobility, which he indicates to be missionary mobility within the early Christian context. He also provides a discussion about mobility practices in the Christian context by referring to the available ancient texts.

Let's look at one example. Malina rejects Malherbe's question about 'office' in 3 John, rhetorically linking Malherbe's concern not to 'the first century Christian' but to 'the 20th century churchman' (p. 179). Malina (p. 179) continues: 'I find the question simply irrelevant and misleading relative to the real issues at stake in the first century Mediterranean world. Here a chief issue is not "office", but the moral brokerage, ability and honour of the Elder/Presbyter'. Of course this remark is based on Malina's desire to apply his explicit social science theories and models to reading the text (p. 176). Returning to Malherbe's view, which is according to Malina part of the 'Received View' it is interesting that Malherbe rejects the idea that the Diotrephes episode in 3 John has much to do with 'office', as a source of the exponents of the 'Received View' want to argue. It is a question of power in the society rather than a quarrel about office that is at stake; in the words of Malherbe: 'the situation reflected is one in which power rather than ecclesiastical authority is exercised' (p. 228-229). Malina would seem to agree with this conclusion. Again, for me, it remains an enigma why Malina misinterpreted, or even worse, misrepresented Malherbe here. Why does he further simply state, without any argumentation, that asking about office is irrelevant or a non-question, while Malherbe carefully shows that it was indeed an issue in Christianity in the latter parts of the first century and we know from documents like the Didache or 1 Clemens from Rome that such issues were certainly discussed. Malina (p. 179) also links the question of Malherbe about the 'office' to the Elder as the 'chief issue', i.e. did the Elder have an 'office'. The main issue Malherbe is concerned with is whether Diotrephes, and not the Elder, had an office or aspired for one. How could Malina miss this and then blame Malherbe a few paragraphs later for holding opinions that are 'for the most part rooted in implicit assumptions and impressionistic models' (p. 180)? The sweeping statement of Malina, that concerns like whether there is some reference to early types of leadership or 'office' is a non-issue, does not make sense within this context.

III. Considering the above remarks, it is also a question whether Malina really understood (or tried to understand) what Malherbe was doing. Malina (p. 177) remarks that Malherbe's 'social description lacks the theoretical modelling and explicit use of generalizations that the sociological approach utilizes to remove ambiguity'. But this is the whole point, and also the point of difference between the two. Malherbe's shied away from terms like sociology (which Malina frequently uses in connection with Malherbe – p. 177). Malherbe refers to social aspects or the social dimensions of the text.¹⁴ He felt that the term sociology or sociological implies constructing models which should

14 Malherbe confirmed this to me in numerous discussions.

then be applied to textual information. He maintained that the lack of adequate information upon which to build and then check and validate these models for ancient societies made it very dangerous to apply such models to ancient texts. He preferred a more cautious approach, namely, to try and establish what the ancient society looked like, what was possible and what not according to the existing evidence. Obviously, the ancient societies were markedly social in nature. That is why he talks about 'social aspects'. However, he resisted the temptation to build models and say this or that happened all over the Mediterranean (a generalization that frustrated him) and therefore all information should be interpreted within, and only within, that framework. His approach, as is also evident from the article under discussion, was rather to establish the possibilities in the ancient world, regarding people moving around as missionaries, where they stayed (in inns, with friends, etc.) and read the text under discussion within such a social 'world'. He tried to utilize those contexts that were chronologically and spatially closest to the texts he was dealing with (see his discussions about Paul on pages 224-225 as example). He does not automatically assume that because something is evidenced in the ancient social world, it must also be like that in the text under discussion (i.e. following theories of dependence, or theories of social construction). By analysing the textual evidence as carefully as he could, bearing in mind the social information available to him, he would make his conclusions. These conclusions will reflect the available social information, the strength being that he could credibly argue that what he concluded is a possibility in related ancient contexts and is not an idea carried into the text without any contemporary evidence in that direction. This can be clearly seen in the way he discusses the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes: the possibility in ancient times of a house owner to exercise power without being in an 'ecclesiastic office' allows him to pose the argument that the issue in 3 John is not about office. That is much more than what Malina does with his approach that simply leads him to say that it is a non-issue, without any further motivation.

The problem even extends a little further. It is remarkable that Malina hardly engages with the text of 3 John as such, illustrating how his approach helps in uncovering the meaning of 3 John. Although he, for instance, gives a lengthy description of how he sees hospitality in the first century Mediterranean world, it is not clear how this information impacts on the text of 3 John. At the end of the article one still wonders what was at play in this situation, what influenced the original situation and what the outcomes would have been. What Malina concludes is that the letter was written

by the Elder who seeks satisfaction for the dishonour he suffered at the hands of Diotrefes. ‘III John is the Elder’s culturally required attempt at satisfaction’ (p. 187). This is what Malina’s model apparently offers us: it has everything to do with the Elder who wanted to save his own honour, and that seems to be it.¹⁵ Reading the article of Malherbe, it immediately becomes apparent that there is much more than this. The question, which I will leave unanswered, is: was it Malina’s method or just his oversight that made him miss so much in reading 3 John? Since I am a keen user of many of the (more reliable and proven) materials used by Malina, I can only guess that it must have been the result of his polemic against the ‘Received View’ or a superficial reading of Malherbe or even a lack of understanding of what is at stake with the reading of 3 John that lies behind these oversights. Malina’s remarks that Malherbe’s ‘interpretative model being applied is left at the implicit and impressionistic level’ (p. 177) thus has an ironic ring to it.¹⁶

IV. Part of any academic heritage is the importance of considering the opinions presented by peers in the field and interacting openly and honestly with them. Naturally this interaction takes place within the stated confines of the theoretical framework. In this way the wheel is not discovered over and over again, opinions are weighed and refined, you avail your own opinion to scrutiny and further discussion, and so on. Academic work is not seen as the brilliance of one person (although such brilliance occurs every now and then) but the common endeavour of people seeking the clarity and the best answers to their questions. Hence it is not easy to understand Malina’s reaction against Malherbe when considered within the broad variety of opinions about 3 John.

15 Another unsubstantiated remark, which is stated as fact, reads: ‘With III John, we have evidence of unreceptive reaction to Johannine Christianity’ (Malina 187). He argues that John’s advocacy for a ‘metaphorical variant of the real world, of real society’ (p. 187) led to its ‘demise as unworkable and unrealistic in the first and second century Mediterranean world’. This is obviously highly debatable, since most of the early Christian documents, not only John, work with a transcendental reality that is by definition metaphorical. That could not be the major reason (perhaps a reason) for the demise of Johannine Christianity. John’s theology is indeed idealistic, not least because of its dualism, but to maintain that it is unworkable and unrealistic should be argued properly. Efforts arguing in this direction usually treat the Johannine material selectively.

16 This may also be seen in the discussion of Malherbe (p. 227-228) on 3 John as letter of recommendation. He bases his discussion on the work of Kim, a book Malina also refers to as a basic work. He then argues from the context of the function of such letters and refers to several examples. This is far from impulsive, or merely intuitive, as Malina implies.

Malina's reaction against the normative practice of scholarship is illustrated by the fact that he does not really refer to published material on 3 John because that would put him on par with Malherbe's 'Received View'. However, he does rely on the academic tradition provided in 44 other sources. Why he feels he should not use existing academic information in the case of 3 John, but that his other views should be substantiated by scholarly work from those disciplines, is not clear to me. This approach to is like shooting oneself in the foot.

The attack on Malherbe and the 'Received View' for their 'passion for a full bibliography' (p. 172 and 176) seems to be a bit ironic. Malherbe refers to more or less 50 sources while Malina refers to 47, of which only three deal with 3 John (the one of Malherbe, one of Funk, who wrote on the form and structure of 3 John and the commentary of Brown on the Letters of John). In his bibliography he has sources such as, *Toward understanding Germany* (by Lowie 1954) or 'The image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial mind' (by Nash 1972). Some of these books or articles serve as sources for the stereotypes Malina uses in his description of the 'Received View' that is basically German-driven in his perspective (p. 176).¹⁷

4. SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Both authors make some very insightful remarks, Malherbe pointing out how some practices impact upon the text of 3 John, pointing the reader to different interpretations. Malina in turn showed that social data should not be approached in isolation, but as systems, interrelating and integrating several aspects in the process of interpretation. Although Malherbe resisted working with systems and larger constructs, he nevertheless had a keen feeling for the integration of social material in order to interpret texts. His commentary on Thessalonians (2004) is evidence of that. Malina's approach helps one to see that broader picture and one is often invited to explore unexpected avenues. Take for instance his description of mobility, which not only draws attention to physical mobility in interpreting 3 John, but also social up-down mobility, which was so central to the dynamics in ancient communities.

Polemic academic activity tends to polarize, as has happened in this case. Two of the 'greats' of the past 30 years, who are known for applying social material to the understanding of the New Testament, never interacted academically after the appearance of Malina's. This remains a great pity.

17 Malherbe never researched in Germany. He did his PhD work in the United States, worked for a year with van Unnik in Utrecht in the Netherlands during which time he also visited Sweden for a few weeks. He was however well versed in German theology, as well as in other theologies (to use these terms).

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ABSTRACT

This article reflects on ways in which the idea of an ethical quality of life of the people of God can be contextualized. This idea is largely similar to the concept of the wholeness of life that is found in documents of the World Council of Churches. Attention is given to the results of efforts to improve the quality of life in Africa through modernization during the development era, as well as to the quality of life in post-apartheid South Africa. The consumer culture has a strong influence on rich and poor, but there are different forms of resistance to modernisation. These forms of resistance often become destructive. If the church wants to present an attractive life-giving alternative, we need a moral vision, even a new cosmology, as well as the technology, practices, life styles and other ways to make that vision a reality.



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1. INTRODUCTION

This article reflects on ways to contextualize the statement of Christopher Wright, an Old Testament scholar: "...ethics stands as the mid-term between election and mission. Ethics is the purpose of election and the basis of mission... the ethical quality of life of the people of God is the vital link between their calling and their mission. God's intention to bless the nations is inseparable from God's ethical demand on the people he has created to be the agent of that blessing. There is no biblical mission without biblical ethics" (2010:93, 94).

This statement finds support in the description of eternal life in the writings of John, as explained by the New Testament scholar, George Eldon Ladd. In summary, John's view of the life of the believers is that God so loved the world that He sent Jesus to give eternal life to those who believe. This eternal life is the fullness of life that was expected in the age to come, that Jesus brought into this present age. It becomes a present fact and continues beyond physical death. Those who follow Jesus must by necessity act according to this new way of living and impart life to each other and to their own world. It is the same structure that we find in the Synoptic gospels, where it is announced that the future Kingdom of God invades the present and begins to play a transforming role in this age (Ladd 1974:257-281). Eternal life is, in other words, an ethical quality of life, imparted by Jesus to his followers, that does not end even when we die, because God maintains his relation with those who believe in Him.

This theme, the theme of life in its fullness, of life-affirming and life-giving practices and ministries, has been the central theme in the circles of the World Council of Churches the past number of years. The WCC document *Together towards Life. Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, for example, states: "Health is more than physical and/or mental well-being, and healing is not primarily medical. This understanding of health coheres with the biblical-theological tradition of the church, which sees a human being as a multidimensional unity, and the body, soul and mind as interrelated and interdependent. It thus affirms the social, political and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness. Health, in the sense of wholeness, is a condition related to God's promise for the end of time, as well as a real possibility in the present. Wholeness is not a static balance of harmony but rather involves living-in-community with God, people and creation. Individualism and injustice are barriers to community building, and therefore to wholeness" (WCC Resource Book 2013:62).

Improving the quality of life is often stated as the goal of efforts to make life better, for example in development projects for communities where something – poverty,

conflict, disease, pollution, and so on – is doing damage to life. The term that Wright uses, *the ethical quality of life of the people of God*, adds an important aspect, namely the ethical aspect and in this case the *Christian* ethical aspect. This addition changes the meaning of the term. Quality of life is not measured only in terms of human needs anymore, even if these needs may still be very important. Quality of life is now measured in terms of certain ethical standards that cannot be derived only from what we need or want, but from what is expected from us by virtue of the fact that we confess to belong to the people of God. This emphasis on the ethical aspect of the wholeness of life is also found in recent WCC documents, for example, a policy document of the WCC, *The church – towards a common vision*, states: “The ethics of Christians as disciples are rooted in God, the creator and revealer, and take shape as the community seeks to understand God’s will within the various circumstances of time and place. The Church does not stand in isolation from the moral struggles of humankind as a whole. Together with the adherents of other religions as well as with all persons of good will, Christians must promote not only those individual moral values which are essential to the authentic realization of the human person but also the social values of justice, peace and the protection of the environment, since the message of the Gospel extends to both the personal and the communal aspects of human existence. Thus *koinonia* includes not only the confession of the one faith and celebration of common worship, but also shared moral values, based upon the inspiration and insights of the Gospel” (WCC Resource Book 2013:40).

The term ethical quality of life is used in this article in such a way that the term quality of life and the insights of secular quality of life studies are in principle included and maintained, and considered in the light of Christian ethics. It combines “quality of life” and “ethical quality of life”, taking the potential conflict between them as something to be considered when it occurs.

This article reflects on the way in which the term *the ethical quality of life of the people of God* can be contextualized in our contemporary lifestyles as rich and poor South Africans.

2. BACKGROUND

There has been much debate on the impact of colonialism in Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the role of the churches and missionaries in this time. It would have been much easier for everyone if the plight of Africa could be blamed on the evil – which was there – of colonialism and apartheid. What is practically and morally much more complicated, is to consider the *unintended* destructive consequences of the good intentions – which were also there, however tainted – of the West: to bring progress and modernity to Africa.

The same can be said of the post-colonial era. Martin Meredith, in his book *The state of Africa* (2005:683) wrote that, since political independence, "...more than USD 500 billion of Western aid has been sunk into Africa, but with little discernible result". To this figure must be added the income from resources such as oil and mines that did not benefit the vast majority of the population. It is perhaps not correct to say that there was no discernible result. The funds have often been used to finance wasteful lifestyles and even the further oppression of those who are most vulnerable.

Throughout the 20th century African writers reflected on the impact of modern culture on the African world. Kofi Awoonor (1976:252-254), a writer from Ghana, comments on Chinua Achebe's well-known book *Things fall apart*: "To Achebe, the African world before the arrival of Europe was a well-integrated one, with dignity and honour ... As a story of the tragic encounter between Africa and Europe, it is an attempt to capture and restate the pristine integrity which has been so traumatically shattered by that confrontation ... Order and coherence are followed by that slow, imperceptible and disguised process of destruction and decay...when the Christians come...the seeds of havoc are planted."

In his *A short history of African philosophy* Barry Hallen (2009:135-137) argues that one reason for the unmeant negative impact of Western efforts to improve the quality of life in Africa, is that the conceptual frameworks that are used to "understand" African society have their origin in Western culture. This applies to concepts such as community, family and gender. For example: female scholars in Africa such as Oyewumi, Amadiume and Nzegwu "at various points and in the strongest terms reject 'feminism' as a Western-based and Western-oriented movement that has yet to demonstrate that it is prepared to reject the misrepresentations of African societies by Western scholarship and is prepared to learn from rather than dictate to the non-Western world." Western feminists strengthen the gendering of society in individualistic terms, while traditional African culture puts the community first, and gives male and female equal and interdependent roles in the community, which makes it possible not to gender society. Amadiume, for example, blames Western feminists that their imposed systems erode all positive aspects of historical gains, "... leaving us impoverished, naked to abuse, and objects of pity to Western aid rescue missions" (quoted by Hallen 2009:136).

Neither was the impact of the Christians always perceived, as was the intention, to be life giving. In 2001 the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, dr Molefe Tsele (2001:1) complained, "African Christianity has either borne bitter fruits or none at all. For many Africans, the Church continues to be an ambiguous institution they love to hate... On the one hand, Christianity is more rooted in the Continent than anywhere else, on the other hand, the Continent continues to

reap bitter fruits of poverty, wars, abuse and enslavement... we must ponder for a while on what to do to this big tree called Christianity, which is green with leaves of millions of African adherents, yet continues to fail them at their hour of need.”

We as the churches, as Christians, can only present a life-giving message that is perceived as such if we understand the dynamics of society, as they are perceived by the members of that society. The risk of us causing damaging but unintended results emanating from well-meant efforts can only be reduced if the people who are in the situation and their understanding of what is to be done are fully included in the way that problems are formulated and solutions are designed and presented. All efforts to improve the quality of life of a community must be fully contextualized and internalized by that community itself.

3. THE CONTEMPORARY LIFESTYLES OF RICH AND POOR SOUTH AFRICANS

In post-apartheid South Africa the economic solution to human need has moved to the centre of the stage, with the consumer culture in a dominant role. One result is that there are two types of communities that have grown most visibly hand over hand: so-called squatter camps (informal settlements) and luxurious golf estates and gated communities, sealed off by high walls, electric fences and security services. Neither was expected when the “new South Africa” came into being in 1994. There was a general expectation, not least among the poor, that the eradication of poverty would be a much more central concern that would be tackled with dedication and that such affluence would not be allowed. However, both poverty and affluence have grown beyond all expectations.

In August 2013 Robert Brand and Mike Cohen wrote in an article, *SA's post-apartheid failure in squatter camps*: “Only 15% of South Africa’s 14.45 million households earn enough to secure a mortgage, while 60% earn less than R3,500 a month and can qualify for state housing, government data shows. The remaining 25%, including most teachers, nurses, police officers and soldiers, have had access to neither.”

While new squatter camps continue to spring up, golf estates are doing the same. In 2009, for example, a property group reported that there had been significant growth in the residential golf estate sector in the previous five years in South Africa: “during this period, 50% of a total of approximately 30,000 residential golf estate properties located within 66 golf estate developments, came onto the market in South Africa” (Golding 2009). This figure does not include the large number of luxurious gated communities that do not have golf courses.

The country is growing in two directions, away from each other. The high ideals that seemed to drive the transition to a new South Africa immediately before and after 1994, of making life better for all, have made way for a destructive consumerism, also, all too often, among the poor who are its victims but still dream of a luxurious lifestyle.

Former anti-apartheid politicians are in the lead. One example: at the time of writing this article, there is a hot political battle caused by the finding of the public protector that the state spent R248m of tax payers' money to upgrade state president Jacob Zuma's private Nkandla estate. But the politicians are not alone: in all sectors of society there is a drive for having more, for the purpose of having more, beyond the satisfaction of fundamental human needs. Churches and church members all too often take part in this, whether we preach a prosperity gospel or not.

It depends on what indicators of poverty and wealth are considered, but according to Pauw and Mncube (2007:3), there is wide agreement amongst researchers that the rich have become richer and the poor poorer. A report, *Poverty Trends in South Africa. An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2011* that was released in 2014 by Statistics South Africa, indicates that the income of the poor has indeed improved, but an important reason is the increase in grants from 3 million in 2000 to 15 million by 2011 (p 20), which makes the poor very vulnerable to pressures on the economy.

In an article in the Mail and Guardian on 3 August 2012 the well-known economist Sampie Terreblanche wrote about the "elite compromise – or the elite conspiracy – reached between the corporate sector and a leadership core of the ANC before 1994... The ANC government has used the power allotted to it to create a black elite by implementing black empowerment and affirmative action in rather doubtful and myopic ways and plundering the budget recklessly. The perpetuation of white elitism and white corporatism after 1994 and the creation of black elitism over the past 18 years, to the detriment of the poor and unemployed is the main reason why income has become increasingly unequal since 1994. The richest 10-million South Africans received almost 75% of total income in 2008, whereas the poorest 25 million received less than 8%."

How do we, both rich and poor, start to transform our lifestyles towards a better *ethical quality of life, as the people of God* in this context? It is a difficult question, since we have not yet reached agreement on what we mean by a good quality of life.

4. CONFUSION ABOUT A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In the past, the churches from the West have mostly promoted the Western way of living, such as schools, hospitals, modern technology, and other elements of this lifestyle. The two books: *Reeftown Elite* (1971) and *Coming through. The search of a new cultural identity* (1978) describe to what extent black South Africans, from their side, idealized the Western way of life in the 1960's.

In 1971 a poet from Soweto, Oswald Joseph Mtshali (1972:25) Mtshali wrote:

I don't want to go to heaven when I'm dead.
I want my heaven now, here on earth in Houghton and Parktown;
a mansion
two cars or more
and smiling servants.
Isn't that heaven?

This is still the predominant attitude of many people of all races and classes today. But there has also been resistance to this ideal. Soon after writing this poem, Mtshali joined other black poets, writers, theologians, politicians and academics in singing the praises of African culture and African values. Some have denounced Western culture; others saw a blending of cultures as the way to go. The seventies was the period of Black Consciousness in South Africa. Black Consciousness is not as visible now as it was then, but resistance to modern culture still accompanies, paradoxically, the consumer culture with its desire for modern consumer goods.

The resistance to modern culture is, for example, visible in the education system, albeit in a passive way. The education system with its schools and universities is the way in which modern culture is transferred to learners, but there is a general lack of interest in good education amongst large sectors of the population: "...the system has failed to reverse unacceptably low exam results or to improve the standard of teaching. The quality of education remains very poor, and the output rate has not improved... challenges include: poor teacher training; unskilled teachers; lack of commitment to teach by teachers; poor support for learners at home; and a shortage of resources in education despite the large budgetary commitments by government" (Matshidiso: 2012). A culture of learning has not emerged.

Resistance to Western education has a long history. There was strong protest against the education policy of the apartheid government. The University of the North, a so-called "black university" where I was teaching from 1984 until 1993, was a centre

of the struggle against apartheid in those years. Boycotts, strikes, the burning down of buildings, endless negotiations and on-going violent confrontations with the security forces meant that the academic programme was constantly under severe pressure. But it was not only political protest. It was also protest against modern Western culture, for example against its emphasis on individual responsibility and individual success or failure. Slogans such as “An injury to one is an injury to all” and “Pass one, pass all”, which were seen as the traditional African value of community or Ubuntu, were repeatedly used to bring the academic programme to a halt. It happened that the whole university was brought to a standstill because one student had failed in his exams.

This cultural protest confirmed the trends in the black urban poetry of the seventies, during the time of Black Consciousness. In the seventies black poets such as Oswald Mtshali, Wally Serote, Sipho Sepamla and Pascal Gwala, hailing from Soweto and the township Alexandra, published a number of bundles in English that identified the conflict between modern Western and traditional African cultures as a central issue in the unrest in townships (cf A S van Niekerk:1983 and Mphutlane wa Bofelo 2008:191-211).

In 1998 the literary scholar D Brown published a book *Voicing the text: South African oral poetry and performance* in which he describes a still deeper level of protest against Western culture, the mobilization of oral forms by the black consciousness movement in the 1970's. The main strategy for liberation was to liberate people's minds and to reassert communal values of black humanism (Brown 1998, p169). The oral poetry of the seventies in Soweto, that expressed this movement, rejected Western literary and cultural norms and forms, and made use of traditional African forms (Brown 1998:174,175). It included resistance to Western education. Oral poets followed a strategy of performance rather than publication. Protest poets like those mentioned in the previous paragraph, who did publish their poetry, were regarded “with hostility and mistrust” (Brown:182-183).

This protest builds on earlier forms of protest by figures such as the prophet Isaiah Shembe who was the founder of one of the largest AIC's in South Africa. Shembe worked in Natal between 1911 and 1935. He resisted the suppression of orality by the epistemological and cognitive authority of the Western tradition of print (Brown:124). Brown comments: “Shembe...sought to revitalize Zulu society through the maintenance and revival of social customs and mores, many of which were rejected by the mission churches. In one of his songs he, from his side, rejected their emphasis on the written word: “...their bibles and testaments... they said it was written... Breaker-away, let us leave and let us head for own Zululand...” He wanted

to undermine “the colonial discourses of power, particularly the centrality of the printed word and the Bible” (Brown:147).

The present lack of enthusiasm for learning among teachers, parents and children, is nothing new. There are two options; the people could change their attitude, or the possibility to contextualise the education system to function better in the present context, which is influenced by culture, politics, the economy, and so on, can be investigated.

The overall context was well articulated by a writer from Kenya: “We need to see Africa’s history in three broad phases: Africa before white conquest, Africa under colonial domination, and today’s Africa striving to find its true self-image. We are all involved in a common problem: how best to build a true communal home for all Africans. Then all the black people, all the African masses can truthfully say: we have come home” (Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiongó 1981:4). And the Euro-Africans have to find a place for ourselves with the “African masses”.

In Latin American liberation theology there was also an element of suspicion against the modern way of life, that was associated with the Protestant faith: “When a poor peasant or a worker in the new industrial areas becomes a Protestant, he stops drinking, starts working regularly, establishes a stable family, learns to read and write, and consequently gains social and economic status. Quite likely his children will already belong to the ‘progressive’ middle sector of society. Protestantism is thus clearly linked with the whole North Atlantic ideological, cultural, economic, and political thrust beginning with the nineteenth century...” (Bonino, 1975:12).

This confronts us with the question: Liberation towards what? Is Protestantism merely a part of modern Western culture? Can the church present a better alternative? What would an ethical quality of life look like, seen from a Christian perspective?

5. WHAT WOULD AN ETHICAL QUALITY OF LIFE LOOK LIKE, SEEN FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE?

A Christian description of an ethical quality of life may be characterised by good relations, fairness to all, promoting the lives of others and of God’s creation, and promoting dignity. In his book *The gravity of sin. Augustine, Luther and Barth on homo incurvatus in se* Jenson (2006:1-2) emphasizes that, over the last century, a broad consensus has developed in Western theology and philosophy that human personhood is fundamentally constituted by its relationships. He refers to Eberhard Jüngel, who calls sin “the urge towards relationlessness and dissociation” and the sinner “a person without relations”.

In WCC declarations, justice, peace and the integrity of creation have emerged in different formulations (Rasmussen 1996:139) with the emphasises on relations as an important theme. It is in many ways the opposite of both destructive consumerism and chronic poverty. The WCC document *Together towards life* expresses it well: "... the gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society. It is, therefore, vital to recognize God's mission in a cosmic sense, and to affirm all life, the whole *oikoumene*, as being interconnected in God's web of life" (Resource Book 2013:52).

Rasmussen (1996:329, 330) argues that relations are necessarily developed locally and not globally: in spaceship economics, even when "greened" as sustainable development or green globalism, however pure the motives, some begin to decide what is in the interest of the rest. "Things are no longer soul-size, with multiple voices attuned to the complexity of things on the ground in places very different from each other... It treats Seattle, Boston, Madras, Rio, and Kuala Lumpur as though they were very much the same, or should be". Following David Korten, Rasmussen rejects the ideal put forward by Akio Morita, founder and chairman of Sony's, of one global culture based on the free market, where "relationships, both individual and corporate, are defined entirely by the market, and there are no loyalties to place and community".

If the ethical quality of life is marked by healthy relations, it is of fundamental importance that it must be realised on community and household level, where we can form such relations, as well as on the level of our wider network of relations and ecological and social footprints. The micro- and macro- levels are connected in many ways. The household is an important driver of macro-industry: a large part of the production of industry is for consumption by individuals in the household context. And to have integrity, it is important not to separate private and public life, as is the trend in modern culture.

The emphasis on relations and responsibility finds practical support in the principle of subsidiarity, which plays an important role in Roman Catholic circles. Subsidiarity means, "...one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry". (Pope Pius XI, 1931). This principle leads to an emphasis on grassroots community projects where community members are involved in leadership and decision-making (cf Rasmussen p 336). At the same time, those functions that cannot be executed on a local level must be escalated to higher levels: "...subsidiarity asks not for the most local but for the most appropriate level of organization and response" (Rasmussen:339).

An emphasis on local relations as such is not enough. Such an emphasis can also be found in the prevailing tendency to build golf estates and the so-called ‘hamlet’ trend. “This is the emergence of ‘small town’ South Africa where people are electing to live in smaller towns for lifestyle reasons, and with new technology are able to work from home... (Golding, 2009).” This could lead to further withdrawal into oneself, which could as such be a withdrawal from an ethical quality of life, as argued by Matt Jenson.

The vision of an ethical quality of life as presented by the church of Christ will have to be developed locally, in our case in the context of contemporary Africa, where the modern and postmodern global cultures and the traditional African cultures are in a process of forming new combinations, and breaking them up all the time, and where Islam has a growing presence. These combinations differ from place to place. The local context must be seen within the global context.

It is a very complex and concrete task to put this moral vision into practice: to develop new relations to each other and to the material world, to find new ways of using energy and water at home and of disposing of waste, to protect and sustain ourselves. Transforming our own network of relations means the transformation of our own identity. It requires a new vision of what happiness is, and it requires resources, knowledge, skills, funding and partnerships. Our present ways of living have developed over centuries. They are imbedded in a web of practices, habits, conventions, regimes, systems, vested interests, agreements, traditions, technologies, symbols, dreams, values, and worldviews. It is no easy task to transform them into different alternatives that embody the vision of a different world.

6. THE CHRISTIAN ROAD TOWARDS AN ETHICAL QUALITY OF LIFE

What would an ethical quality of life look like, and how do we get there? This question was also considered by the South African Council of Churches, with reference to the problem of climate change: “...we require a radical change of direction, a change of heart and mind, a transformation of our society towards a sustainable economy and a sustainable lifestyle... It is a matter of moral vision. We need to envision alternatives to the current global economic order that has caused climate change. Such a vision needs to be attractive enough to motivate millions of people, to energise and mobilise action. The question is therefore whether a different world is indeed possible’ (Declaration SACC 2009:x, 41).

The “alternative world”, according to the SACC Declaration, is “a matter of moral vision”. The SACC is not alone in this approach. Rasmussen (182) refers to Bateson,

who “assumes the reality and efficacy of a cosmology and its ethic: ‘the whole way of thinking about what we are and what other people are.’ And he assumes that earth’s present distress is a foundational challenge to the reigning cosmology. Its consequences expose this cosmology and ethic as death dealing. Bateson concludes that an alternative cosmology must take its place.”

The WCC document *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All A Call to Action* thinks along the same lines: “Therefore, the crisis has deep moral and existential dimensions. The challenges that are posed are not first and foremost technological and financial, but ethical and spiritual” (WCC Resource Book:86).

Is this formulated correctly? Is it true that “(T)echnologies express cultures. Ways of doing things reflect ways of seeing things”, as Rasmussen (181) states? Is it not true that churches and church members all too often practice a privatized spirituality that we combine comfortably with either the prevailing consumerism or the culture of poverty of our communities, separating the vision of faith and the way of living? This happens also with those of us who are convinced that we need a sustainable lifestyle: we still live in the prevailing economy and technology, even if these structures do not express our cosmology and the way we think things should be. We may have a moral vision of an alternative world, but we do not have the means to bring it about even in our own lives, apart from making a few adjustments to the prevailing systems. This applies to Christians in both the affluent and poor communities.

That does not make a moral vision irrelevant, but it depends on what we do with it. We can take as example the “Declaration on the Environment” signed by Patriarch Bartholomew I and Pope John Paul II on 10 June 2002: “What is required is an act of repentance on our part and a renewed attempt to view ourselves, one another, and the world around us within the perspective of the divine design for creation. The problem is not simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual. A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine conversion in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act” (The SACC Declaration 2009:6,7).

This statement is true, depending on what is meant by “a genuine conversion to Christ”. Does this statement not fall back into “...the wrong conception of conversion as a purely religious phenomenon separated from its sociological context“ that Newbigin refers to? Newbigin argues for a conception of conversion that is inseparable from its sociological context. He illustrates it with reference to the message of Moses and Aaron to the people of Israel in the house of bondage. They told the elders of Israel

that God had seen their plight and was ready to lead them out of the house of slavery "...and the people believed... and bowed their heads and worshipped" (Ex 4:30-31). From that time onwards the people were facing the other way, comments Newbigin; turning towards God is in itself turning away from slavery and undertaking the journey towards life (Newbigin 1969:94-95).

It is not that a genuine conversion to Christ, as a purely religious phenomenon separated from its sociological context takes place first, and that we then, from there, express this faith in an ethical quality of life almost automatically. Many churches have preached such a conversion for many decades, and the resultant ethical quality of life is often limited to a few personal issues. In Western Christianity, Pietism has often restricted faith to the emotional inner life of the individual, and orthodoxy to the maintenance of the pure doctrine. Both have a tendency to separate faith from public life and the rational approach of modernity and to live largely according to the rationality and values of modernity while believing according to the Christian doctrines (Jonker 2008:32-37). In his preface to Willie Jonker's book, Dirkie Smit (Jonker, 2008:xi) states that the Christian message is one of salvation for the world, and that being a church without being passionately concerned about the deepest problems of the world could be regarded as a betrayal of the church and her message. Conversion to such spirituality should be avoided.

A genuine conversion to Christ can rather be understood as hearing the call of Christ to accept his gift of eternal life as the calling to an ethical quality of life and responding positively to this call by searching to develop such a quality of life for yourself and for others, and presenting a life-giving alternative within the existing context. In the context of Southern Africa, the ethical quality of life of the Kingdom of God must be passionately concerned about the deepest problems of this context, which include the search for identity and dignity in our multi-cultural context and the search for sustainable lifestyles in which such an identity exists.

The SACC statement on the possibility of an alternative world contains valuable elements but it does not sufficiently combine the need for a moral vision with the need to demonstrate that vision in practice. To do that, we could expand it to read: "It is a matter of moral vision and of the capability (capacity and ability) to put the vision into practice. In order to develop a vision that is attractive enough to motivate millions of people, to energise and mobilise action, we have to illustrate it in practice. The question is therefore whether we can demonstrate that a different world is indeed possible, by presenting an alternative cosmology in the form of alternative economies, lifestyles, practices, habits and technologies."

Faith, which is always expressed within some or other cosmology, cannot be packaged, transferred and consumed like a fast food hamburger. Living faith is more like yeast that is kneaded into the dough and then acts as a life-giving and transforming agent, working through the whole of our lives. With technology it is not completely different. Technology, also, cannot be transferred as a package, as is often attempted in development projects; the people who are to use it must conceive it and functionally integrate it into their own lives. Both faith and technology play a role in shaping our daily domestic practices and both must be contextualized by those who use it into their daily lives, also by those who want to develop an ethical quality of life.

In their book *The homeless mind* Peter L Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1977) use the term *consciousness*, that refers to the everyday knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and affects of the community (p 18). In a process of modernisation, elements in modernity and elements in local consciousness that have an affinity to each other seek each other out, and form “packages”. A package consists, therefore, of a combination of elements from the modernising institutions and from the consciousness of the community (cf. Berger et.al 1977:64-77). The term *package* means more or less the same as the *practices* described above, but the word package more clearly expresses the *combination of cultural elements* that formed the practice.

Such packages and practices must be developed intentionally, using the best resources – science, technology, networks, funding – available.

On a most local level, we can begin by examining our own domestic practices. A domestic practice combines elements of the residents’ cosmology with the available technology and resources such as materials and artefacts to form patterns of behaviour that we regularly use to achieve certain goals. These practices play a role to shape our roles and relations. We can examine the ecological and social footprints of these practices. We can evaluate to what extent they help or hinder us in responding in our sociological context to Christ’s gift of an ethical quality of life. We can investigate possibilities to develop alternative practices and patterns of living. We will have to apply our minds, our hearts and our strengths. We will need advice from others who have knowledge and skills that we do not have: philosophers who think about life, engineers, architects, agriculturalists, health care workers, psychologists, and others. It becomes a process that builds relations with fellow believers and with people who do not believe, where they may come to understand our faith better, hopefully, as a meaningful and life-giving power.

7. CONCLUSION

If the church is to present a life-giving message in the 21st century, we will have to develop an ethical quality of life for ourselves and for the different local contexts in which we are. Such a quality of life cannot be perceived in isolation from our sociological context. It can only come into existence if we hear the call of Christ to a sustainable and dignified lifestyle in our different but related contexts, and if we respond to that call by searching for alternative ways in which we can combine our faith and cosmology, the consciousness of local communities and the available technology and other elements of modernisation, to form practices that better express an ethical quality of life in each context.

We need to plan a deliberate process of interaction between our Christian consciousness and the cultural consciousness and technological elements of our contexts, to form a Christian ethical quality of life that is relevant to each context and the wider world we live in. In the Southern African context, we not only have to consider the cultural elements of modernity and post-modernity, but also the role of African traditional culture in the whole mix of things. We have, in other words, to work with what is at hand in our context, and not merely import and implement lifestyles from abroad.

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*With reasons of the heart before God. On religious
experience from an evolutionary-theological
perspective¹*

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ABSTRACT

What does the affective-cognitive dimension of being human entails? Many contemporary scholars from theological (especially religious experience) perspectives as well as from evolutionary biological (especially neuroscientific) perspectives have made exciting inroads in the on-going anthropological discourses on this very dimension of being human. My article partially makes work of their respective contributions. For the former theological perspective I will utilize Pascal and Stoker. For the latter neuroscientific perspective I will concentrate on LeDoux and Damasio. I call my contribution an evolutionary-theological re-conceptualisation of religious experience for which I make use of Pascal's famous words from his *Pensées* (1670) "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know" and "(i)t is the heart which experiences God and not the reason". Therefore the title: *With reasons of the heart before God*. Such a formulation however immediately raises the question: Does such an emphasis on the "heart" re-introduce irrationality into the scientific scholarly dialogue? The answer is clear: Yes, it does. It is argued that it should be re-introduced constructively into contemporary science-theology discourses in order – on the one hand – to critically address the very accusation, and – on the other hand – to present us with a far richer, deeper understanding of personhood. From the constructive integration of the two perspectives, namely the theological and neuroscientific the words of Pascal is finally re-formulated from an evolutionary-theological perspective and qualified in which emotion is presented as the embodiment of the logic of survival.

1 Paper that was read at 15th European Society for Studies in Science and Theology Conference, *Do Emotions Shape the World?*, Assisi, Italy 30 April – 4 May 2014 has been re-worked for publication as article.



1. INTRODUCTION

No aspect of our mental life is more important to the quality and meaning of our existence than emotions. They are what make life worth living, or sometimes ending (De Sousa 2013:1).

The theme for the 15th European Society for Studies in Science and Theology Conference in Assisi, Italy in April 2014 was formulated as a question, namely “Do emotions shape the world?” My opinion of the conference question was that it was formulated too tidily and too cautiously. The more robust question – however still tidily formulated - should rather have been: What are the implications of a world shaped by emotions? Or perhaps reformulated with a specific anthropological focus: What does an affective-cognitive understanding of personhood entail? If we would agree from a hermeneutical perspective that all experience is interpretative experience and thus theory-laden, will we constructively agree in the same manner from an evolutionary biological perspective that all experience is shaped by emotions and is thus “affective-laden”? I would like to argue from an evolutionary biological perspective that this is an anthropological given! There is in my opinion indeed no polite way around the constitutive shaping-character of emotions in our respective worlds.² Let me take as vantage point for my argument the conclusion of Ronald De Sousa (2013)³ in his very useful article on “Emotion” in *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. He writes:

- Emotions are typically conscious phenomena; yet
- Dispositions to manifest certain emotion types, such as irascibility, are often unconscious;
- Emotions typically involve more pervasive bodily manifestations than other conscious states; but
- They cannot reliably be discriminated on physiological grounds alone;
- Emotions vary along a number of dimensions: intensity, duration, valence, type and range of intentional objects, etc.;
- They are typically, but not always, manifested in desires;
- They are distinct from moods, but modified by them;
- They are reputed to be antagonists of rationality; but also

2 Most probably the best known classic and influential example is that from the 4th century BC of Plato’s Chariot Allegory in *Phaedrus*.

3 Ronald de Sousa is an Emeritus Professor at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Toronto, Canada.

- They play an indispensable role in determining the quality of life;
- They contribute crucially to defining our ends and priorities.

I cannot unpack and unravel in any extensive discursive way in this article the archaeological depth and interdisciplinary width of all of these statements by De Sousa, but I would like to address at least his following two statements, namely that emotions firstly are “distinct from moods, but modified by them” and that they secondly “are reputed to be antagonists of rationality”. The popular and very influential belief is that emotion and rationality stand in opposition to each other. Furthermore those emotions are but inner feelings or sensations that reflect only physiological causal connections to the objects. I would like to argue two points, namely to refute the popular convictions of *Emotion vs. Rationality*, and secondly to present a viewpoint of layered affectivity in which affectivity involves more than emotion. My aim in this article is – summarised – in short:

The affective-cognitive dimension of being human – that is, of being persons of flesh and blood – represents a constitutive dimension of personhood that enriches a holistic understanding of life. My statement simply re-introduces and emphasises that which many contemporary scholars from theological (especially religious experience) perspectives as well as from evolutionary biological (especially neuroscientific) perspectives have already noticed and defended in their respective and distinctive contributions to anthropology. I make work of their contributions in my exposition. For the latter neuroscientific perspective I will concentrate on LeDoux and Damasio. For the former theological perspective I will utilize Pascal and Stoker. But before I discuss them, I would like to give firstly a brief explanation for the choice of “heart” in my title, and secondly a short discussion of the recently published critique *Het brein geeft te denken* (2012)⁴ by the Dutch theologian Gijs Dingemans⁵ on “brainification”.

2. THE HEART: METAPHORIC DESCRIPTION OF THE SEAT OF HUMAN LIFE

Humans are the way that life knows life (cf Veldsman 2013:8ff).⁶ In their knowing of life, the most distinct and significant characteristic of human life or personhood is

4 The title can freely be translated as: “To reflect on the brain”.

5 Gijs Dingemans is an Emeritus Professor of the Department of Practical Theology of the University of Groningen, The Netherlands

6 My formulation goes back to the reference by the British theologian and philosopher of the University of Nottingham, Conor Cunningham in his *Darwin's Pious Idea* (2010) of George Wald who said that the way for an atom to know an atom, is a physicist!

its discovering, explicating and unfolding of meaning – in so many different ways as broad as the spectrum of life itself – in its interaction with reality. One of the most powerful metaphoric descriptions for one of the most significant dimensions of the quest of human life on its journey in search of and explicating meaning in my opinion is the *heart*. The heart as the seat of human life. The heart as the fountain of meaning. Of personhood. Just as the physiological (biological) body cannot be alive without the heart as the organ that “pumps blood”, in the same metaphoric manner we cannot talk about life if not “pumped” by meaning in whatever cultural-philosophical and psycho-sociological manner it finds historical-contextual reflective expression. But then not only meaning in reference to its cognitive dimension, but specifically adding the affective dimension – as heart – to cognitive meaning-formation. The heart as metaphoric descriptive term for the seat of life, thus of the blending of knowledge and emotions (affectivity), unleashes a cosmological-existential and poetic depth and width and height for reflection on all of life whether human or non-human.⁷

If the heart – as the metaphoric depiction of the in one of the cognitive and affective dimension (mind-heart) of being human – represents the seat of life, where does the brain fit in? Posing this intermediate question is of importance since there are contemporary anthropological discourses that focus primarily on our brains (mind without heart!) as constitutive dimension of being characterized as a rational human being!

3. “BRAINIFICATION”?

The Dutch scholar Gijs Dingemans has in his recent book “Het brein geeft te denken” (2012) very neatly critiqued the popular and influential rationalistic and reductionistic anthropological perspectives that suggest, “We are our brains”! Although he mostly covers Dutch neuroscientific literature⁸ in his critique, it is

7 The heart as descriptive term is in so many multi-various ways part of the everyday vernacular in all fields of being human (literature, music etc) that examples seem to be superfluous. Perhaps just one example to illustrate my choice for poetic. It comes from the beautiful formulation by Plato: “Every heart sings a song, incomplete, until another heart whispers back. Those who wish to sing always find a song. At the touch of a lover, everyone becomes a poet”.

8 Some of the most recent important Dutch publications that he mentions are: Lone Frank *De vijfde revolutie - omdat hersenwetenschap onze wereld gaat veranderen* (2010); Victor Lamme, *De vrije wil bestaat niet; over wie er echt de baas is in het brein* (2010); Dick Swaab, *Wij zijn ons brein - van baarmoeder tot Alzheimer* (2010); Margriet Sitskoorn, *Het maakbare brein; Gebruik je hersens en word wie je wilt zijn* (2008); Margriet Sitskoorn, *Passies van het brein. Waarom zondigen zo verleidelijk is* (2009); H.

representative of the most popular arguments that we find worldwide in defence of the all-encompassing importance of the brain and cognition. From there the critical coined Dutch term “breinificatie”⁹ (“brainification”) as protest against those viewpoints that want to suggest “we are our brains”! With the conviction that “we are our brains” (Swaab) comes the negation of the “free will” of humans (Lamme). For Dingemans, these suggestions – which he takes very seriously – represent a new challenge that comes from the neurosciences and that are directed at the philosophers, theologians, psychologists and every one with a “frontale hersenkwab” (frontal brain lob)! His main concern in addressing “brainification” as challenge is to answer the question: Does my “I” actually exist, or is my “I” only a product of my biological and environmental factors? And with that comes a second related question: How is the relationship between our feelings, emotions and mind to be understood? For Dingemans we are “more than our brains”, and he defends his position in following amongst others Sicco de Jong and system-theory that argues that we have to work with the “living person”, the “total system (and all the subsystems) as human being”. We are on the one hand made up (inside) by these systems and subsystems – that can be studied on their own – but we exist at the same time – on the other hand – in continuous reaction to many systems of the world “outside of us”. It is surely not only the interaction with everything that has been collected by and in our brains, but also with the environment that we find ourselves in. Being human – as identity, psyche and spirit – is some kind of “counting together” (“optelsom”) in various languages¹⁰ of all of these that are more than our biological and neural make-up.¹¹ For Dingemans it entails a new religious understanding and working out of these very neuroscientific insights in their respective languages of personhood. To a more

van Praag, *God en Psyche* (2008); Bert Keizer, *Waar blijft de ziel?* (2012), Marc Slors, *Dat had je gedacht! Brein, bewustzijn en vrije wil in filosofisch perspectief* (2012).

- 9 The word “breinificatie” is a word “made up” in Dutch which can roughly be translated into English as “brainification”, that is, human existence reduced to the workings of the (autonomous) brain (cf Dingemans 2012:12).
- 10 The reference to various languages is to the distinct languages of respectively the natural sciences, of philosophy, of psychology, of religion etc!
- 11 The important question that Dingemans as theologian raises is the anthropological question whether we are “from nature” sinful and not destined to do good. He addresses the question in taking the neuroscientific input seriously. In my opinion he creatively argues that being human entails being confronted with three distinct conflicts that must be discerned – namely, the internal conflict of emotion and ratio, moral conflict to choose between right and wrong, and religious conflict (accepting that we cannot save ourselves).

detailed “counting together” specifically of emotion and rationality I would like to turn to.

4. EMOTION VS RATIONALITY

As starting point, I deliberately choose the French mathematician, physicist and theologian Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) and his famous words from his posthumously published *Pensées* (1670) “the heart has its reasons which reason does not know” and “(i)t is the heart which experiences God and not the reason”.¹² These rich Pascalian words I would like to revisit from an evolutionary-theological perspective.

My choice for the heart metaphor (Pascal) immediately raises the question: Does such an emphasis on the “heart” re-introduce irrationality¹³ – often the common accusation (eg John Locke, David Hume, Rene Descartes) – into the scholarly dialogue? Yes, it does and this is precisely the reason for introducing it! For it is to be argued that it should be re-introduced constructively into contemporary science-theology discourses in order – on the one hand – to critically address the very accusation of irrationality, and – on the other hand – to present us with a far richer, deeper understanding of personhood. To respond and to refute accusations of irrationality, we have to critically revisit viewpoints on emotion that understand emotion as an inner feeling or sensation that reflects only a physiological causal connection to the object.

Over against such an understanding of emotion which leads to its characterisation as irrational, I take my vantage point from evolutionary biology – amongst others from the very insightful classic contributions¹⁴ of the American neuroscientist Joseph

12 The references are from the translation by William Finlayson Trotter of Pascal’s [1954 (1670):78] *Pensees*.

13 Nor is it some kind of immunisation strategy, that is, an effort to avoid any form of being held accountable for a viewpoint.

14 I have chosen the works of LeDoux and Damasio simply for being so influential after being published. Their respective contributions were met with wide-ranging scholarly appraisal. LeDoux’s *The Emotional Brain* (1996) – just to mention a few examples – was described by Daniel Goleman as a “superb guide to that ultimate frontier in understanding our emotional life, the brain...”. He calls it “...pioneering state-of-the-art research”. Howard Eichenbaum states that “LeDoux succeeds in unraveling the mysteries of The Emotional Brain”. Steven Hyman says that “LeDoux shows how the study of the brain leaves our understanding of emotion richer than it was before”. Walter Mischel calls it “an impressive, fact-filled, provocative overview of the state of the art and science in the demystification of The Emotional Brain”. Eric Kandel describes it as a “marvelous book” in which “LeDoux guides us in a masterly way through the current

LeDoux in his *The Emotional Brain* (1996) and Portuguese-American neurobiologist Antonio Damasio in his *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999) – that present us with new insights on the affective dimension of personhood, especially that our emotions are rooted in our biological nature. Unfortunately only a few key insights from their respective creative contributions are noted in the following exposition.

4.1 Joseph LeDoux and *The Emotional Brain* (1996)

...(M)inds without emotions are not really minds at all. They are souls on ice – cold lifeless creatures devoid of any desires, fears, sorrows, pains, or pleasures (LeDoux 1996:25).

According to James McGaugh, a neurobiologist at the University of California in Irvine, “Joe LeDoux is among a small number of people pushing the frontiers of how the brain provides a basis for our emotional responses”. In response LeDoux – who entered graduate school with virtually no training in biology – said: “I wasn’t corrupted by too much knowledge... I was naive enough to think that emotions could be studied”. And when studied, one has to know that there “...is no such thing as the ‘emotion’ faculty and there is no single brain systems dedicated to this phantom function” (LeDoux 1996:16). One has also to know that the human brain

...happens to be the most sophisticated machine imaginable, or unimaginable, yet it wasn’t predesigned. It is the product of evolutionary tinkering, where lots of little changes over extremely long periods of time have accumulated (LeDoux 1996:104).

Through LeDoux’s “naivety” in studying the evolutionary established links between the brain’s structure and emotions, we are insightfully confronted by the questions: What happens in our brains to make us feel fear, love, hate, anger, joy? Do we control our emotions, or do they control us? Is being hungry an emotion or not?

thinking about emotion, from both a behavioral and neurobiological perspective, in a clear and entertaining style that is accessible to all. The *Emotional Brain* gives us a new and deeper sense of our own emotional life”. In very much the same manner, Damasio’s *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999) enjoyed a similar choir of appraisal. To mention only a few. Williford described it as a “... landmark work ... and essential read”; Dolan in *Nature* calls it a “stunning” book which he later qualifies as a “remarkable work of intellectual daring”! Mainen says that Damasio’s contribution is a “radical rejection of conventional thinking” whereas Grof sees Damasio’s contribution as “an amazing synthesis of precise experimentation and poetic thinking”. Oatley simply calls it a “terrifically good book”!

Do animals have emotions? LeDoux¹⁵ investigates the origins of human emotions and explains that many exist as part of complex neural systems that evolved to enable us to survive. For him, emotions are a “subjective experience, a passionate invasion of consciousness, a feeling” (LeDoux 1996:267). Unlike conscious feelings, emotions originate in the brain at a much deeper level.¹⁶ Emotions can occur without cognitive processing in the cortex. For example, our brains can detect danger before we even experience the feeling of being afraid. The brain also begins to initiate physical responses (heart palpitations, sweaty palms, muscle tension) before we become aware of an associated feeling of fear. Conscious feelings, says LeDoux, are somewhat irrelevant to the way *The Emotional Brain* works. He points out that emotional responses are hard-wired into the brain’s circuitry, but the things that make us emotional are learned through experience. And this may be the key to understanding, even changing, our emotional make up. LeDoux’s research, using an array of neurobiological methods, centres on the amygdala, a small area hidden within the temporal region of the brain. According to LeDoux’s evidence, this area is the heart of the emotion system. It is able to process the emotional significance of individual stimuli as well as complex situations. The amygdala is, in essence, involved in the appraisal of emotional meaning. Appraisal – the comparison of an event to a person’s goals and resources – is the process that cognitive researchers agree is the key to how particular emotions are produced in response to particular kinds of events.¹⁷

From these brief notes on LeDoux, I turn to Damasio.

15 I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Keith Oatley, professor of Applied Psychology at the University of Toronto for a number of these formulations that follow in my explication of the significance of LeDoux’s work.

16 For LeDoux, there are similarities and differences between our conscious emotions and our conscious thoughts. He explains: “Conscious emotional feelings and conscious thoughts are in some sense very similar. They both involve the symbolic representation in working memory of subsymbolic processes carried out by systems that work unconsciously. The difference between them is not due to the system that does the consciousness part but instead is due to two other factors. One is that the emotional feelings and mere thoughts are generated by different subsymbolic systems. The other is that emotional feelings involve many more brain systems than thought” (LeDoux 1996:299).

17 The interesting concept that LeDoux coins to explain the workings of appraisals, is that off the working memory. He states: “I’m saying that feelings come about when the activity of specialized emotion systems gets represented in the system that give rise to consciousness, and I’m using working memory as a fairly widely accepted version of how the latter might come about” (LeDoux 1996:282).

4.2 Antonio Damasio and *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999)

Throughout most of the twentieth century, emotion was not trusted in the laboratory. Emotion was too subjective, it was said. Emotion was too elusive and vague. Emotion was at the opposite end from reason, easily the finest human ability, and reason was presumed to be entirely independent from emotion. This was a perverse twist on the Romantic view of humanity. Romantics placed emotion in the body and reason in the brain. Twentieth-century science left out the body, moved emotion back into the brain, but relegated it to the lower neural strata associated with ancestors who no one worshiped. In the end, not only was emotion not rational, even studying it was probably not rational (Damasio 1999:39).

From the onset in his rational study of emotion, Damasio is clear that the feeling of what happens, self-consciousness and emotion go together. Rationality and emotion go together. Of the “feeling of what happens” as self-consciousness, emotion constitutes “...a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly” (Damasio 1999:42). It is from this closely knitted understanding of the relationship between rationality and emotion within the broader framework of life¹⁸ that Damasio (1999:312-3) states:

...(C)onsciousness *feels* like a feeling, and if it feels like a feeling, it may well be a feeling. It certainly does not feel like a clear image in any of the externally directory sensory modalities. It is not a visual pattern or an auditory pattern; it is not an olfactory or gustatory pattern. We do not see consciousness or hear consciousness. Consciousness does not smell or taste. Consciousness feels like some kind of pattern built with the nonverbal signs of body-states. It is for this reason perhaps that the mysterious source of our mental first-person perspective – core consciousness and its simple sense of the self – is revealed to the organism in a form that is both powerful and elusive, unmistakable and vague.

Damasio identifies two problems of consciousness.¹⁹ The first is to explain how neural patterns engender mental “images”, where an image is not just a visual

18 Damasio (1999:135) refers elsewhere to the broader framework of life in which “consciousness” is embedded as follow: “...(C)onsciousness has succeeded in evolution because it supports life most beautifully”.

19 The significance of consciousness is spelt out by Damasio (1999:304) as follow: “...(T)he power of consciousness comes from the effective connection it establishes between the biological machinery of individual life regulation and the biological machinery of thought. That connection is the basis for the creation of an individual concern which

percept but any mental pattern built with the tokens of each sensory modality. The second problem of consciousness is to explain how we come to have “a sense of self in the act of knowing” (Damasio 1999:9). Damasio is concerned almost exclusively with the latter problem of which he believes that there is no consciousness that is not self-consciousness,²⁰ and especially with its relation to the knowledge or feeling of emotions.²¹ Self-consciousness as “core consciousness” is a second-order state of the mind/brain located in some specific regions that is capable of representing the relation between representations of objects and representations of the soma, while the latter is almost invariably reacting emotionally to some object or another. Feeling is for him the realisation of a nexus between an object and an emotional body state. Damasio further distinguishes core consciousness, which is concerned with the here and now, from extended consciousness, which includes autobiographical memory and the perception of time. His method of inquiry is to advance theoretical hypotheses as suggested and supported by clinical and anatomical evidence. The emotions²² are defined as patterns of chemical and neural responses, the function of which is to assist the organism in maintaining life by prompting adaptive behaviours.²³ They are due to the activation of a set of brain

permeates all aspects of thought processing, focuses all problem-solving activities, and inspires the ensuing solutions. Consciousness is valuable because it centers knowledge on the life of an individual organism” (Damasio 1999:304). It is against this background that he formulates in his own special manner the first problem of consciousness: “... (The) first problem of consciousness is the problem of how we get a ‘movie-in-the-brain’ provided we realize that in this rough metaphor the movie has as many sensory tracks as our nervous systems have sensory portals...” (Damasio 1999:9; cf 1999:313). The question that Damasio subsequently pursue is specifically the “sense of the self”.

- 20 For Damasio, all living organisms have “proto-selves”. However, only organisms with a complex nervous system capable of “seeing” their proto-self interacting with the world also have real “consciousness”. These organisms are capable of registering the “feeling of what happens”. Human consciousness is one further step beyond, enabled by the fact that we have a large memory that allows autobiographical memory.
- 21 In the following exposition I have also made use with gratitude of Aldo Moca’s helpful review article of Damasio’s book.
- 22 The six primary or universal emotions that are identified are happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, and disgust.
- 23 Two further distinctions are important, namely secondary and background emotions. Firstly. Secondary and social emotions are also identified, namely embarrassment, jealousy, guilt and pride. Secondly. A class of background emotions such as well-being or malaise, calm or tension, fatigue or energy, anticipation or dread. In the background emotions, the inducer is normally internal and the focus of response is mainly the “internal milieu” of the body.

structures, most of which also monitor and regulate bodily states around optimal physiological values, in processes known as homeostasis or homeodynamics. The emotions are biologically determined, stereotypical, and automatic, although it is acknowledged that culture and individual development may influence the set of inducers and can inhibit or modify overt expressions. There are rather well defined brain regions responsible for emotion. The brain regions that account for emotions are the amygdala (the centre of the triggering event) and the hypothalamus (the centre of the execution). The physiology of emotion is not easily described, because of the simultaneous activation of several structures and feedback reactions among them. This prevents the process from being straightforwardly linear and creates significant problems for an overall conceptualisation of levels or orders of processing. Damasio distinguishes feelings and emotions: a feeling is a mental representation of the state of the organism's body, the perception of body state, whereas an emotion is the reaction to a stimulus and the associated behaviour (eg. a facial expression). So the feeling is the recognition that an event is taking place, whereas the emotion is the visible effect of it. Emotions are bodily things, while feelings are mental things. Emotions are an automatic response. They don't require any thinking. They are the fundamental mechanism for the regulation of life. Emotions precede feelings, and are the foundations for feelings. Evolution has prepared us with a repertory of emotions that we apply to the circumstances. The effect of the emotion is both some bodily behaviour and the creation of a neural map. That neural map leads to the feeling, and the relationship between maps and feelings is that feelings reflect how well the body is doing according to the map. Neural maps of body states are useful to manage the body. Feelings allow us to reason about the cause of the emotion. Feelings allow us to see the big picture, not just to react mechanically to a situation. An emotion is registered by the brain when a stimulus is recognised as useful for survival or for well being or damaging for survival and well-being. This appraisal results in bodily changes, such as quickening heart-beat, tensing muscles, etc. These bodily changes also imply that a map changes in the brain, and this change is the physical implementation of the "feeling".

From Damasio and the neuroscientific contribution I now turn to Stoker and the religious contribution to address the two statements (by De Sousa) that I chose to focus on, namely that emotions are

- "Distinct from moods, but modified by them" and
- Emotions "are reputed to be antagonists of rationality".

5. STOKER, AFFECTIVITY AND COGNITIVITY

The Dutch philosopher of religion, Wessel Stoker²⁴ argues in his *Is Faith Rational?* (2006) that to address the accusation of the irrationality of emotion, we have to refute those viewpoints on emotion that take emotions only to be an inner feeling or sensation that stands in a physiological-causal relationship. In these (unacceptable) viewpoints, hunger and anger are understood *sui generis*. Emotions are not tied with any idea (that is, cognitive content) or judgment (that is, any specific cognitive activity).

In the light of the afore going exposition of the neuroscientific contributions of LeDoux and Damasio, it is possible to develop and revise Stoker's (cf. 2006:166ff) philosophical-religious viewpoint and critique in more detail:

- Our emotions are rooted in our biological nature. They have evolved over centuries from the basic instincts relating to mating, protection of territory, food, survival etc. and thus have an (evolutionary) cognitive core.
- Emotions are communicated nonconsciously and consciously by means of various different bodily systems and subsystems, consisting of neural networks and the blood network / stream.
- Three components are distinguished in those theories on the origin of emotion that take their vantage point from their biological rootedness, namely the physiological and / or psychological state-of-mind component of the person experiencing the emotion, the object of the emotion and the relevant reasons for the emotion (Stoker). Emotions thus have mental/cognitive and physical components.
- There is however more to affectivity than emotions. Affectivity refers to every aspect relating to our feelings, emotions and moods. Following Strasser, Stoker (2006:178ff) argues in his exposition of religious affectivity for a layered perspective of emotions. According to this viewpoint, *mood* represents the deepest, undifferentiated layer of affectivity.²⁵
- *Mood* exposes / lays bare our existence, that is, “our thrownness in existence” (Stoker 2006:180). As “pure feeling”, it represents our “finding of being in the

24 Prof Stoker is an Emeritus professor of the Faculty of Theology of the Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

25 See Stoker's (2006:180ff) broader elaboration on mood regarding its pre-intentional character. Especially illuminating is the image of the fountain – following Strasser – in his exposition of the layerdness of emotion.

world”, or a specific “felt state of mind, pure being-in-the-mood” (Strasser quoted by Stoker 2006:180). It represents a characteristic of being human that expresses our belonging to existence.²⁶ Stoker (2006:179) remarks:

Not only emotion but also mood influences our rational thought and our behaviour. The human being is a whole of *bios*, *pathos* and *logos*. Viewing affectivity as layered is an attempt to do justice to the different aspects of our humanness.

Mood²⁷ (and thus our undifferentiated feelings of belonging) and emotions converge²⁸ in our thoughts and actions in our hearts. Feeling internalises and personalises “my thoughts” / knowledge (see “Appraisals” and “Emotions create neural maps”). This all takes place in the heart! The heart unites and integrates what reason / knowledge

26 Stoker (2006:181) carefully formulates and differentiates: “This feeling of belonging to being is the ontological feeling. Just like a psychological feeling, it is affectively charged but differs from the former in that it indicates a property of our humanness: our connection with our (life) world. It is a basic feeling of the human being”.

27 The collection of undifferentiated emotions Damasio (cf 1999:48) calls “backgroundfeelings”. This is very much the same as what Stoker calls “mood”. Damasio elaborates on these feelings, stating that it is difficult to distinguish between them. He however continues in this regard with a description of the person who appears to be “tense”, “depressed”, or “excited” since we “detect background emotions by subtle details of body posture, speed and contour of movements, minimal changes in the amount and speed of eye movement and in the degree of facial muscles” (Damasio 1999:52). The perceived reactions are “closer to the inner core of life” of the one experiencing it and “define our mental state and color our lives” (Damasio 1999:286). In this context mood can be more closely described as consisting of “modulated and sustained backgroundfeelings as well as modulated and sustained feelings of primary emotions...” (Damasio 1999:287). And it is – finally – as “nonconscious system ... deeply interwoven with the conscious reasoning system” (Damasio 1999:302). We do not need to be conscious of the inducer of an emotion and are often not, and we cannot control emotions willfully. You may find yourself in a sad or happy state, and yet you may be at loss as to why you are in that particular state now”. And: All emotions use the body as theater..., but emotions also effect the mode of operation of numerous brain circuits: the variety of the emotional responses is responsible for profound changes in both the body landscape and the brain landscape. The collection of these changes constitutes the substrate for the neural patterns which eventually become feelings of emotions” (Damasio 1999:51-2).

28 For a more detailed description of the reciprocal interaction between mood and emotions, see Stoker (2006:182). He poetically formulates: “Moods supply the leitmotif of the song, whereas feelings such as emotions are the changing melody” (Stoker 2006:182).

separates and / or fragmentises (cf. Stoker 2006:184). This is what the affective-cognitive dimension of being human or personhood according to Stoker entails and which I would like to support in the light of the afore going expositions of LeDoux and Damasio on emotions. From their respective viewpoints on emotions, they physiologically spell out how Pascal's "reasons of the heart of which reason does not even know" can be evolutionary re-conceptualised from our biologically rootedness. In the words of LeDoux (1996: 33):

...(P)eople normally do all sorts of things for reasons they are not consciously aware of (because the behaviour is produced by brain systems that operate unconsciously) and that one of the main jobs of consciousness is to keep our life tied together into a coherent story, a self-concept.

Thus: "Doing all sort of things for unconscious reasons" on the one hand, and emotions on the other hand as evolutionary ingredient of the conscious "keeping our life affectively-cognitively tied together into a coherent story" thus not only unavoidably shape our life (worlds), but is constitutive of the quality and meaning of our existence that indeed "makes life worth living, or sometimes ending" (De Sousa 2013:1). What are the implications for our perspectives on personhood, and on our understanding of religious experience?

6. NOTING A FEW IMPLICATIONS

There are a number of implications from the afore going neuroscientific insights that we can no longer neither ignore nor avoid in our making sense of personhood and of religious experience. Our emotions are biologically rooted. Our emotions operate unconsciously. Our emotions are consciously registered as feelings. Our emotions form part of our affective dimension (feelings, emotions and mood) and are layered. Emotion constitutes a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate. Our emotions – and I regard this as one of the most profound insights – represent the evolutionary embodiment of the logic of human survival. All of these insights – and more – can be captured in the shorthand description of the affective-cognitive dimension of personhood. Can be hermeneutically characterized in the statement of the affective ladenness of rationality. This is my qualified and explanatory answer to the two statements by De Sousa that I chose to address (see opening paragraph), namely that emotions are "distinct from moods, but modified by them" and that they "are reputed to be antagonists of rationality". The former question finds expression in the formulation of the "layerdness of emotion" and the latter in the affirmation of the affective-cognitive dimension of personhood. Together they find expression in this argumentative context in the words of Pascal, namely as

“the reasons of the heart”! How then are these “reasons of the heart” to be further theologically explicated as religious experience from an evolutionary perspective?

There are in my opinion a number of interpretative directions in which these words can be explored:

- If emotions embodied the logic of survival, what does it entail for personhood and for religious experience? Should it be pursued and explicated – to give but one possible example – along the lines of Frans de Waal’s “Age of empathy” (2009). That is, survival of being human along the lines of compassion, kindness, generosity? In my opinion, this represent a very exciting and deep possibility to unfold and understand the Christian message along the anthropological lines not of the survival of the strongest (which we already know is surely not true), nor survival of those that merely adapt the best to their environment and circumstances (which we do know is very important) but survival of those that “take care” (which we now know present us with a deep biological and profound religious insight).
- Turning to emotions (the heart) and religious experience (and taking the Christian religion as example), numerous revisionary questions come to the fore. If Pascal’s famous words “the heart has its reasons which reason does not know” and “(i)t is the heart which experiences God and not the reason” are re-conceptualised from an evolutionary perspective for religious experience as “the mind-heart” that experiences God, what are – to electively name a few – the implications for:
 - A fundamental anthropological revision of the traditional problematic viewpoints on “original sin”. One such very creative possibility to re-conceptualise original sin from a neurobiological perspective comes with what Damasio (1999:229) calls the “autobiographical memory”. According to him the autobiographical memory “develops and matures under the ‘looming shadow’ of an inherited biology”. Perhaps the best biological description of “original sin”?
 - We will simply have to accept from our biological make-up: That humans – given our biological-evolutionary make-up – are inclined to doing good and bad things!
 - That – to put it in dogma-historical terms – both Augustine and Pelagius had it right. There are life situations in which our ability to choose are greatly (completely?) impaired by our biological make-up. But at the very same time there are life situations in which we are very capable of making

free – and responsible – decisions. It is thus now our responsibility to discern between these two.

These are but a few of the exciting interpretative directions and avenues that are opening up from these evolutionary insight from the affective-cognitive dimension of personhood and the affective ladenness of all experience, and thus also of religious experience. Emotions as the “embodiment of the logic of survival” especially deepen and enrich the existential significance of religious experience. Emotions as the (unconscious and conscious) support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly. Weaving these insights together leaves us with no other conclusion that emotions do not only shape our (life)worlds. It represents an important dimension of being human that finds expression in characterizing personhood as affective-cognitive in the act of making sense of being human and of religious experience as “loving God with our hearts” (Pascal).

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The law and purity in Matthew; Jesus touching a bleeding woman and a dead girl (Mt 9:18-26)

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the double story in Matthew of Jesus touching a woman with blood flow and a dead girl, with specific reference to purity regulations of the Hebrew Bible. According to Matthew it seems that Jesus did not perform any purity rituals after touching the impure woman and girl. Such negligence would have caused serious repercussions amongst the spectators. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus explicitly states that He did not come to abolish the Law, but in this double story Jesus apparently abrogates purity regulations. It is suggested that Matthew purposefully describes these events to demonstrate how these Laws found their fulfilment in Jesus. Jesus is depicted as Emmanuel and Saviour. Instead of Him being polluted by touching these persons, Jesus cleanses the impure woman and raises the dead girl to life. As Holy One purity flowed from Him to the defiled persons, so that they could be cleansed without Him being polluted. These acts of Jesus form part of the coming of the Kingdom of heaven. By accepting Jesus as their saviour, the Matthean community shares the benefits of his purifying power. Their purity is no longer dependent on external purity regulations, but on the cleansing power of Jesus, the Holy One.



1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of the law and purity in the first Gospel is complex. It seems that Matthew's Jesus is not concerned about becoming impure or pure again after contracting impurity (Deines, 2008:65). Matthew does not mention any purification rites in connection with Jesus and the disciples, not even before entering the temple. He only describes actions of Jesus that apparently contravene the purity regulations of the Hebrew Bible. While Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount emphatically states that He did not come to abolish the Law (Mt. 5:17-19) (see Viljoen, 2011), that He requires greater righteousness (Mt. 5:20) (see Viljoen, 2013a) and explains the true intention of the Law in six antitheses (Mt. 5:21-47) (see Viljoen, 2013b), one would expect Matthew to show concern for purity regulations as well. However, nothing in this regard is mentioned. It seems as if Matthew and his community developed a different understanding of purity requirements. In the Beatitudes Jesus states that those who are pure in heart are blessed and will see God (Mt. 5:8) (see Viljoen, 2012). Some other passages in Matthew also imply a development in purity interpretation, namely Jesus touching a leper (Mt. 8:1-4) (see Viljoen, 2014a), Jesus responding to Pharisees who question why He eats with tax collectors and sinners (Mt. 9:9-13) (see Viljoen, 2014b) and Jesus responding to the Pharisees and teachers of the law who accuse Jesus' disciples for not washing their hands before they eat (Mt. 15:1-20).

In this article two occasions with purity implications are investigated: Jesus was supposed to avoid or at least purify Himself after contact with a woman with abnormal menstrual discharge (Lev. 25-30), but Matthew's Jesus does not object when such a woman touches Him and no mentioning is made of any purification rites (Mt. 9:20-22); and He had to avoid contact with a dead body (Num. 5:2; 19:11-13) or entering the room of a dead person (Num. 19:14), but Jesus enters the room with the dead girl and touches her (Mt. 9:25). In cases where such contact with a dead or haemorrhage person is accidental, performed as deed of compassion or necessary, the Hebrew Bible prescribes that the defiled person has to undergo specific purification rites (Num. 19). The neglect of such purification rites was regarded as prohibited impurity and reason to be cut off from the community (Num. 19:13, 20). Matthew, however, makes no mention of Jesus undergoing such purification rites. Considering that Matthew's readers, other than those of Mark and Luke, were mostly Jewish Christians, hearing about such seeming negligence from Jesus, would have been noted as cause for concern. Though Jesus emphasises that He did not come to abolish the Law (Mt. 5:17-19), He clearly demonstrates an alternative interpretation of the purity Law.

The intention of this article is to establish the relation between Matthew's Jesus and the purity Laws as demonstrated by these two stories. To do this, the applicable

Jewish purity regulations will first be investigated and then be compared with Jesus' actions when healing the bleeding woman and dead girl. From this comparison, certain conclusions will be drawn.

2. PURITY REGULATIONS REGARDING DEATH AND MENSTRUAL BLEEDING

Purity or the lack thereof plays a fundamental role in Ancient Israel's religion. According to the laws of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers purity or impurity refers to a state of physical and spiritual purity or impurity that permitted or prohibited access to God. Cultic purity implies moral purity. It has its roots in the command: "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:2) (Vriezen & van der Woude, 2005:244).

Similar references to purity are found in later writings of the Hebrew Bible, such as the Psalms and the Prophets. Purity is demanded by the "Holy One of Israel" (Is. 1:4; 5:19, 24). God is the ideal manifestation and source of holiness (Chilton, 2000:877). Only the one, who has clean hands and a pure heart, may ascend the mountain of the Lord and stand in his holy place (Ps 24:3-4) (cf. Pss. 18:21; 24:3-6; 26:4-7; 51:4, 8, 9, 12; 119:9).

Some impurities are avoidable, and are prohibited under all circumstances. Prohibited impurities result from contamination that could have been avoided or as a result of mismanagement of unavoidable impurities or from the violation of moral norms. Others are unavoidable as they come about as the result of natural circumstances, e.g. death, sexual relations, disease, etc. However, for such unavoidable impurities specific methods of purification are prescribed, like washing, sacrifices, disposal or required time lapses (Wright, 1992:736-737). Among all these laws prescribed for different situations, the purity laws related to death and sexual discharge are applicable to the stories of Mt. 9:18-26.

2.1 Purity regulations related to death

Touching a human corpse is regarded as the most serious of permitted impurities. A person becomes impure (*tame*) through contact with a "dead body", which includes significant parts of a body or the soil in which the body has decomposed, or by being present in a building or roofed structure containing a dead body:¹

1 One can become impure by contact with a primary source of impurity or an object that has been in contact with a primary source of impurity (Lev. 15:4-27).

Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone... who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body (Num. 5:2); and

Whoever touches a human corpse will be unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11).

Various restrictions and purification requirements are applicable for such corpse related impurities. Persons and objects that are polluted remain impure for seven days and have to undergo several prescribed purification rituals:

They must purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then they will be clean. But if they do not purify themselves on the third and seventh days, they will not be clean... (Num. 19:12-19).

Related, but less serious than impurity contracted by touching a human a corpse, is that of coming into contact with certain dead animals, including most insects and all lizards (listed in Lev. 11:29-32). Restrictions and purifications for such contaminations are prescribed, but they are fewer than when touching a dead person. Lev. 11:24-25 states:

Whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening (also see Lev. 11:27-28, 39-40).

It is reasonable to assume that the Jews still observed purity regulations related to the touching of corpses in the time of Jesus. The parable of the Good Samaritan implies this as the priest and the Levite in the parable avoid contact beaten traveller (Lk. 10:25-37). Even in later rabbinic traditions (*Rashi* on *b. Pesah*, 14b, 17a; *m. Kelim*, 1:1-4; *Tohar*, 1:5) touching a corpse is called “the father of fathers of uncleanness” (Hayes, 2007:747). Although scholars generally suppose that these rabbinic writings date from a late stage, namely. 200 to 600 C.E. (Neusner, 1999:652), one has to keep in mind that the date of a document and the date of ideas taken up in it, stand some distance from one another. Ideas within the rabbinic literature most probably reflect ideas of some earlier stage in history.

To read of Jesus entering the room of a dead girl and taking her hand without hesitating, the first readers, who were mostly Jews, would expect Jesus to perform

2 The phrase “father of uncleanness” forms part of rabbinic terminology, which refers to impurity that can generate offspring of lesser impurities (Wright, 1992:730).

the required purity rites. Yet, nothing in this regard is mentioned (Mt. 9:25)³. This would have raised questions and concern.

2.2 Purity regulations related to sexual discharge

The five “fathers of sexual impurities” are listed as seminal emission (Lev. 15:16-18, 32), menstruation (Lev. 15:19-24; 18:19; 20:18), vaginal discharge after birth (Lev. 12), abnormal genital discharge of a male (Lev. 15:2-15; 22:4-6) and abnormal menstrual discharge (Lev. 15:25-30) (Hayes, 2007:747; Wright & Jones, 1992:204-207; Wright, 1992:731).

Semen-polluted persons cannot pollute other persons and things of the community, but are restricted from the holy sphere (Lev. 22:4-7). Impurity of menstruation is more serious as it can pollute others for seven days from the beginning of the blood flow. Persons or objects touching a woman with such bleeding become impure and persons touching something which she sat or laid on also become polluted: (Lev. 15:19-24). The impurity of vaginal discharge after birth is even more severe than menstruation. By giving birth to a child the regarded time of impurity is seven days after the birth of a boy and fourteen days after the birth of a girl (Lev. 12) and such a woman should be treated as a menstruant during this period (Lev. 12:2-5). The effect of pollution of a man with abnormal sexual discharge (*zab*) is similar to that of a menstruant. Once such a man is cured he can undergo purity rituals after seven days (Lev. 16:2-15). The female counterpart of a *zab* is that of a woman with abnormal menstrual discharge (*zaba*). Such a woman would pollute another person just as a man with abnormal genital discharge:

When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. Anyone who touches them will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening (Lev. 15:25-30).

3 Mk. 5:41 and Luk. 8:54 also don't mention Jesus performing purification rites. However these evangelists don't put the same emphasis on Jesus' claim to observe the Law in its finest detail (Mt. 5:17-20).

For Jesus not to be concerned when being touched by the woman with blood flow (Mark 5:25; Mt. 9:20; Luk. 8:34)⁴ would have been unusual for the readers of the first Gospel.

2.3 Neglect of purification rites

The delaying to purification after becoming impure is prohibited. The Hebrew Bible prescribes various purification rites such as bathing, laundering, sacrifices and in some cases even punishment to rectify such impurities. If the deed of becoming impure was avoidable and intentional it can result in the execution of the culprit (in cases of murder), *karet* (cutting off), or purification on the Day of Atonement (Wright, 1992:737-738).

The delay of purification after being polluted for touching human corpses, animal carcasses, and impure objects is considered as sinful and requires additional sacrifice and ablution (Chilton, 2000:874; Hayes, 2007:749):

If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty ... if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt; or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt; ... (Lev. 5:2-3).

Persons who advertently do not purify themselves will suffer being *karet* (cut off), or expelled:

...Everyone who does any of these detestable things, such persons must be cut off from their people... (Lev. 18:24-30) (see also Num. 19:13, 20).

In Jesus' cultural context, it would have been unacceptable for Him not to undergo purification rites after his contact with the bleeding woman or the dead girl.

Considering the above-mentioned regulations regarding purity, it seems as if Jesus did not observe these purity laws in a similar way as the Jews of his days. The question therefore arises of how this described behaviour of Jesus correlates with his explicit statement that his mission was not to abolish the Law or Prophets, but to fulfil them (Mt. 5:17-19). With this story Matthew apparently intends to advise his

4 Once again Mark 5:25 and Luk. 8:34 also don't mention Jesus performing purification rites, but Matthew writes to a predominantly Jewish audience and shows a specific interest in the maintenance of the details of the Law.

readers of a specific interpretation of purity laws in terms of their relation to Jesus. With the coming of Jesus these laws got new meaning. This investigation can shed further light on what is implied by the statement by the Matthean Jesus that He came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets.

3. JESUS' APPARENT NEGLECT OF PURITY REGULATIONS

When observing the healings described in Mt. 9-10, it is important to recognize the textual context of the Law in which these stories are set.

3.1 The teacher of the law enacts the law

Once Matthew has ended the Sermon on the Mount, he continues to tell how Jesus came down from the mountain as Moses once did from Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:14; 32:1; 34:29). Matthew thus draws a parallel between Jesus and Moses, and the Mount of Jesus' sermon and Mount Sinai (Carter, 2000:198; Davies & Allison, 2004a:9; Luz, 2001:5). The impressive and authoritative teacher of the Law of the discourse is presented in the subsequent narrative as going into action by demonstrating the meaning and correct practice of the Law. He confirms his authority by performing ten miracles. Grundmann fittingly describes the Sermon on the Mount as "das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch das Wort" (the work of Christ Jesus through the word) (Grundmann, 1971:111) and the miracles that follow as "das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch die Tat" (the work of Christ Jesus through the deed) (Grundmann, 1971:245).

The Sermon on the Mount and healing discourse are compositionally framed by two summaries of the miracles Jesus had performed (Morris, 1992:186; Senior, 1998:94; Talbert, 2010:109):

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people... and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them (Mt. 4:23-25).

Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7).

Healing narrative (Mt. 8-9).⁵

5 It is significant that the series of healing miracles includes one nature miracle, namely the stilling of the storm (Mt. 8:23-27). Matthew moves this nature miracle from the context as in Mark, and places it within a series of healing miracles (Mt. 8-9). After presenting Jesus as the Messiah of the Word in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people ... and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them (Matt 9:35).

In both these summaries reference is made to the Kingdom of heaven. With his inaugural proclamation “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 4:17), Jesus states that the future Kingdom of heaven is already present (Duling, 1992:57). The coming of the Kingdom is connected to the person of Jesus. The Kingdom does not only signify the territory where God rules, but also his activity as ruler as envisioned in Deutero-Isaiah (Davies & Allison, 2004a:389). The Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Bar. 73:1-2)⁶ describes this anticipation:

And it shall come to pass, when He has brought low everything that is in the world and has sat down in peace for the age on the throne of His kingdom. That joy shall then be revealed and rest shall appear. And then healing shall descend in dew, and disease shall withdraw, and anxiety and anguish and lamentation pass from amongst men, and gladness proceeds through the whole earth.

continues to describe Jesus as the Messiah of the deed in the miracle narrative. The evangelist brings out a new motive by the context in which he places the miracle of the stilling of the storm. Before this miracle he places Jesus’ teaching on the cost of following Jesus (Mt. 8:18-22) and afterwards Jesus’ calling of Matthew to follow Him (Mt. 9:9-12) and the question why Jesus’ disciples do not fast (Mt. 9: 14-17). Matthew interprets the journey of the disciples with Jesus in the storm and the stilling of the storm with reference to discipleship. The scope of the miracle is widened to become a description of discipleship and the church. When following Jesus, one can expect tribulation and rescue, and storm and security (Bornkamm, 1963:52-57). With the story of the stilling of the storm Matthew describes the challenges the church is confronted with. At the same time he uses the story to explain how Jesus subdues demonic powers and brings the βασιλεία (Kingdom) of God. By placing this miracle amongst the healing miracles, the healing miracles similarly become descriptions of the coming of God’s Kingdom in a broken world.

6 Though 2 Baruch is attributed to the Biblical Baruch, it was probably written after the destruction of the Jerusalem in 70 AD (Klijn, 1983:194), in the late first century or early in the second century. This document therefore reflects sentiments contemporary to Matthew. The document was most likely composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, but this original-language text did not survive. The only complete text of 2 Baruch is preserved in one Syriac manuscript (7a1).

For Jesus the coming of the Kingdom did not comprise of one moment, but it realizes through a series of events over a period of time. When Jesus announces that the Kingdom of heaven has come and is coming, He indicates that the process of the realisation of God's rule has started, but the completion lies in the future, when the last things will come. The coming of the Kingdom is being established by Jesus. His teaching (Sermon on the Mount) and activity (healing miracles) form part of the realization of the blessings associated with the coming of the Kingdom. Purity regulations remind God's people of the devastating effect of sin and evil which destroys their relation with God, but with his miracles Jesus subdues these evil powers of sin and restores the relation between God and his people. With his purifying power He removes evil and establishes the Kingdom of heaven (Van der Walt, 2007:196).

3.2 Double story of Jesus healing a woman with blood flow and a dead girl (Mt. 9:18-26)

Mt. 9:18-34 presents the third triad of Matthew's miracle stories.⁷ These three short miracle stories include four miracles in which Jesus heals five people:

- The double story of the woman with blood flow and the ruler's⁸ daughter (Mt. 9:18-26);
- The story of two blind men (Mt. 9:27-31); and
- The story of a demoniac (Mt. 9:32-34).

These miracle stories demonstrate coming of God's Kingdom in anticipation of the wholeness expected in future.

The double story with which this triad of miracle stories begins, describes examples of how Jesus dealt with purity matters.

3.2.1 *Matthew's redaction of the story*

Matthew (Mt. 9:18-26) tells a much shorter version than Mk. (5:21-43) of the double story of Jesus healing the woman subject to bleeding for twelve years and of Him

⁷ Matthew tells a series of nine healing miracles stories (Mt. 8-9) and a nature miracle of Jesus stilling the storm (Mt. 8:23-27) in three triads. The nine healings are that of the leper, the centurion's servant, Peter's mother in law, the Gaderene demoniacs, the paralyzed man, the ruler's daughter, the woman with blood flow, the blind men and the dumb man.

⁸ In Matthew the ruler is unnamed, while both Mark and Luke call him Jairus.

healing the dead girl of twelve⁹ years. Mark’s priority is assumed. The redaction by Matthew should be considered in a comparison of these two versions.

Mark 5:21-43	Mt. 9:18-26
<p>²¹Καὶ διαπεράσαντος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ πάλιν εἰς τὸ πέραν συνήχθη ὄχλος πολὺς ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ ἦν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν.</p> <p>²¹When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.</p>	<p>¹⁸Ταῦτα αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος αὐτοῖς</p> <p>¹⁸While he was saying this,</p>
<p>²²καὶ ἔρχεται εἷς τῶν ἀρχισυναγῶγων, ὄνόματι Ἰάειρος, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν πίπτει πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ,²³καὶ παρακαλεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ λέγων ὅτι Τὸ θυγάτριόν μου ἐσχάτως ἔχει, ἵνα ἐλθὼν ἐπιθῆς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῆς, ἵνα σωθῆ καὶ ζήσῃ.</p> <p>²⁴καὶ ἀπῆλθεν μετ’ αὐτοῦ.</p> <p>καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, καὶ συνέθλιβον αὐτόν.</p> <p>²²Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴So Jesus went with him.</p> <p>A large crowd followed and pressed around him.</p>	<p>ἰδοὺ ἄρχων εἷς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων ὅτι Ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν· ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν ἐπίθεε τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπ’ αὐτήν, καὶ ζήσεται.¹⁹ καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.</p> <p>a leader came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.</p>

9 The woman suffered bleeding over a period of twelve years, the same span of time as the age of the ruler’s daughter. Menses also typically begins at the age of twelve.

²⁵Καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ρύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη, ²⁶καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα, καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χειρὸν ἐλθοῦσα, ²⁷ἀκούσασα τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὀπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ²⁸ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι Ἐὰν ἄψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι. ²⁹καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔγνω τῷ σώματι ὅτι ἴται ἀπὸ τῆς μᾶστιγος.

³⁰καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπιγνοὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ἔλεγεν Τίς μου ἤψατο τῶν ἱματίων;

³¹καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ Βλέπεις τὸν ὄχλον συνθλίβοντά σε, καὶ λέγεις Τίς μου ἤψατο; ³²καὶ περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο ποιήσασαν. ³³ἡ δὲ γυνὴ φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα ὃ γέγονεν αὐτῇ, ἤλθεν καὶ προσέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ³⁴ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην, καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιῆς ἀπὸ τῆς μᾶστιγός σου

²⁰Καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ αἰμορροοῦσα δώδεκα ἔτη προσελθοῦσα ὀπισθεν ἤψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ²¹ἔλεγεν γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῇ Ἐὰν μόνον ἄψωμαι τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι.

²²ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφεὶς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν Θάρσει, θυγάτηρ· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε. καὶ ἐσώθη ἡ γυνὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης.

²⁰Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

²²Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

³⁵Ἐτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἔρχονται ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου λέγοντες ὅτι Ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἀπέθανεν· τί ἔτι σκύλλεις τὸν διδάσκαλον;

³⁶ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς παρακούσας τὸν λόγον λαλούμενον λέγει τῷ ἀρχισυναγώγῳ Μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε.

³⁷καὶ οὐκ ἀφήκεν οὐδένα μετ' αὐτοῦ συνακολουθῆσαι εἰ μὴ τὸν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰακώβου. ³⁸καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου, καὶ θεωρεῖ θόρυβον, καὶ κλαίοντας καὶ ἀλαλάζοντας πολλά, ³⁹καὶ εἰσελθὼν λέγει αὐτοῖς Τί θορυβεῖσθε καὶ κλαίετε; τὸ παιδίον οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. ⁴⁰καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ.

αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκβαλὼν πάντας παραλαμβάνει τὸν πατέρα τοῦ παιδίου καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰσπορεύεται ὅπου ἦν τὸ παιδίον. ⁴¹καὶ κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου λέγει αὐτῇ Ταλιθὰ κούμ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον Τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε. ⁴²καὶ εὐθὺς ἀνέστη τὸ κοράσιον καὶ περιεπάτει· ἦν γὰρ ἐτῶν δώδεκα. καὶ ἐξέστησαν εὐθὺς ἐκστάσει μεγάλη. ⁴³καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἵνα μηδεὶς γνοῖ τοῦτο, καὶ εἶπεν δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν.

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

²³καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἄρχοντος καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς αὐλητὰς καὶ τὸν ὄχλον θορυβούμενον ²⁴ἔλεγεν Ἀναχωρεῖτε, οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν τὸ κοράσιον ἀλλὰ καθεύδει· καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ. ²⁵ὅτε δὲ ἐξεβλήθη ὁ ὄχλος, εἰσελθὼν ἐκράτησεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἠγέρθη τὸ κοράσιον. ²⁶καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἡ φήμη αὕτη εἰς ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην.

²³When Jesus entered the synagogue leader’s house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, ²⁴he said, “Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. ²⁵After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶News of this spread through all that region.

³⁷He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

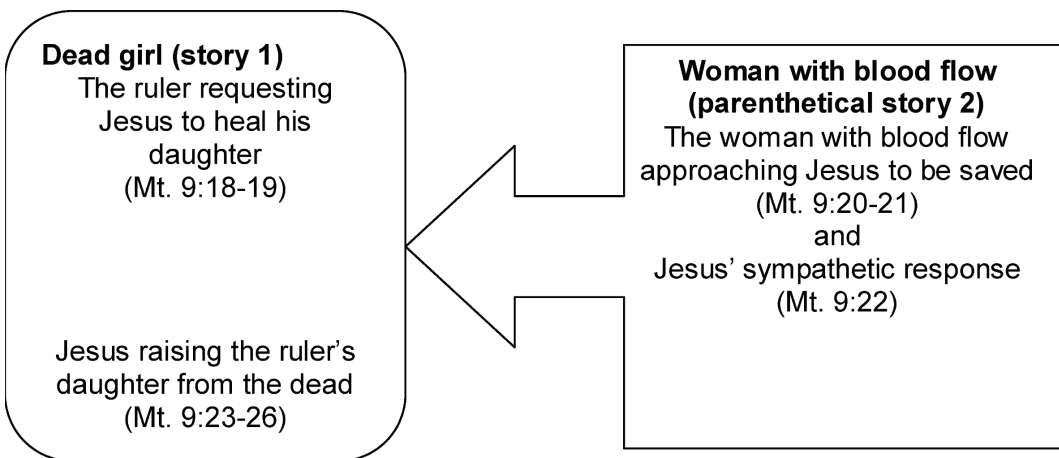
The most obvious difference is the much shortened version by Matthew, which is a general tendency with Matthew in his miracle stories. Matthew usually shortens Mark’s narratives, especially the miracle stories, while he expands and inserts discourse material. Earlier scholars of the Synoptics were of the opinion that Matthew was careless in his abbreviations and weakened the narratives (Schniewind, 1930:139; Wellhausen, 1911:50). Yet Bornkamm (1963:52-57) demonstrates with his article on the stilling of the storm in Matthew that the evangelist exercises great care in his version of this miracle story. Matthew not only retells the story, but exegetes it. He applies the story of the stilling of the storm to the trials and tribulations of discipleship and the church. Jesus rescues his disciples and people who believe in Him. He provides them security. Greeven (1955:69) indicates how Matthew abbreviates the story of the healing of the paralytic to reach the essentials of the story more quickly. Scholars became convinced that Matthew abbreviates the miracle stories for the sake of interpretation (Held, 1963:165-192). In comparison with Mark’s version, Matthew cuts out a third of the first part of the story of the girl, two thirds of the

woman with the blood flow and two thirds of the conclusion. Matthew makes no reference to the crossing of the lake (Mark 5:21), and it seems as if Jesus is still at table in the house (cf. Mt. 9:10). He neither mentions the crowds who followed and pressed against Jesus (Mk. 5:24). He omits details on how the haemorrhage woman suffered under the treatment of the doctors (Mk. 5:26) or about Jesus who turned around asking who touched Him (Mk. 5:30). Furthermore he twice omits reference to the disciples (Mark 5:31 and 37). He does not describe how the healed woman fell at the feet of Jesus trembling with fear (Mk. 5:33). Furthermore he does not mention the child's father and mother whom Jesus took with Him (Mk. 5:40). Similar to many other cases "Matthew seems impatient of Mark's asides and details and gives only the bare essentials of the story" (Hagner, 1993:246). It seems that Matthew abbreviates the story so that he can focus on the message he wants to convey with it. In Mt. 5:18-26 faith in Jesus and his healing power occupies the centre stage of the story.

A significant difference is that Mark 5:23 mentions that the daughter was dying and only after the healing of the haemorrhage women messengers announced her death (Mk. 5:35), but according to Mt. 9:25 she has died before her father first approached Jesus. In Matthew the ruler believes that Jesus can raise his daughter from death, while in Mark he expects that Jesus could save her from dying. While Mark refers to the father as εἷς τῶν ἀρχισυναγώγων (one of the rulers of the synagogue) (Mk. 5:22), Matthew refers to him as ἄρχων (a ruler) (Mt. 9:18). As is typical of Matthew, he once again omits any positive reference to the synagogue. The first Gospel throughout contrasts the hostile attitude of the synagogue and its leaders with the positive attitude of the church and its believing community. Matthew emphasises the ruler's trust in Jesus. Matthew replaces Mark's πίπτει πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ (he fell before his [Jesus'] feet) (Mk. 5:22) with προσεκύνει (he knelt before Him) (Mt. 9:18). This verb describes the ruler prostrating before Jesus as his superior in a gesture of worship. Matthew uses προσεκύνειν (to worship) to refer to the worship of God (Mt. 4:10) and to describe how people put their trust in Jesus and worship Him (Mt. 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20 and 28:9, 17). Matthew clearly emphasises the ruler's faith in Jesus and his power to conquer death. Jesus also mentions the faith of the bleeding woman when telling her ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε (your faith has healed you) (Mt. 9:22). As with the story of the stilling of the storm (Mt. 8:23-27), the double story of Jesus healing these two women describes how Jesus rescues people from trouble and tribulation. Matthew also replaces the ὄχλος πολὺς (large crowd) who followed Jesus (Mk. 5:24) with οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (his disciples) (Mt. 9:19). Matthew focuses on the faith community who witness and experience the restoring power of Jesus.

As part of his interpretation Matthew also adds some detail in his retelling of miracle stories (Held, 1963:168). A significant addition by Matthew in this double story is that he mentions that Jesus wore a garment with tassels. The woman wanted to touch the fringe of his garment (τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ). The fringe probably does not simply refer to the edge of Jesus’ garment, but to the tassels (tzitzit) required by Num. 15:38-41 and Deut. 22:12. These tassels had to remind Jews to remain obedient to the Law (Carter, 2000:225; Hagner, 1993:249; Luz, 2001:42; Osborne, 2010:349). Matthew takes interest in Jesus’ faithfulness to the Torah, even in his clothing. Furthermore Matthew replaces οὔσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος (who had been subject to bleeding) (Mk. 5:25) with the rare compound verb and hapax legomenon in the New Testament, αἰμορροοῦσα (who suffered of haemorrhage) (Mt. 9:20). This verb is also used in the LXX of Lev. 15:33, a passage in which sexual impurities and contamination are explained. Clearly Matthew wants to emphasise that Jesus was pious to the Torah, but nevertheless was not concerned by the touching of this woman. Later He would also touch the dead girl. Wainwright (1991:199) remarks: “... both (the woman and the girl) can be considered dead (one socially and religiously, the other physically), and both therefore have the capacity to contaminate life”. Matthew emphasises, that even though these two females had the capacity to contaminate Jesus, Jesus in contrast had the power to heal them.

Matthew, as the other Synoptics, places the story of the bleeding woman as intercalation within the framework of the story of the raising of the young girl. In Matthew’s version the sharp intercalation is marked with καὶ ἰδοὺ (and then) (Mt. 9:20).



The technique of intercalation builds up suspense and highlights similarities between the stories (Carter, 2000:224; Osborne, 2010:347). Both stories vividly tell

about faith. The faith of the ruler is tested by the intervening of the bleeding woman and Jesus commends the faith of the woman. Both stories tell about females in need, one twelve years of age and the other about a woman who suffered for twelve years. The one story is about a daughter, and the other about a woman whom Jesus calls daughter. Both tell about suffering, of the father and of the bleeding woman. In both stories touching is involved, the woman touching the fringe of Jesus' garment and Jesus taking the daughter by the hand. In both cases healing takes place. Both these healings are miracles. Both stories vividly describe hope in Jesus for people otherwise in hopeless situations. In both stories the people are powerless, but experience the power of Jesus. The one story tells about a direct approach and request, and the other about an indirect touching of Jesus. In both stories the focus is on Jesus. Faith is directed towards Him, He offers healing power and He brings wholeness and restoration.

Taking the cultural and textual context into consideration, it becomes clear that Matthew does not tell these stories for their own sake, but to tell something about the coming of the Kingdom, about faith and expectation, about the power and character of Jesus, about healing and access to Jesus. Purity regulations find new meaning through the teachings and healings of Jesus. With his healing power and care Jesus enacts the true intention of the Law.

3.2.2 *Jesus' reaction when touched by a woman with blood flow (Mt. 9:20-22)*

While Jesus was on his way to heal the daughter of the ruler who had just died, a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of his cloak (Mt. 5:20). The interruption of this new story is marked by *καὶ ἰδοὺ* (and look). According to purity regulations her bleeding made her perpetually unclean, which caused constant social and religious separation (Lev. 15:25-30) (Anderson, 1983:11; Morris, 1992:229; Wainwright, 1994:648). "She was a virtual leper who would have had to leave family and village, lest contact with her renders everyone unclean" (Osborne, 2010:348). Even a touch from her would make someone unclean (Lev. 15:19¹⁰). This includes a woman who's blood flow¹¹ continues for a longer period (Lev 15:25¹²). Also according to the *Tannaim (Mishnah Zabim*,

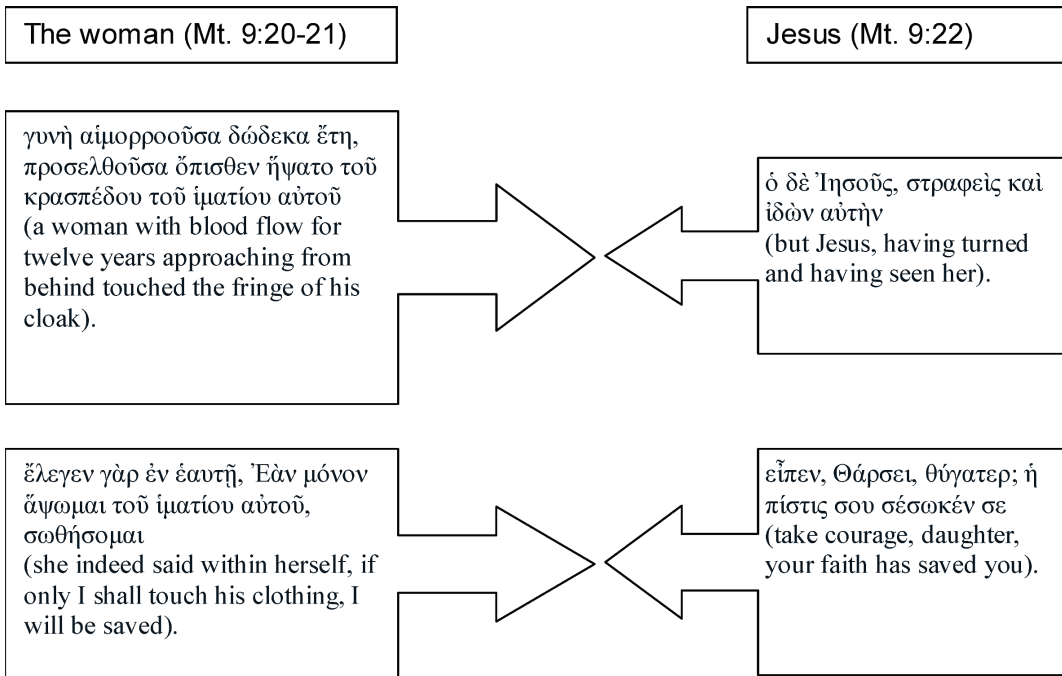
10 "When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening" (Lev. 15:19).

11 Matthew uses the same word for blood flow as has been used in the LXX to Lev. 15:33, i.e.: αἱμορροοῦση.

12 "When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period" (Lev 15:25).

5.1, 6)¹³, the impurity of a woman with blood flow can be transmitted through touching (Davies & Allison, 2004b:128; Talbert, 2010:121). The woman in the story therefore took a risk to touch Jesus, which is probably the reason why she approached Him from behind (Luz, 2001:42; Morris, 1992:229; Witherington, 2006:203). This touching would leave Jesus ritually impure. Yet, when realising He was being touched, Jesus responds positively in a very sympathetic way. He turns to the woman and says to her: “Take heart, daughter ... your faith has healed you” (Mt. 9:22).

It is noteworthy to recognize the interaction between Jesus and the woman as illustrated in the following diagram.



Matthew focuses on the interaction between the woman and Jesus alone. The vivid scene in Mk 5:25-26 of the seriousness of her sickness and how the woman tries to conceal herself in the crowd is omitted. Though presupposed, the crowd and

13 The *Tannaim* were Rabinnic sages who acted approximately from 10 to 220 CE. Their views were recorded in the *Mishnah*. The period of the *Tannaim* is also referred to as the *Mishnaic* period. Though the *Mishnah* was produced about 200 C.E. the ideas recorded in it, stem from an earlier period. The *Mishnah* therefore provides useful background information about the time of Jesus’ ministry and the early church (Neusner, 1994:97).

the disciples disappeared from the picture. No detail is given about the place, time or circumstances. In parallel style Matthew describes the interaction between the woman and Jesus. The initiative of the woman to approach Jesus from behind and to touch the fringe of his cloak,¹⁴ is paralleled by Jesus' turning around and seeing her. Her touching draws Jesus' attention. The woman is almost caught in her act, but Jesus turns to her sympathetically. Furthermore, the prayer like reasoning of the woman, "I will be saved" (σωθήσομαι)¹⁵, is paralleled by Jesus' positive response "your faith has saved you" (ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν). Matthew frequently refers to faith in the context of miracles (Mt. 8:13; 9:28, 15:28, 17:20 and 21:21). Faith implies trust in the power of Jesus to perform miracles¹⁶. The woman's expectation that Jesus could save her is comparable with a believer's prayer to God. She approaches Jesus in much the same way as one would approach God. As the Father knows the request of his children before they ask (Mt. 6:8), Jesus knows the need of this woman (Davies & Allison, 2004b:129).

According to Jewish custom, one would expect Jesus to be upset for being defiled by the woman's action. Surprisingly Jesus responds with kindness as He knows both her faith and her plight. He encourages her to "take courage" and addresses her tenderly as "daughter". In comparison with Mark, Matthew omits that Jesus sensed that the power streamed out from Him, that He did not know who had touched Him and that the woman reacted fearfully when coming forward to confess that she did it (cf. Mk. 5:19-33).

The verbs that describe the woman's healing, both derivatives of save (σωζειν), are significant. This alludes to the task of Jesus as stated in Mt. 1:21: "He will save his people from their sins".¹⁷ This is a statement with programmatic significance. It declares the messianic identity of Jesus, as well as what could be expected from Him to do (Novakovic, 2003:63-69). Jesus adds that her faith has saved her. Her bleeding and its consequent impurity disvalued her social status and she was excluded from society. To understand the impact of this desired healing, one has to consider what healing implied in the ancient Mediterranean world. Healing involved (at that time

14 The notion that healing could take place by touching a healer's clothing was common (cf. Acts 19:12) in those times (Davies & Allison, 2004b:129).

15 It might be argued that the woman only expected Jesus to "save" her from her illness, but Matthew places her request firmly in context of faith.

16 Matthew places the double story alongside the healing of two blind men (Mt. 9:27-31) where the question about faith also plays a central role. All of these stories illustrate genuine faith in miracles.

17 Though the woman's faith could also refer to faith in God or in the Pharisaic robes, within this context it seems that she had faith in Jesus.

and even today) more than physical healing from a disease. Healing implied the restoration of the total well-being of a person (Malina & Rohrbauch, 2003:368; Pilch, 1988:60-66). This includes the restoration of meaning of life and honour. A healed person can fully participate in societal activities again. Healing, therefore, is culturally constructed. In this regard, one has to consider the difference between disease and illness. A disease causes sickness and is a pathological issue. Sickness exists irrespective of whether a culture recognizes it or not. Sickness is caused by viruses and germs. Illness, on the other hand, refers to misfortunes in well-being beyond a pathological state. An ill person is a socially disvalued person. Restoring the meaning of life for an ill person implies healing. The bleeding woman had the expectation and belief that Jesus could heal her from this deprived state. Jesus heals more than her physical ailment. Her whole person is healed and she can again fully participate in society.

Matthew's version intensifies the compassionate interaction between Jesus and the woman, with no hint of Jesus being upset for being touched by the unclean woman. Compassionate interaction forms a key component of the intention of the Law (Mt. 22:34-40). Mt. 9:20-22 describes the positive story in contrast to the suffering of the woman. She suffered not only because from the illness itself, but also from the purity restrictions. She is wholly presented in a positive light, no mention is made of her impurity, nothing is said about the fact that her touch would indignify Jesus, and onlookers do not mention anything about Jesus coming into contact with this unclean woman. Surely something different is at stake: "Instead of uncleanness passing from the woman to Jesus, healing power flows from Jesus to the woman" (Davies & Allison, 2004b:130). In the ancient Mediterranean world, healers are considered to be holy men. Holy men have direct contact with the realm of God. The activity of holy men is supposed to benefit people of the society (Malina & Rohrbauch, 2003:369). Jesus is identified as the Holy One, as the Holy Spirit came upon Him and is called the Son of God (Mt. 3:13-17). Jesus acts as Saviour and messianic Healer. He is Emmanuel, the Holy One. His healing forms part of the coming of the Kingdom of heaven. The purity regulations found their fulfilment in this act of Jesus who can bring an end to the ungodly power of impurity. He heals the woman by restoring her to her proper place in the community. Jesus is depicted as the miracle-working Saviour (Held, 1963:260). In Mt. 8:17 Matthew applies Is. 53:4 to Jesus. As servant of the Lord, He does away with the infirmities and sickness of this woman.

From this story it can be derived that the Matthew developed a new understanding of purity laws. As Jesus saves this woman from her distress, He saves his followers from their sins. He transposes purity for his followers from an external ritual to an

internal ethical and moral level. This is probably intended in the sixth beatitude: “*Blessed are the pure in heart*” (Mt. 5:8).

3.2.3 *Jesus taking a dead girl by the hand (Mt. 9:25)*

This inserted story of Jesus’ healing of the woman with blood flow is framed with the story of Jesus’ raising the ruler’s daughter from the dead.

Before this interruption, the father’s request is reported. Unlike Mark, who wrote that the ruler’s daughter was near dying (ἐσχάτως ἔχει) (Mk. 5:23), Matthew wrote that the daughter has just died (ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν) (Mt. 9:19). This has the effect of emphasising the faith of the ruler even in the face of death. He does not only believe that Jesus can heal his sick daughter, but that He can raise her from the dead. Right through the story he firmly and confidently trusts Jesus. This implies that the father’s request that Jesus should lay his hand on her, would place Jesus in a state of impurity. Nevertheless, Jesus does not mention anything in this regard or hesitate to follow the ruler to his house.

After the interruption about the bleeding woman, the story continues with Jesus arriving at the house where the dead daughter was. Though Matthew limits the detail of the story, he does, however, add the references to the flute players and noisy crowd. These activities signify a funeral procession and emphasises the death of the girl (Hagner, 1993:250).

Matthew’s version of the story is therefore, from the start right through to the end, about Jesus responding to the pleading of the father to raise his daughter from the dead.¹⁸ The flow of Matthew’s carefully structured story can be demonstrated by the following diagram:

18 Levine (1996:394-396) notes the contrast between Jesus’ constructive power with the destructive power of Herod who killed children (Mt. 2:16-18) and Herod Antipas who orders a killing because of a daughter (Mt. 14:1-12).

Η θυγατηρ μου αρτι ετελευτησεν (my daughter has just died) (Matt. 9:18b) (A)
 ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν, ἐπίθεσ τὴν χειρὰ σου ἐπ' αὐτήν, καὶ ζήσεται (but come, lay your
 hand on her and she will live) (Matt. 9:18c) (B)
 καὶ ἐγερθεὶς, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ, καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ (and Jesus
 got up and followed him, as well as the disciples) (Matt. 9:19) (C)
 (parenthetical story) (Matt. 9:20-22)
 Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἄρχοντος (and as Jesus
 came at the house of the ruler) (Matt. 9:23a) (C')
 καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς ἀλύτῃς καὶ τὸν ὄχλον θορυβούμενον (and having seen the
 flute-players and the crowd making commotion) (Matt. 9:23b)
 εἰσελθὼν, ἐκράτησεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς (having entered, He took hold of
 her hand) (Matt. 9:25b) (B')
 καὶ ἠγέρθη τὸ κοράσιον (and He raised the girl) (Matt. 9:25c) (A')

In this story the father states that his daughter has just died (Mt. 9:18b) which correlates with Jesus who raises her (Mt. 9:25c). This parallel accentuates the message that Jesus has the power to do much more than any human can. Similarly the father's request that Jesus should come and lay his hand on his daughter (Mt. 9:18c), is paralleled with Jesus entering the room and taking the girl by her hand (Mt. 9:25b). Matthew also refers to the hand of Jesus when healing a leper (Mt. 8:3). The hand of Jesus probably refers to the hand of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. The hand of Jesus can do what the powerful hand of Yahweh had done. The third parallel lies between Jesus and his disciples getting up and following the ruler (Mt. 9:19) and Jesus coming to the house of the ruler (Mt. 9:23a). Within this parallel structure Matthew's addition of the flute players and noisy crowds of the funeral procession is significant. This girl was dead indeed. Jesus does not hesitate to make contact with the dead girl, despite the fact that purity regulations state that this would leave Him impure.

The way Matthew describes Jesus' activity in the room, intensifies the private and close character of this miracle. After sending out the mourners, Jesus enters the room where the daughter is lying. Different from Mark, Matthew does not mention anything about the daughter's parents or his disciples (cf. Mark 5:37, 40). Having entered the room (εἰσελθὼν), Jesus takes the hand of the girl (ἐκράτησεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς) (Mt. 9:25). Different from Mark (Mk. 5:41) or Luke (Lk. 8:54) who records that Jesus also spoke to the girl, Matthew only mentions Him taking her hand. Matthew explicitly mentions that Jesus takes the girl by the hand to raise her up (Luz, 2001:43; Witherington, 2006:203). Jesus' hand once again symbolizes his healing power (cf. Mt. 8:3, 15) (Hagner, 1993:250; Luz, 2001:41; Malina & Rohrbauch, 2004:368). It is also significant how Matthew uses a series of three participles leading up to the two finite verbs to describe Jesus' actions at the house: The participles ἐλθὼν (coming)

+ ἰδὼν (seeing) + εἰσελθὼν (entering) intensify the expectation leading to the climactic finite verbs, ἐκράτησεν (He touched) + ἤγέρθη (He raised).

Apparently entering the room and touching the girl would leave Jesus ritually impure. Nevertheless Matthew makes no reference to Jesus hesitating to enter the room or to touch her. He actually intensifies the action with a series of participles leading up to the climactic finite action words. Matthew also does not make any reference to Jesus performing purification rituals after this deed. With this story, Matthew clearly relates a deeper message. While death is associated with impurity, Jesus does not become impure through this contact. The contrary happens. Life flows from Jesus to the girl to raise her from death. Death and its associated impurity are conquered. He is the healer and Holy One. Jesus has yet again brought the Kingdom of heaven a step closer. With his coming, the purity laws are fulfilled. Jesus enacts the intention of the Law.

4. CONCLUSION

The double story of Jesus healing the woman with blood flow and the daughter of the ruler describes a significant fulfilment of the purity laws of the Hebrew Bible. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) and the healing narrative (Mt. 8-9) are closely connected. While the Sermon on the Mount describes Jesus' teaching of the Law, the healing narrative describes his enactment of it. Thus the law provides the background for this story of Jesus, while the story of Jesus gives new meaning to the law. The purity laws form part of this.

Matthew's redactional intent becomes evident in the way he retells this double story. He does not merely tell it for its own sake, but for the message it contains. His descriptive parts are quite bare. He omits much of the pictorial details of Mark's story to concentrate on the messages he wishes to convey. His additions to Mark's version likewise show his special interests and intentions. The story demonstrates the nature of miracle faith in Jesus as the Servant of the Lord and Holy One who can cure these two women by touching them. Jesus is described as Emmanuel and the one who would save his people from their sins. As Saviour He purifies people, who believe in Him, of that which defiles them. As the Holy One, He touches people and purity flows from Him to them, while He Himself does not become impure. Doing this forms part of the coming of the Kingdom of heaven where eventually no impurity, sickness, illness and death will persist. Jesus thus has come to bring the purity laws to their fulfilment.

Followers of Jesus share the healing and purifying power of Jesus. Within their faith community purity regulations are transformed from an external ritual to an internal moral level. Jesus expects from them to be pure at heart (Mt. 5:8).

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KEY WORDS

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Gospel of Matthew
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TREFWOORDE

Reinheidswette
Heilig / Die Heilige
Evangelie van Matteus
Torah
Genesing
Siek
Rein / onrein

KONTAKBESONDERHEDE

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The role of the Holy Spirit in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches: A missiological study

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ABSTRACT

This article discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches from a missiological perspective. In order to achieve the aim for the topic, the article focused on one of the major factors that led to the rise and popularity of Pentecostalism in Ghana; i.e. the concern of the indigenes about their worldview not being addressed by the Western missionaries which came to serve in Ghana. The article argued that, in the desire for Ghanaians to have their worldview addressed, they resorted to Pentecostalism – a movement first introduced into Ghana by the African Initiated Churches. It is also argued that, though one of the factors that have made Pentecostalism to be accepted by Ghanaians is how it has addressed their worldview; Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches are of the view that the role of the Holy Spirit is the major factor for this increase.



1. INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the European missionaries in the 15th century to the then Gold Coast State of West Africa (i.e. Ghana) brought Christianity to the land, and made an unforgettable imprint on Ghanaian soil (Darkwa 2013). According to census figures from the year 2010, out of Ghana's 18.9 million people, Christians made up 71.2 % (percent) of the population. Pentecostals form the bulk of the Christian population in the country (Ghana Statistical Service 2012:1, 6, 40). Larbi (2002:99) argues that, presently in Ghana, the growing edges of Christianity in its most vital and dynamic forms are found in the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. In spite of the diversity¹ in the Pentecostal movement (i.e. churches), they are at least – from a demographical point of view – the most important religious trend in Ghana (Larbi 2001:xii). For the purpose of this research, Ghanaian Pentecostals are referred to as a group of Christians who emphasize salvation in Christ as the basis for one to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and in which the 'Spirit phenomenon' (including speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general) is perceived as in line with what happened in the early church in the Acts of the Apostles and accepted as a continuous experience in the contemporary church as a sign of the presence of God and experience of His Spirit (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:12). According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:10-11), what defines Pentecostalism is the experience of the Holy Spirit in transformation, radical discipleship and manifestations of the acts of power that demonstrate the presence of the kingdom of God among His people. The Holy Spirit is therefore the power of the transition, mediation, communication and history which takes place first in the life of God Himself, and then consequently in our life and our relationship with Christ Jesus (Flett 2010:239). Since Pentecostalism flows from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, this paper therefore seeks to answer the following questions:

- “What provoked the Holy Spirit Movement (Pentecostalism) to manifest in the church history of Ghana in the face of Ghanaians worldview and culture?”
- “How do Ghanaian Pentecostals understand the role of the Holy Spirit in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches?”

1 In Ghana, we have the Classical Pentecostal Churches and the Neo Pentecostal Churches. The classical Pentecostals are the four main line Pentecostals Churches, namely: Christ Apostolic Church International; The Apostolic Church, Ghana; The Church of Pentecost; and Assemblies of God. The Neo Pentecostals are the Charismatic churches and Independent Pentecostal Churches popularly known as “one man churches”. However, they are all members of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council.

2. WESTERN MISSIONARIES AND THE TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEW OF GHANAIS

Pentecostalism, as we see it today in Ghana, did not come into being in a vacuum – certain factors led to impact and role of Pentecostalism in Ghanaian Church history. Although Western missionaries initially came to plant Christianity in Ghana, Ghanaian Christians were experiencing a missing link. That is, they saw that their spiritual needs were not being met by the then mainline churches planted by the Western missionaries (e.g. missionaries from the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, and the Methodist Church [Busia 1972:239-246]). In Williamson's (1965:152-175) comparative study of the impact of Akan Religion and the Christian Faith, he concluded that the Western missionaries did very well in meeting the needs of Ghanais at the social and economic level, but failed to make any significant and lasting impact on the religious level – mainly because they did not address the traditional worldview of Ghanais, a worldview embedded in the belief in spirits.

In this section we briefly discuss the African traditional worldview in general, and the Ghanaian worldview in particular. The analysis of the African traditional worldview will cast more light on how the understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit in Ghanaian people could take root so rapidly and easily. Western missionaries, especially those from mainline churches, seem to have been less at ease making connections to the Ghanaian traditional religion than missionaries from the Pentecostal Movement.

According to Rusbult (2013), a worldview is a mental model of reality, a framework of ideas and attitudes about the world, ourselves and life. It is a comprehensive system of beliefs of people, communities and nations. People's worldview is affected by factors such as their inherited characteristics, background, experiences, life situations, their values, attitudes, the habits they have developed, and more. Kraft (1996:52) defines worldview as culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments or allegiances underlying people's perceptions of reality and their responses to those perceptions. In his view, worldview is not separate from culture. It is included in culture as the structuring of the deepest level of presuppositions on the basis of which people live their lives.

The Ghanaian traditional worldview, which is also found in many other parts of Africa, about spirits displays the following characteristics: In African traditional religion there is no division and/or differentiation between the animate and inanimate, the spirit and matter, the living and non-living, the dead and living, the physical and metaphysical, the secular and sacred, the body and the spirit, etc. Generally, in the

traditional African's view, they believe that everything (human beings included) is in constant relationship with one another and with the invisible world, and that people are in a state of complete dependence upon those invisible powers and beings (Cilliers 2013:10). The Ashanti or the Akans of Ghana, who are found in the Southern part of the country, believe that these divinities make their abode in trees, rivers, rocks, mountains, and in the sky. Their chiefs keep a three-forked branch of tree, used as an altar, in their compounds. This tree is known as "nyame dua" which means, "God's tree". If they want to offer any sacrifice to "God", that is where it is done (Mbiti 2012:199-200). In fact, this is not only practiced among the Akans of Ghana, but also the Ewes of the Volta Region. One of the researchers remembers that, in his childhood visits to his village in the Volta Region of Ghana, "there was always a pot on a three-forked tree - 'nyame dua' - in our compound, and in the pot there was always water which the entire family would have to use to wash their face. And it is believed that the 'soul' of the family is linked to the three-forked 'nyame dua' and therefore must be preserved for generations to come" (Mbiti 2013:205, 215). Generally, both the Akan and the Ewes believe that their many divinities – "abosom" or "mawu Sowlui" – are "God's servants" and/or "mouthpieces", acting as go-between between him and his creatures. They also believe that these deities or spirits act as guardians of families and individuals.

Inferring from what has been said so far; it could be concluded that, before the arrival of the Western missionaries to the Gold Coast, the indigenes were on the whole practicing African traditional religions. According to Sarpong (2012:95-97), the then indigenes had already believed in a Supreme Being – "Onyakopong" – which means a God who supersedes other gods (or in other words the Almighty God). His argument states that, in spite of their view about "Onyakopong", they also believe in other deities, spirits and ancestral spirits - with the view that they are all intertwined and are in constant relationship with all living beings. These deities demand worship and are said to possess supernatural powers, with which they punish or reward their worshippers. In addition to Sarpong's view, Mbiti (2012:6, 9-15) argues that Africans believe that there is only one Supreme God; however, this view about God is influenced by factors such as geographical location, culture, language, social, and political factors. He further states that the indigenous names of God are always present in the worldviews of African people, and have been passed down through the generations through oral tradition. In his conclusion, he emphasizes that "there is, therefore, no place for atheism or denial of God's existence in traditional African communities" (Mbiti 2012:6, 9-15), for "Africans are ontologically attached to God" (Mbiti 2012:6, 9-15).

In contrast to this, the Western Missionaries encountered Ghanaian traditional worldview and religion from a background of Christianity embedded in the “Enlightenment” (Kalu 2005:228). That is to say, they came with the perception and approach that presented them as superiors and viewed Ghanaian traditional worldview and culture as paganism, which made their missions almost a non-starter. Williamson (1965:159-164) attests to this fact in his comparative study of Christianity and Akan Religion. He argues that the Western Missions-related churches, by and large, are still an alien institution; with the reason being that it failed to root itself in the life and institutions of the Akan people – the Christian church, denominationally implanted from the West, has substantially retained its original forms and expressed itself in Western modes. Kingsley (Warren 1967:15 cites Kingsley) observed that most of the early missionaries regarded the Africans’ minds as jugs, which had only to be emptied of the stuff which was in them and refilled with the particular form of doctrine that the missionaries were teaching. This, therefore, caused the Western missionaries to undermine indigenous Ghanaians, their worldview and their culture; which in turn led to the local people referring/approaching Christianity as the “white man’s religion”. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013:12) points out that one of the major setbacks of the missionary approach of the mainline churches was the way they marginalized and underemphasized the African pneumatic phenomena.

In addition to Asamoah-Gyadu’s view, Brenno (2013:7-8) states that the Western missionaries overlooked the role of the African worldview in their approach to presenting the gospel to Africans. They saw the African traditional worldview on spirituality as merely superstition, and thus did not help to find adequate alternative solutions. The consequence of this approach was that young Christians lived a double-life, i.e. had a “double allegiance”, which was in effect understood by the missionaries as hypocrisy. Having said this, one cannot totally blame the missionaries for their approach to the African culture and worldview - in agreement with Walls (1996:149) and Kalu (2005:226-227), missionary Christianity was generally not able to give clear guidelines on many of the issues Africans were faced with because there is nothing in Western culture and/or experience that they could refer to. This, therefore, made them treat the African worldview of the “human-spirit” continual relationship as superstition. Their attitude was explained as partly influenced by the Enlightenment culture - which says, “things which could not be scientifically and rationally proved should not be taken seriously” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:2).

In addressing the issue on the traditional worldview of African people, Paris (1995:37) made reference to Genovese’s statement: “When Africans took over the Christian God, they simultaneously extended, rather than transcended their own practice”. That is to say that African conversion to Christianity did not mean a

wholesale exchange of their indigenous religion for a new one (Paris 1995:36). Most Ghanaian Christians still believe in the existence of ghost, witches, evil spirits, idols, etc., and are of the view that these spirits can cause havoc, misery, diseases, death, poverty and so on in one's life (Sarpong 2002:94-103). Because of this embedded worldview, Ghanaian Christians still have the fear that these invisible spirits can have a negative influence on one's life, in spite of the fact that the person has become a Christian (Ekem 2009:39). To this end, Taylor (2001:7) states that members of the mainline churches were not totally submissive to Western theological worldviews. Even though the missionaries attempted to contextualize or "indigenize" their Western Christianity, the outcomes were often "too superficial".

3. PENTECOSTALISM IN GHANA: AFRICA INITIATED CHURCHES

Pentecostalism emerged in Ghana due to the unaddressed concerns of the Ghanaian Christian faith community by the Western missionaries. In their pursuit of solutions for their fears, they were led by their craving for a "higher spirituality", which in turn led them to the development of prayer and bible study groups in the mainline churches, of which some separated from the mainline churches and became independent churches which emphasized the operation of the Holy Spirit (both in the church and in the lives of believers).

This separation, and the need for a "higher spirituality", led to the establishment of the African Instituted Churches, also known as "African Indigenous Churches", "African Independent Churches", or "African Initiatives in Christianity" (depending on the person using the term). According to Turner (1967:1), they are churches which have been founded in Africa by Africans, primarily for Africans. They are churches that were not started or founded by Western missionaries (Oduro *et al.* 2008:6).

Though the term "African Initiated Churches" represents a wider spectrum in various contexts (Kalu 2005:309), this paper's focus is on the "Spirit-type Churches" or "Spiritual Churches" (Daneel 1987:39). The focus is on the "Spirit type" because; they are the most prominent type in Ghana, where they are popularly called "Susum Sore" (Akan), "Mumu Solemo" (Ga), and "Bobome Tsotsi" (Ewe), which literally means "Spiritual Churches". They are called "Spiritual Churches" because they claim that their activities and style of worship demonstrate that every single aspect of their worship and ministry activity is being enabled through the help of the Holy Spirit (Baeta 1962:1, Larbi 2001:69).

Scholars such as Kwesi Dickson (1984), John Pobee (1991:10-12), Kwame Bediako (1995), and Asare Opoku (1978, 1980) are of the view that the AIC's came into being

as a protest against the Eurocentric disposition of the mainline churches in Africa (and for that matter, Ghana). At the 2002 Inter-Theological Dialogue between representatives of a group of AIC's and that of the Mission Initiated Churches - held at Nairobi Kenya - the AIC's were described as "any African founded church which believes in Jesus Christ as Saviour, the Holy Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit as One God), and also believes in the Christian doctrine as presented in the Holy Bible (both the Old Testament and New Testament)" (Reformed World 2005:39).

According to Oduro et al. (2008:19), "there is an African way of understanding God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, there is an African way of understanding the world, the visible world around us - the cattle, trees, people and cities - as well as the unseen world - the supernatural world of spirits and powers. The AIC's therefore came as a means of presenting Christianity in the African context, making Christianity relevant to Africans and their worldview". Kgatla (2013) argues that AIC's came as a response to the intolerance and ignorance of the Western Missionaries toward Africans, their worldview and culture.

Pobee and Ositelu II (1998:5) state that the AIC's represent a central development of Christianity in the Africa of the 20th Century. This indicates that there is no way one can discuss world Christianity without talking about the AIC's. According to Bediako (1995: 66), the AIC's have pointed to the direction in which broad sections of African Christianity are moving and therefore have testified to the existence of some generalised trends in the African response to the Christian faith. In effect, the presence of both the Classical and Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana was as a result of the initiative of the AIC's.

4. CLASSICAL PENTECOSTALISM IN GHANA

As time passed, and with the emergence of the classical Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches in Ghana, the AIC's began to lose popularity and members (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:29-30). The reason was that, while the classical Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches adopted some of the traditional African styles of worship - such as drumming, clapping of hands, dancing, divine healing, and exorcism (that are practiced by the AIC's) - they criticized practices such as types of sacrifices and offering, and the use of items such as holy water, candles, and ritualistic prayers which are inconsistent with the New Testament. The Pentecostals emphasized salvation through Christ, the indwelling or the infilling of the Holy Spirit in every Christian, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and missions through the sharing of the gospel, followed by miracles, signs, and wonders (Omenyo 2006:5). This, therefore, made the Classical and Neo-Pentecostal Churches attract many of the previous members

of AIC's, which were more or less a syncretism between Christianity and African traditional religious practices. In Oduro's (2006:1) view, Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity is an expression of a refined African Pentecostal Christianity.

After a critical analysis of the Pentecostal Movement, Harvey Cox (1995:4-5) concludes that;

The first Pentecost event in Acts 2, serves as inspiration for people who are discontented with the way religion or the world in general is going. In order to find solutions to their challenges, they turn to Pentecostalism because it is packed with promise... it is about the experience of God not about abstract religious ideas, and it presents a God who is ever ready and caring to attend to human needs through the power of Holy Spirit.

Omenyo's (2006:244-258) historical study of Pentecostalism in the mainline churches in Ghana argues that, although Seymour never stepped on Ghanaian soil and none of his missionaries to Africa set foot in Ghana, one can trace the impact of Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival on Ghanaian Christianity through various connections. They are: the Prophet William Wade Harris connection; Apostle Peter Anim's connection with the Apostolic Faith Church (Peter Anim and his Faith Tabernacle Church are credited with the origins of Classical Pentecostalism in Ghana); The Assemblies of God Church's connection through Rev. Lloyd and Margaret Shirer, who were the first Pentecostal missionaries to Ghana in 1931; James McKeon of the Apostolic Church, the UK's connection with Anim's Asamankese-based group in 1937, and his subsequent role in the establishment of Church of Pentecost which is now the second largest church in Ghana (Larbi 2001:32-33); and, finally, the Four Square Gospel Church's connection which took place in the 1980's. These encounters changed the face of Christianity in Ghana, after several years of the failure of the mainline mission organizations to attend to the spiritual needs of their members (Omenyo 2006:101-219). However, in spite of the limitations of the Western missionary-led mainline churches, the current mainline churches have also been influenced by the Pentecostal wave (Atiemo 1993).

Though many Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches claim to be doing very well in Ghana (Larbi 2001:xii), there are, however, some challenges for some of them. Until recently, many of the Ghanaian Pentecostal leaders and Pastors had little or no formal education. Where the Neo-Pentecostals are concerned, apart from the issue of education, many of them have no formal leadership succession and/or administrative structures in their churches. Many of them also do not have structured church services and programmes. This means that the leader decides everything on his own with little or no consultation with other Pastors and/or

leaders of the Church. What they mostly use as a cover-up is the statement: “I am led by the Holy Spirit to do A, B, and C” (and then no one can say anything). Some of the Pastors are also arrogant, especially the ones from the Neo-Pentecostal and Independent Pentecostal Churches, using their position to extort money from their congregations in order to enrich themselves.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT, PENTECOSTALISM AND MISSION

While African churches typically belong to one of three types – i.e. mainline churches (stemming from Western missionaries), Pentecostal churches, and AIC’s (Africa Instituted/Initiated Churches) – all of them still share the African primal religion/worldview as their spiritual bedrock. Although there were some extremely puritanical approaches to African traditions among these churches, most of them were characterized by strong pneumatology and supernatural awareness, which can be ascribed to the traditional or primal religiosity that forms the foundation of African cultural knowledge and life. This explains why charismatic Pentecostal currents have been notably detected across all three ecclesiastical types (Chul-Soo Kim 2013:123). Pentecostalism, with its African characteristics, has made a great impact on Ghanaian Christianity.

Russell (1988:133-134) asserts that Pentecostalism has emerged as the dominant Protestant spirituality. Pentecostals stress the fact that God’s gifts can be experienced in the church today. Essentially, they “stress the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit directed towards the proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God” (Vinson 1986:32).

Balia & Kim (2010:24), in a summary of the Edinburg 2010 research, note that the last century has seen an extraordinary rise in Pentecostalism, with its Christo-centric orientation and its Spirit practice, and an engagement with primal religions and a desire to inculturate Christianity by including the realm of the spirits. These experiences have influenced missiology, encouraging reflection upon the inseparable relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. This approach suggests that there is no part in Jesus that is not touched by the Holy Spirit. This in effect, forces one to approach missions from a Pneumatological perspective - as initiated by Jesus Christ in Luke 4:18, and also encouraged in Acts 1:8.

A Pneumatological mission approach is characteristic of the Pentecostal Churches and movements in Ghana. According to them, it takes the role of the Holy Spirit to convict sinners of their sins and to bring them into the body of Christ, a process known as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” (Jn 16:8, Eph 2:18-21, 1 Cor 12:13,). It is also the Holy Spirit that empowers the believer to live a godly life, endowed with

the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit for the purpose of mission and church growth; which is also known as the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:8; 2:1-4, Eph 4:10-14 (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:10-11).

Connecting the role of the Holy Spirit in mission to the Trinitarian mission - what others call the *missio Dei* – is a point of departure clearly presented by Jesus Christ in John 20: 21-22: “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’”. This, therefore, means that the Father is the Sender and the Lord of the harvest; the incarnate Son is the model embodiment of the mission in the world; and the Holy Spirit is the divine empowering presence for the entire mission (Tennent 2010:75). In his book *Missio Dei*, Vicedom (cited by Verkuyl 1988:3) puts it this way: “God the Father sent the Son, and the Son is both the Sent One and the Sender. Together with the Father the Son sends the Holy Spirit, who in turn sends the church to participate in the mission of God in the world”.

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:286-295) present the *missio Dei* as part of the theology of the Second Vatican Council, which traces its roots to the idea of “Divine Missions” originally developed by Augustine and the scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century, but was also influenced by the Protestant mission theology of the twentieth century, and, more recently, by Evangelical and Pentecostal theologians.

Flett (2010:9) states that, without the *missio Dei*, the mission of the church would simply be grasping at mere straws; it would be salvation by works alone. Mission is more than mere human activity, it belongs to God. Furthermore, “the *missio Dei* is not something from which the Christian community can depart. Any other conception of the ground motive and goal of mission apart from the *missio Dei*’s Trinitarian location risks investing authority in historical accident and human capacity” Flett (2010:9). The *missio Dei*, affirming that mission is God’s sending forth, expanded during the ecumenical discussions in the 20th century to include the participation of the church in the divine mission (Balta & Kim 2010:23). In the *missio Dei*, “the Holy Spirit has a wholly unique personhood, not only in the form in which it is experienced, but also in his relationship to the Father and the Son” (Moltmann 1992:12); and “the Spirit of God is constantly at work in ways that surpass human understanding and in places that, to us, are least expected” (World Council of Churches 1992:43).

In line with the views shared above, Ghanaian Pentecostals affirm their belief in the Triune God in the following statement: “We believe in the existence of the One True God, Elohim, maker of the whole universe; indefinable, but revealed as Triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit – One in nature, essence and attributes, Omnipotent,

and Omnipresent (Gn 1:1; Mt 3:16-17; 1 Jn 5:7)” (Church of Pentecost, Ghana Tenets Article 2; Larbi 2001:280-281). This view about the Triune God has also influenced their approach to mission and also appears in their songs. In their meetings, they sing songs like:

Akan language – Twi	Translation
<i>Ye wɔ nyame basan Koro</i>	We have a three in One God (Triune God)
<i>Ono nkoa na yebe som no (2x)</i>	He is the only One we will worship
<i>Ye wɔ nyame Agya</i>	We have God the Father
<i>Ye wɔ nyame Oba</i>	We have God the Son
<i>Ye wɔ nyame Susumkronkron</i>	We have God the Holy Spirit
<i>Ono nkoa na yebe som no</i>	He is the only One we will worship

In the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call, the church is described as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, called “to witness to Christ today by sharing in God’s mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit” (Balia & Kim 2010:1). One can say that, in comparing Ghanaian Pentecostal churches to the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call, similarities exist: Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches see the church as people of God who are called, gathered, equipped by the Spirit, and sent to participate in God’s mission by bringing the gospel of God’s love and new life (Niemandt 2012:1). In comparison to the *missio Dei* understanding of older Catholic and Protestant missions and the “obedience to the Great Commission” of evangelical missions, Pentecostal mission is grounded first and foremost in the conviction that the Spirit is the motivating power behind this activity (Allan 2004: 206-207). Dempster (1999:48-49) asserts “the theological reflection of early Pentecostals on church mission started with the conviction that the New Testament church was called into existence and empowered for evangelistic witness throughout the world by the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost”.

6. CONCLUSION

Pentecostalism became a part of Ghanaian mission and church history as a result of indigenous Ghanaian Christians in Western missionary-established churches’ desire to address their “traditional spiritual concerns”, which they thought/felt the Western missionaries could not address. This desire led to the emergence of Pentecostal churches in Ghana, starting with the AIC’s, and later welcoming the Classical and Neo-Pentecostal churches. “Culture blended with the Holy Spirit movement”

characterizes many Ghana Pentecostal Churches. This, therefore, made many Ghanaians comfortable to relate to them. In view of this impact, Pentecostalism is not only the predominant Christian type of worship in Ghana, but almost all the mainline churches have been “pentecostalized” as well. Apart from the role of culture in the Pentecostal churches in Ghana, they also stress the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as well as the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit in the lives of believers for ministry in church and in mission.

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*Die Woord as maatstaf: die implikasie van
Godspraak in 1 Petrus 4:11*

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ABSTRACT

The Word as norm, the implication of oracle in 1 Peter 4:11

In 1 Peter the author uses the rare oracular word λόγια followed by the added θεοῦ to refer to the collective oracles of God, his revealed words. For all practical purposes: sacred Scripture. He suggests that these divine oracles should set the standard for all Christian speech and proclamation. The seriousness of these words is reinforced by an eschatological setting that emphasizes God as the final judge of a temporal world that is drawing to its close. The revelatory character that is inherent to λόγια and its divine origin is reinforced by θεοῦ. In the mind of 1 Peter it is the reality of revelation from above that Christians draw from and against which all human speech and proclamation should be measured, particularly in the Church.



1. INLEIDING

Hierdie artikel wil die implikasies van die gebruik van die Griekse frase *λόγια θεοῦ* vasstel binne die literêre konteks van 1 Petrus 4:11. Die semantiese teorie wat hiertoe gebruik word, is die filologiese benadering, wat die teks vanuit sy grammatiese en literêre konteks probeer verstaan. Vanuit daardie verstaan word betoog dat die huidige Afrikaanse vertalings van die teks verbeter kan word, aangesien die wesenlike betekenis van *λόγια θεοῦ* as openbaring en orakels uit “die hemel” onvoldoende sigbaar is vir die leser wat net Afrikaans verstaan.

Hierdie artikel beoog om aan te toon dat Petrus in hierdie perikoop God se orakels daarstel as die standaard vir alle Christelike verbale kommunikasie.

1 Petrus 4:11: εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ ...

1983/92-Vertaling: As iemand die gawe ontvang het om te preek, moet God deur hom aan die woord kom ...¹

Die kerngedagte dat God aan die woord kom, is sinvol, maar die objektiewe standaard wat Petrus daarstel, bly onvertaald. Die ouer 1933/53-Vertaling mis ook aan seggingskrag in hierdie verband: “As iemand spreek, laat dit wees soos woorde van God.”

Hierdie artikel betoog dat dit nie net gaan om woorde wat moet klink soos woorde van God nie, maar dat Petrus baie meer impliseer. Dit gaan nie om ’n gevoelsmatige gesindheid nie, maar om ’n navolg van ’n geopenbaarde standaard wat die HERE daargestel het. Dit gaan volgens die skrywer om orakels van God, om Godsprake wat navolging verdien in Christene se kommunikasie. Die Godsprake is nie menslike gevoelens nie, maar geopenbaarde woorde wat van Bo afkom. Hulle is nie uitgedink namens God deur die mens hier benede nie.

Petrus het die meer algemene *λόγος* tot sy beskikking gehad, maar hy het in 1 Petrus 4:11 verkies om ’n seldsame Griekse woord te gebruik: *λόγιον*. Hierdie woord is baie meer as net ’n “woord”. Enige vertaling sou dit moes verreken, maar ongelukkig het die Afrikaanse vertalings wat tot nog toe verskyn het, dit in onvoldoende mate gedoen. In essensie is *λόγιον* ’n orakel, ’n Godsspraak wat die mens net ontvang en deurgee. Petrus kies doelbewus vir die woord “Godsprake”, en daarom kan daar nie maar net vertaal word asof daar “woorde” staan nie. Dis belangrik om die ingrypende verskil tussen *λόγιον* en die meer algemene *λόγος* te besef. ’n Onlangse

1 Die NRSV is meer letterlik in sy vertaling van 1 Pet 4:11 as die 1983/92-Vertaling: “Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God ...” Hierdie artikel argumenteer egter dat die vertaling van die RSV, die NRSV se voorganger, die voorkeur het: “whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God ...”

studie het dit in diepte aangetoon (Zuiddam, Van Rensburg & Jordaan 2008:381): “One of the most evident ways that the writers of Biblical literature claimed to receive divine speech is their use of the word λόγιον. This word is a physical illustration that Jesus’ statement about adding or removing a jota² may be of some consequence to philologists as well as to a more general public. While the commonly used λόγος is primarily word, a communicative vehicle of any sort, this is not true about λόγιον. Like λόγος it is a word, but it is much more restricted in its meaning. The ancient Greek used it to describe an oracle, i.e. an authoritative pronouncement of the gods. In other words, while the author of λόγος could be human or divine, λόγιον was always produced in the heavenlies” (vgl. Liddell & Scott 1996:1056).

Die meervoudsvorm λόγια dui aan dat dit gaan om die versameling of die verskynsel van orakels (of: Godsprake). Dit is verder van belang dat λόγια θεοῦ in 1 Petrus 4:11 nader bepaal deur die toevoeging van θεοῦ, ’n subjektiewe genitief. Die hemelse oorsprong word op daardie wyse versterk.

Gevolgtik stel hierdie artikel voor dat λόγια in 1 Petrus 4:11 nie verstaan moet word as bloot “woorde” nie, maar in sigself beskou moet word as goddelike kommunikasie. Die gebruik van θεοῦ is nie net ’n nadere kwalifikasie nie, soos dit by ’n ander woord sou gewees het nie. Deurdat die aanwesigheid van λόγια reeds openbaring impliseer, is hier sprake van ’n toutologie wat die saak wil beklemtoon. Die outeur wil duidelik maak dat dit God se geopenbaarde Woord is wat die standaard stel.

Ons sal dit nader aantoon deur die wyer konteks van die vers in ag te neem (2). Dan sal die onmiddellike tekstuele konteks belig word, 1 Petrus 4:7-11 (3). Vervolgens sal ’n nadere eksegetiese van die tersaaklike frase in 1 Petrus 4:11 plaasvind (4). Filologiese gevolgtrekkings en ’n voorstel vir ’n alternatiewe vertaling van die frase is deel hiervan.

2. SKRIFBEWYS EN WAARHEID AS ARGUMENT IN 1 PETRUS

Die plan van God vir Christene se lewe en die wêreld in die algemeen speel ’n baie belangrike rol in die Eerste Petrusbrief. Dinge gebeur nie maar net toevallig nie, maar die geskiedenis ontwikkel volgens God se bedoeling, soos Hy dit in die Skrif aan sy mense bekend gemaak het. Die profete van oudsher was reeds diensbaar aan

2 Matt 5:18: ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ ἰῶτα ἐν ἧ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. (83/92-Vertaling: Dit verseker Ek julle: Die hemel en die aarde sal eerder vergaan as dat een letter of letterstrepie van die wet sal wegval voordat alles voleindig is.)

die Gees van Christus,³ die gesalfde Koning, wat volgens Petrus in hulle gewoon het (1 Pet 1:11 τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ προμαρτυρόμενον τὰ εἰς Χριστὸν). Met hierdie openbaringsargument (οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη)⁴ gebruik hy die perikoop 1:3-12 as die uitgangspunt vir die oproepe wat volg in 1:13-25.⁵ In daardie gedeelte roep die outeur sy lesers op tot heiligmaking. Die oproep daartoe is eweneens gegrond op God se openbaring in die Skrif: διότι γέγραπται ὅτι ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος εἶμι (Want dit staan geskrywe: “Wees heilig, want Ek is heilig”). Dit word dan gevolg deur nog ’n verwysing na God se verlossingsplan (1:17-21)⁶, ’n oproep en weer ’n

3 Die Gees van Christus het in die profete gebly en getuienis gegee lank voordat die gebeurtenisse waaroor Hy praat, plaasgevind het. Dit wat vir die menslike sintuie onbekend was, was aan hulle geopenbaar (ἀπεκαλύφθη). Miller (1993:306-307) is reg deur daarop te wys dat hierdie openbaring kom met ’n verpligting aan die adres van die lesers van die Eerste Petrusbrief: «In 1:10-12 Peter suggests a «practical equivalence» between the Old Testament message as the apostles understood it in the light of Christ, and the gospel which had been preached to his readers. In 1:22ff. Peter suggests that it was this gospel which had brought his readers new birth, and closely connects it with the Old Testament message. Also, in 1:22 and 2:8 Peter insisted that it is this word which is the “truth” and claims their “obedience.”

4 1 Pet 1:12: οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτὰ ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν διὰ τῶν εὐαγγελισαμένων ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἀποσταλέντι ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι. (1983/92-Vertaling: Aan hulle is geopenbaar dat wat hulle geprofeteer het, nie vir hulleself bedoel was nie, maar vir julle. Nou het dié wat die evangelie aan julle verkondig het, dit aan julle bekend gemaak deur die Heilige Gees wat van die hemel af gestuur is. Dit is dinge waarin selfs engele begerig is om insig te kry.)

5 1 Pet 1:13: διὸ ἀναζωσάμενοι τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν νήφοντες τελείως ἐλπίζατε. (1983/92-Vertaling: Wees daarom verstandelik wakker en nugter, en vestig julle hoop volkome op die genade wat julle deel sal word by die wederkoms van Jesus Christus.) Van Rensburg (1992:36-39) wys op die gebruik van diestrukturele aanduiding διὸ in die Griekse teks (vgl. Van Rensburg & Vosloo 1999:1713) om aan te toon dat 1:3-12 die basis vorm vir die perikoop 1:13-25, asook vir drie ander hoofdele van die brief (2:1-10, 2:11-4:19; 5:1-11). Hoewel die perikope teologies verbind word deur die algemene verklaring in 1:3-12, is daar behalwe in 1:13-25, geen duidelike verwysing na die begin van die brief as sulks nie. Dit is eerder die geval dat die outeur vergelykbare gedagtes aan die orde stel in die meer onmiddellike konteks van latere perikope, sonder ’n direkte verwysing na 1:3-12.

6 Van Rensburg (2005:418-432) indentifiseer verskillende beelde wat help om Petrus se begrip van redding te begryp.

verwysing na die Skrif (met die gebruik van διότι), wat die rol van die Woord van God in die geestelike geboorte van die lesers beskryf (1:23-25).⁷

Die rol van die Woord gebruik die outeur vervolgens ook as 'n aanmoediging vir geestelike groei (2:1-2 ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν).⁸

'n Nuwe reeks oproepe in 2:11 – 3:9 word ook weer gegrond op die Skrif. 1 Petrus 3:10-14 haal aan uit Psalm 34:12-16 en uit Jesaja 8:12. Ook is daar 'n samevatting van die leer van die Apostels oor Christus se voorbeeld op aarde, hoe Hy tog die wil van God gesoek het in situasies van veronregting, pyn (χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκί⁹) en verwerping deur mense (3:15-22). Hierdie stelling gebruik die outeur as deel van sy argument teen 'n heidense leefwyse (4:1-4). Die openbaringsgegewens van die einde van die wêreld en die laaste oordeel wat kom, versterk sy saak (4:5-7a). Die ander oproepe, byvoorbeeld 4:7b-16 (σωφρονήσατε οὖν¹⁰) word ook op redegewende wyse op openbaring gebaseer (vgl. 4:17-18). Dit geld ook vir die uiteindelijke oproepe in 4:19 – 5:11 (veral 4:17-18). Die outeur doen dus baie moeite om sy saak in die Eerste Petrusbrief te stel binne 'n algemene konteks waarby openbaring deur God die grond is. Die brief (5:12) eindig ook met 'n nadruklike

7 1 Pet 1: 22-25: τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας εἰς φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἕκτενῶς ²³ ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος ²⁴ διότι πᾶσα σὰρξ ὡς χόρτος καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῆς ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν. (1983/92-Vertaling: Noudat julle julle in gehoorsaamheid aan die waarheid gereinig het om mekaar as broers ongeveins lief te hê, moet julle mekaar dan ook van harte en vurig liefhê. Julle is immers weergebore, nie uit verganklike saad nie, maar uit onverganklike saad: die lewende en ewige woord van God. Die Skrif sê: "Die mens is soos gras, en al sy prag soos 'n veldblom; die gras verdor en die blom val af, maar die woord van die Here, dít bly vir ewig." En hierdie woord is die evangelie wat aan julle verkondig is.)

8 1 Peter 2:1 (1933/53-Vertaling): "Lê dan af alle boosheid en alle bedrog en geveinsdheid en afguns en alle kwaadpraterij." Hier word die Griekse οὖν gebruik om dit te verbind aan die mens se verlange na die onderrig uit die Woord van God (1:25, vgl. 1:2: ἐπιποθήσατε; vgl. 1 Kor 3:2, Heb 5:12-13). Daar is geen aanduiding in die teks dat dit gaan om 'n direkte verwysing na 1:3-12 nie. Waarskynlik dui die samevattende οὖν op die samevatting wat die outeur net voor dit gee (1:17-23), veral die rol van die Woord van God (wat dit fasiliteer) word in gedagte gebring.

9 1 Pet 4:1a (1933/53-Vertaling): "Omdat Christus dan vir ons na die vlees gely het."

10 1 Pet 4:7b (1933/53-Vertaling): "wees dan ingetoë en nugter."

herbevestiging (ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε¹¹) van hierdie objektiewe standaard, die waarheid,¹² wat aan die mens gestel is.

3. SKRIFBEWYS EN REKENSAP AS NOUE KONTEKS VAN 1 PETRUS 4:7-11

3.1 Inleiding

Net soos in die eerste hoofstuk van die Petrusbrief die geval was (vgl. 1:10-12; 1:22-25), gebruik die outeur in 4:7-11 ook strukturele verwysings na die Woord van God by sy vermanings aan die adres van die leser wat aangemoedig word om 'n Christelike lewe te lei. Die perikoop betrek ook die openbaringsgegewe dat God die bestaande wêreld sal beëindig en die Regter van die mensheid sal wees (4:5-6; 4:17-18). Dit speel dus 'n belangrike rol beide voor en na 1 Petrus 4:7-11. Elke mens moet rekenskap aflê van sy dade aan God, wie se insigte en mening van deurslaggewende belang behoort te wees, sowel vir die mens se lewe nou as vir sy finale bestemming.

3.2 Eksegese van die konteks, 1 Petrus 4:7-11

Die eksegese van die perikoop 1 Petrus 4:7-11 is van belang vir die eksegese van die tersaaklike onderdeel van 1 Petrus 4:11. Daar is 'n strukturele samehang. Die begin van 4:7, πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν,¹³ het 'n duidelike band met die voorgaande

11 1 Pet 4:12 (1933/53-Vertaling): "Geliefdes, verbaas julle nie oor die vuurgloed van vervolging onder julle wat tot julle beproewing dien, asof iets vreemds oor julle kom nie."

12 Waarheid is vir Petrus dieselfde as God se bedoeling. Sy openbaring is nie 'n abstrakte teorie nie, maar teiken die Christen se gedagtes, woorde en leefwyse. Senior (2003:126) stem saam: "This notion of 'God-consciousness' or awareness of truth through the eyes of faith is a key underlying motif of the letter and it emerges again in the final doxology (4:11b)."

13 1 Pet 4:7a (1933/53-Vertaling): "En die einde van alle dinge is naby." Volgens Petrus het sy lesers die laaste fase van die wêreldgeskiedenis betree. Dit moet gelees word in verband met 4:4-6, waar die outeur God beskryf as die Regter van die lewendes en dié wat reeds gesterf het, wat almal rekenskap moet aflê aan Hom (vgl. Van Rensburg & Vosloo 1999:1727-1728). Dit lyk nie asof dit beoog om paniek te veroorsaak onder Petrus se lesers nie. Inteendeel, hulle word bemoedig deur die gedagte dat daar 'n einde sal kom aan hulle lyding en dat reg wel sal geskied. Aangesien hulle dit besef, is die nabye einde van alle dinge gevolglik 'n aanmoediging (4:7b) tot 'n sobere leefwyse wat op God gerig is. Schweizer (1998:82) toon dit mooi aan: „Den Lesern, die die Botschaft von Jesus Christus gehört und angenommen haben, sagt es also zunächst, dass ihre Zeit nicht mehr die alte, immer gleiche oder doch nur in stetem Kreisen sich

verse oor God wat gereed staan om die lewendes en die wat reeds gesterf het, te oordeel (4:5-6 οἱ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἐτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς ens).¹⁴ Petrus verkondig nie net 'n God wat praat met sy lesers nie, maar een wat in beheer is van hulle lewens en uiteindelijke bestemming. Dit is nie op die ingewing van die oomblik nie, maar volgens die waarheid wat God in sy Woord openbaar het, dat hy die mensheid sal oordeel. Op grond van hierdie openbaringswaarheid wat 4:7 bevestig, dat die tweede helfte van 4:7 vervolgd met die imperatiewe σωφρονήσατε οὖν καὶ νήψατε¹⁵ εἰς προσευχάς.¹⁶ Dis ook binne hierdie konteks dat 4:8 hulle oproep tot die deug van liefde (πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει¹⁷ πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν); asook gasvryheid in 4:9 (φιλόξενοι εἰς

wiederholende Zeit ist. Für sie ist die Zeit offen auf die Zukunft hin, auf die alles hinzielt und die alles zur Vollendung führt. Dabei ist aber gerade nicht an einen Enthusiasmus gedacht, der alles Gegenwärtige überspringen wollte. Im Gegenteil führt die Ansage des nahen Weltendes und des Anbruchs der endgültigen Vollendung ausgerechnet zur Besonnenheit, die über den Augenblick hinaussieht und sich <<nüchter>> (vgl. Zu 1,13) vor Illusionen hütet, die über alles Bedrohende oder Verlockende Gott selbst in die Mitte stellt und von ihm alles Leben erwartet.“

- 14 1 Pet 4:5-6 (1933-Vertaling): "Hulle sal rekenskap gee aan Hom wat gereed staan om die lewende en die dode te oordeel. Want daarom is ook aan die dode die evangelie verkondig, sodat hulle wel geoordeel kan word na die mens in die vlees, maar lewe na God in die gees."
- 15 The oproep tot nugterheid, νήψατε, (νήψω, vgl. Bauer & Aland 1988:1090; Liddell & Scott 1996:1175) veronderstel die afwesigheid van enigets wat die oordeelsvermoë aantast. Met ander woorde, die gelowiges sou in staat moes wees om te bid en die gewenste aandag daaraan te gee. Beare (1947:158) is reg wanneer hy sê dat hierdie segswyse "combines the thoughts of literal sobriety, abstinence from drunkenness (cf. 1 Thess. 5:7-8), and of clear-headed insight which sees life steadily in the light of eternity and of the impending end of Time. The two verbs together suggest a disciplined life, with all the faculties under control and the energies unimpaired by any kind of excess... ..enjoined primarily for the sake of the prayers in which the Christian most truly realizes his communion with God and his fellowship with all believers."
- 16 1 Pet 4:7b (1933-Vertaling): "Wees dan ingetoë en nugter, om te kan bid."
- 17 Sommige navorsers sien 'n konflik wanneer Petrus verklaar ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν (4:7) ("omdat die liefde 'n veelheid van sondes bedek). Feldmeier (2005:146) oordeel verkeerdelik dat Petrus sê dat menslike liefde die rede is vir God om sondes te vergewe. Tog meen Feldmeier dat 'n mens nie te veel daar moet maak, omdat (Feldmeier volg Goppelt hierin) Petrus homself nie noukeurig teologies uitdruk nie. Dit is egter nie die teks as sulks nie, maar Feldmeier se uitleg wat die teënstelling skep wat hy voor Petrus se voete lê. Die outeur van 1 Petrus behandel hier (4:7) nie die dogma van redding nie. Hy het dit klaar gedoen in 1:18 (ἐλυτρώθητε). In 1 Petrus 4:7 staan die liefde wat alle dinge bedek in die konteks van πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἡγγικεν (4:7) en τὸ

ἀλλήλους ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ; en die gebruik van geestelike gawes en talente in 4:10-11.¹⁸ Dit alles dui dus op 'n duidelike samehang tussen wat God geopenbaar het en wat Petrus meen die Christen se gedrag moet wees.

Om duidelik te maak hoe belangrik hierdie sake vir hom is, gebruik die outeur πρό in kombinasie met πάντων; vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf (1990:172-73). Terwyl hulle in gedagte hou dat die einde van alles naby is (4:7), moet die gelowiges besef dat hulle mekaar moet liefhê (4:8). Die grond hiervoor is 'n Skrifverwysing na Spreuke 10:12 (πρὸ πάντων τὴν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες ὅτι ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν). Die partisipium ἔχοντες dui op 'n vervolg van die imperatief σωφρονησατε en νήψατε in 4:7; vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf (1990:397-98). Dis dus nie sommer net los verse nie, maar 'n eenheid in die Grieks wat gegronde en bymekaar gehou word deur gehoorsaamheid aan God se geopenbaarde Woord (vgl. 1:22; Joh 13:34). In 4:9 gebruik Petrus die voorsetsel ἄνευ, wat met “sonder” of “vry van” vertaal kan word (Bauer & Aland 1988:129-130, vgl. 1 Pet 3:1 “sonder woorde”). In 4:9 moet gasvryheid aangebied word “without grumbling” (NIV), of “without complaining” (NRSV). Sowel 3:1 as 4:9 moedig die leser aan om sowel sy praat as sy swye te onderwerp aan God se reëls. Dit lei uiteindelik tot die hoogtepunt in 4:11 waar die outeur stel dat God se orakels die standaard vir menslike spreke in die Kerk behoort te wees, en in die lig van 4:9 gevolglik ook vir wanneer 'n mens maar liewers stil moet bly en nie onsin praat of pêrels voor die varke gooi nie.

Die eenheid van die perikoop word ook bevestig in 4:10, waar die partisipium διακονοῦντες, net soos vroeër ἔχοντες, die imperatief in 4:7 verder voer; vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf (1990:397-98). God openbaar egter nie net sy Woord nie, hy

κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ (4:17; vgl. 4:5-6). Die oortuiging dat God oordeel, straf en beloon, tref 'n mens dwarsdeur die Nuwe Testament aan, bv. Mat 7:2; 16:27; Luk 14:14; 19:22; Hand 17:31; Rom 2:16; Op 20:12-13. Die verwysing na Spr 10:12 oor liefde wat sondes bedek, betref slegs die Hebreeuse teks, aangesien die Septuaginta lees: μῖσος ἐγείρει νεῖκος πάντας δὲ τοὺς μὴ φιλονεικοῦντας καλύπτει φιλία (Haat hits bakleierij aan, maar toegeneëndheid bedek die wat nie daarvan hou om te baklei nie). Sien ook Jak 5:20 en Luk 7:47. Van Houwelingen (1991:156) het 'n goeie voorstel as hy sê dat hierdie vers nie praat van God se vergewing nie, maar van die mens s'n. Die bedekking van sondes het betrekking op die daaglikse verhoudings tussen Christene: «Vergeving herstel die onderlinge gemeenskap, zoals Jezus aangaf in de gelijkenis van de koning die afrekening hield met zijn slaven (Mt. 18, 23-35).»

18 Vir 1 Pet 4:10 is God se genade aan die mens bewys (χάρις) 'n belangrike oorweging. Dit lei tot die uitdeling van χάρισμα deur God aan elke gelowige persoonlik. Goppelt (1978:287) verklaar hierdie op goeie wyse as hy die term «Liebeserweisung» (liefdesuitdrukking) gebruik. Knoch (1990:116-17) gee 'n oorsig van die Bybeltekste wat handel oor die geestelike gawes.

deel ook gawes uit aan sy gelowiges. Die NRSV vertaal dit goed: “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” Petrus maan die Christene tot liefde (4:8) en diensbaarheid (4:10). Die uitdrukking ποικίλης χάριτος (*genitivus qualitatis*, Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf 1990:136-137)¹⁹ θεοῦ verwys na die menigvuldige uitdrukkings van Godsgenade.²⁰ Christene se gedrag en praat vind in hierdie konteks plaas. Hulle is instrumente in diens van God wat aan hulle sy genade betoon het. Die genade van God is soos ’n groot skuur, ’n bergplek vir baie soorte en uitdrukkings van sy genadige omgang met die mens. God word voorgestel as die eienaar wat die geestelike goedere beheer en uitdeel. Vanuit hierdie bron kry elke Christen afsonderlik (ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα εἰς ἑαυτοῦς)²¹ gawes wat by die betrokke pas. Hy gebruik hierdie gawes

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- 19 Goppelt (1978:287) wys uit dat "der Genitiv χάριτος nähert sich hier einem Gen. Obj. Und der Begriff χάρις selbst dem Sinn „Gnadegabe“; man kann es vielleicht als ‚Liebeserweisung‘ verstehen.“ Die gebruik van ‚Liebeserweisung‘ is jammer aangesien dit kan lei tot ’n verwarring van ἀγάπη and χάριτος.
- 20 God se genade (4:10) speel ’n sentrale rol in die konteks van 1 Pet 4:11. Hierdie genade word uitgedeel op velerlei wyses, maar twee kategorië, verkondiging en diensbaarheid, is tog hier onderskeibaar. Miller (1993:306) wys op die genadebron van albei: “Peter stresses the fact that each has received a gift. Whatever the gift, it comes from the store of God’s varied grace. If one speaks, he is to do it as one who utters oracles of God. If one renders service, he is to do it by the strength which God supplies. The horizontal, therefore, is always an expression of the vertical.” Hoewel Groenewald (1977:79) die moontlikheid van twee spesifieke gawes oop los, dink hy ook dat Petrus twee kategorië beoog: “Uit die ryke verskeidenheid van genadegawes word nou net twee dinge genoem: “as iemand spreek” en “as iemand dien”. Waarskynlik is dit nie die bedoeling dat net hierdie twee gawes van belang is nie, maar dat Petrus die groot verskeidenheid van gawes nie afsonderlik wil bespreek nie, en hulle daarom onder twee hoofde tuisbring: die bediening van die woord, en die bediening van die tafels (Hand. 6:2-4).” Die meeste navorsers volg inderdaad die gedagte van twee kategorië in 1 Pet 4:11. Bolkestein (1963:164) stem saam: “Er kunnen dus twee groepen geestesgaven onderscheiden worden: die van het spreken en die van het dienen met de daad.” Wiebert (1984:259-60) ook: “Peter divided gifts into two functional categories: the speaking gifts and the service gifts. The two categories are presented in the form of two conditional sentences.” Goppelt (1978:287-88) praat in dié verband van “die beiden Grundformen” (die bediening van die Woord en die diens van die tafels).
- 21 Volgens 1 Pet 4:10 word Christelike genadegawes verder uitgedeel ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα εἰς ἑαυτοῦς (NRSV: As each has received a gift, employ it for one another). Hierdie is vir Petrus uitdrukkings van die HERE se genade in die lewe van gelowiges. Hierdie genade word op verskillende wyses (ποικίλος, vgl. Bauer & Aland 1988:1370-71) sigbaar, soos daar ook onderskeie genadegawes is. Schreiner (2003:214) is reg deur te beklemtoon dat hoewel daar verskillende uitdrukkings is, dit tog gaan

as 'n rentmeester in sy woorde en daade wanneer hy ander Christene teëkom. Op hierdie wyse maak die genadegawes van God 'n praktiese verskil op aarde. Vir die argument van hierdie artikel is dit belangrik, want Petrus se fokus is op die Gewer en Bron, dis die ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ wat sentraal staan. Dit kom op baie maniere voor, maar dit kom van God af – hetsy in spreke of in Christelike diensbaarheid, dit is God wat die standaard stel. Sowel woorde as daade moet ingegee word deur God, sodat Hy geëer kan word. Die moontlik dat hier verwys word na 'n spesiale 'eindtydgenade' is onwaarskynlik.²²

Dit gaan vir die outeur om woorde en daade, 4:11: εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ εἴ τις διακονεῖ ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἢς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός.²³ Sowel gedrag as taal moet verander word deur die Evangelie. Elliott (2000:758) bevestig die parallellisme wat 'n mens kry in hierdie perikoop: "The parallelism of this couplet is marked by balanced conditional statements, followed by elliptical clauses referring to God... ...[let that one do so] as [uttering] oracles of God." Dit is God wat die standarde stel vir verkondiging

om dieselfde bron, God: "Even though every believer possesses at least one gift, the gifts are not necessarily the same. God's grace manifests itself 'in its various forms,' so the diversity of gifts reveals the multifaceted character of God's grace." Groenewald (1977:79) vat die saak saam: "Die genade van God is "veelvuldig". Dit neem baie vorme aan en openbaar hom in 'n ryke verskeidenheid van gestaltes." Schweizer (1998:83) vra aandag vir die geestelike implikasies: „Freilich ist diese Gnade <<vielfältig>>. Das befreit von unbarmherziger Grenzenlosigkeit. Niemand ist für alles verantwortlich. Niemand muss ins Unendliche streben. Gott teilt zu, was für jedes Glied gabe und Aufgabe ist, und immer sind die andern da, die das können, was ihm versagt ist.“

22 Michaels (1988: s.n. ad 1 Pet 4:10) meen dat "Peter now points to that eschatological 'grace' at work even now in the worship and ministries of the Christian congregations to which he writes". Hierdie misterieuse voorstelling van genade as 'an end-time force lingering in churches' lyk eerder asof dit veroorsaak is deur Michaels' se teologie as 'n interpretasie van die Grieks en die konteks van 1 Petrus. Bauer & Aland (1988:1750-53) wys daarop dat χάρις gebruik word vir genade en uitdrukkings van genade. Binne die konteks van 4:10 dui dit nie op 'n spesiale eskatologiese genade nie, maar op genade van God (χάριτος θεοῦ). Petrus kwalifiseer dit ook nie as «end-time grace» nie, maar as 'n «manifold» grace. Bratcher (1984:116) is reg dat God die kwalifiserende faktor is in hierdie vers: "God's varied grace: here grace means what is given, the gift; "the various gifts of God," that is, what God gives. This verse may be translated as follows: God has given you various gifts, and each one of you must be a good administrator of the particular gift he has received, and use it for the good of all." Holmer & Boor (1976:150) stem saam: „Er rechnet also damit, daß jeder Christ teilhat an der vielfältigen Gnade Gottes, daß er demzufolge auch Gnadengaben hat. Man kann sie nicht aus sich selbst hervorbringen, sondern nur empfangen.“

23 Die RSV gee 'n goeie letterlike vertaling van 1 Pet 4:11a: "whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God ..."

en die krag gee vir 'n Christelike leefwyse: ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός (vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf 1990:122-23). Die gebruik van ὡς in die verband maak duidelik dat Christene in staat gestel word tot diensbaarheid volgens die krag wat God beskikbaar stel; vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf (1990:353-54). Soos die orakels die standaard is vir Christelike verkondiging, so is die maat van God se krag die bron vir Christelike diensbaarheid en barmhartigheid. Dis die teendeel van aktivisme en steun op eie krag. Net soos Petrus sy lesers aanmoedig om in hulle spreke God die standaard te maak, vermaan hy hulle om by diensbaarheid dieselfde te wees: afhanklik van die HERE. Hoewel die outeur nie nadruklik spreek van ampte nie gaan dit tog om genadegawes wat toegepas word binne die gemeente.²⁴ God stel die standaard en verleen die krag. Dit is gevolglik nie 'n onbepaalde oproep tot diensbaarheid nie, maar volgens gawes en krag wat God ter beskikking stel, ontbloot van menslike aktivisme.²⁵ Die Middeleeuse teoloog Beda (Bray 2000:118) vat die sentrale gedagte en die verbinding van die twee kategorieë goed saam: "It seems that Peter was afraid that he might say or teach something which goes against the will of God, or against what is written in Scripture, and be found to be a false witness to God or a blasphemer or a heretic who was introducing something which goes against the Lord's teaching. And what he practiced himself in this respect he enjoins on us all."

Dit alles het die eer van God in die oog. Dit blyk uit die slot van die perikoop, waar die outeur ἐστίν gebruik (vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf 1990:105) om te beklemtoon dat die heerlikheid en krag reeds aan die Here behoort.²⁶ Hy het

24 Petrus noem nie die ampte as sodanig nie (apostels, ouderlinge of diakens). Die kommentare gaan veelal daarvan uit dat die tweede kategorie 'n algemene oproep tot diensbaarheid in afhanklikheid van God beoog. Holmer & Boor (1976:151) weerspieël hierdie siening: „Nicht eine besondere Mahnung an Diakone und Diakonissen liegt hier vor, sondern ein Aufruf an die gesamte Gemeinde.“ Maar 'n mens sou wel moes toelating maak vir die spesiale toepassing of toepaslikheid van hierdie vers op die diakens van die Kerk. Senior (2003:119): "As with the charism of speech, "service" could refer to any act on behalf of another but the author may particularly have in mind public roles of service within the community."

25 God is die kragbron vir Christelike diensbaarheid. Gevolglik is hy ook die standaard. Bolkestein (1963:165) maak dit duidelik vanuit die konsep van die menigerlei genadegawes van God: "Ook het dienen moet ondergeschikt blijven aan de bedoelingen van God. Zijn kracht is het, die in staat stelt tot recht dienen. Niemand, die dient, kan zich hoogmoedig op zijn daden verheffen. De ware daad is een werk van God zelf. Zij wordt veel meer aan de mens geschonken dan door hem gedaan."

26 Die betreklike voornaamwoord ᾧ kan verwys na Jesus of God. Goppelt (1978:291) en Van Houwelingen (1993:159) verkies laasgenoemde. Wiebert (1984:262) noem ten

regmatige aanspraak daarop.²⁷ Die doel van kommunikasie en daede tydens die laaste fase van die huidige planeet aarde, is dat God geëer sal word deur die verskil wat Jesus Christus in 'n mens se lewe maak.

Samevattend, 1 Petrus 4:11 staan in die konteks van God wat in 'n verhouding staan met sy mense en sy genade uitdeel aan almal persoonlik deur gawes wat hulle kan gebruik in hulle diens aan Hom en aan hulle medemens. Dié twee oproepe in 4:11 verteenwoordig twee soorte gawes: die verkondiging van God se Woord en diensbaarheid aan die medemens.²⁸ Waarskynlik moet dit binne die wyer konteks van 1 Petrus verstaan word as toepassing van die Here se genade in die gemeente van Christus. Hy gee twee riglyne wat 'n parallelle struktuur vertoon: εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ· εἴ τις διακονεῖ, ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός. Die outeur doen dit bewustelik om God voor te stel as die bron en die maatstaf van verkondiging en daede in die gemeente van Christus. Die twee oproepe is nogal omvattend: woorde

gunste hiervan dat God die onderwerp is van die sin (δοξάζεται). Schreiner (2003:216) voeg daaraan toe dat dit "seems strange to some to say that the glory is both "through" Christ and also for him," maar vind tog wel dat dit in Rom 11:36 ook so gedoen word. Grammatikaal is "Jesus" die naaste verwysing. Verder word vergelykbare hulde aan Hom bewys in 2 Pet 3:18: αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνώσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος ἀμήν. Ander verwysings in nie so duidelik nie, bv. Heb 13:20-21; Op 1:5-6; vgl. Bratcher (1984:117). In hierdie verwysing egter, en in die meeste ander wat gewoonlik gebruik word om Jesus te verstaan as die antesedent van ᾧ in 1 Pet 4, mag die betreklike voornaamwoord filologies ook verwys na θεός. Holmer & Boor (1976:152) verkies nietemin om Jesus as die antesedent te beskou. Selwyn (1947:220) oordeel: "The order of the words strongly favours it." Schweizer (1998:83) is nie so seker nie: „So oder so, Gott, wie er sich in Christus offenbart hat, steht allein im Rampenlicht, nicht die reddened und dienenden Menschen.“ Dit kan ook wees dat die outeur bewustelik die moontlikheid vir altwee interpretasies oop laat. Joh 17:5 (καὶ νῦν δόξασόν με σύ πάτερ παρὰ σεαυτῷ τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί) hanteer die heerlikheid wat aan God en Jesus gegee word op dieselfde vlak.

- 27 Die uitdrukking ᾧ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος benadruk dat die heerlikheid en krag regmatig syne is. Balz & Schrage (1973:110) stem saam: „Wichtig ist der Indikativ („ist“, nicht: „sei“): Gott wird nicht etwas Fehlendes zugesprochen, sondern es wird das ihm Zukommende aufgenommen und lobend gepriesen.“
- 28 Schweizer (1998:82) het 'n unieke verklaring van 4:11. Hy oordeel dat dit sowel by spreke as diensbaarheid gaan om "Arten des <<Dienens>> (im weiteren Sinn von V.10)". Hoewel dit interessant klink ("Alle Christene moet God dien met woord en daad!"), is dit nie 'n uitleg wat reg laat geskied aan die grondteks van 1 Pet 4:11 nie. Petrus onderskei self tussen diens en praat. Hy beskryf twee onderskeie situasies: "as iemand praat"; en: "as iemand dien".

έν δαδε. Vir albei is God die standaard. Dit gee Gód as die fokus²⁹ vir die gedrag van Christene, veral in die gemeente-konteks. Die outeur versterk verder dit deur die doel van beide te beskryf, die eer van God: ἵνα ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζηται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.³⁰

4. DIE SKRIF AS STANDAARD VIR VERKONDIGING, I PETRUS 4:

4.1 Eksegese van die tersaaklike deel van 1 Petrus 4:11 as onmiddellike konteks van λόγια θεοῦ

1 Petrus 4:11 beklemtoon die rol van openbaring uit die hemel vir die verkondiging in die Christelike gemeente. Sy oproep, εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ, kom neer op die feit dat hulle wat namens God praat, moet seker maak dat hulle die orakels van God self deurgee en nie hulle eie insigte of voorkeure nie.³¹

29 Petrus vertel sy lesers dat dit wat aangaan in die gemeente en die Christelike lewe op God gerig moet wees. Selwyn (1947:219) toon aan dat dit immers God is wat die genade verskaf vir woorde en daede. Daarom het hy ook die reg om sy standaard te stel: "All is of grace: the teacher or preacher is not to be the purveyor of his own notions, but the transmitter of the utterances of God; the minister must not be setting forth his own competence or importance." Feldmeier (2005:147) stem saam: „Nicht die Vielfalt der Begabungen steht im Vordergrund, sondern ihre Rückbindung an Gott, der die Kraft zum Dienst verleiht, wie ausdrücklich hervorgehoben wird.“ Knoch (1990:117) benadruk dieselfde: „Darum ist die Ehrung und Verherrlichung Gottes die höchste Aufgabe und Möglichkeit der Menschen, und zwar zunächst dadurch, daß die Menschen entsprechend ihrer Bestimmung nach der Ordnung und den Wiesungen Gottes leben.“

30 Die lofprysing eindig met die gebruiklike bevestiging ἀμήν: «Mag dit so wees,» of, «Dit is so « (Bratcher 1984:117). Vgl. Rom 11:36; 16:27; Gal 1:5; Ef 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Heb 13:21; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 25; Rev 1:6; 5:13-14; 7:12.

31 Die gebruik van die meervoud λόγια impliseer 'n kategorie, 'n versameling van Godsprake. Hierdie openbaringskarakter word benadruk deur die toegevoegde θεοῦ. Groenewald (1977:80) herken dit: «In die grondteks is daar sprake van die «uitsprake van God» (logia) en nie die «woorde van God» (logoi) nie. Die bedoeling is dat die spreker daarvan bewus moet wees dat God die woorde van mense in sy diens neem, en «uitsprake van God» uit die mond van die mens laat voortkom.» Elliott (2000:759) laat blyk 'n ander interpretasie, as hy sê dat λόγια hierdie toevoeging benodig om die openbaringskarakter duidelik te maak: «When qualified by «of God» (theou), the term logia assumes the sense of «oracles» of God, that is, weighty words or promises originating with God.» Die logia as sulks is egter altyd orakels, met of sonder kwalifikasie. Die toevoeging van θεοῦ versterk juis daardie gedagte wat al klaar bepaal is deur die woord self. Goppelt (1978:287) verduidelik hierdie inherente openbaringsbetekenis

Dit bevat lesse vir die regter- en die linkerflank van die kerk. Hulle moet praat “as one who utters the oracles of God” (RSV).³² Of: “Spreek iemand, dan zo dat hij uitspraken van God verwoordt” (Van Houwelingen 1991:158).

Met ander woorde, Petrus maak die gesag van menslike woorde in die gemeente afhanklik van die mate waarin hulle ooreenstem met die versamelde Godsprake, vir alle praktiese doeleindes: die Skrif, God se geopenbaarde waarheid.³³

van τὸ λόγιον: „der „Spruch“, der „Ausspruch“, ist schon im außerbiblischen Griechisch vor allem der von der Gottheit ausgehende Spruch, nahezu das Orakel. In der LXX ist τὸ λόγιον τοῦ θεοῦ weithin gleichbedeutend mit ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, der biblischen Wortoffenbarung.“ Selwyn (1947:219) stem saam: “As in classical and Hellenistic Greek it means any divine utterances, such as oracles (cf. Thuc.ii.8, Aristoph. Eq.122), so here: the speaker in the congregation should reckon himself to be charged not with his own opinions but the utterances of God.” Schreiner (2003:215) plaas hierdie goddelike oorsprong van λόγιον binne die konteks van die Septuaginta en die Nuwe Testament: “The “oracles of God” refer to the words God has given his people (cf. Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12). The phrase is rooted in the Old Testament, where we have both “oracles of God” (LXX Num 24:4,16; Ps 106:11 and “oracles of the LORD, “logia Kyriou, LXX Pss 11:7; 17:31) and “your oracles” (LXX Pss 118:11,103, 148, 158; 162; cf. Wis 16:11). Using speaking gifts to minister to others means that the one speaking endeavors to speak God’s words.”

- 32 Petrus roep sy lesers op dat εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ (“as iemand praat, laat die orakels van God sy standaard wees”). Jesus het ’n vergelykbare beginsel verkondig in Joh 7:16-18: ἀπεκρίθη οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν ἡ ἐμὴ διδασχὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ ἀλλὰ τοῦ πέμψαντός με. ἐάν τις θέλῃ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν γνώσεται περὶ τῆς διδασχῆς πότερον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστιν ἢ ἐγὼ ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ λαλῶ. ὁ ἀπ’ ἐαυτοῦ λαλῶν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἰδίαν ζητεῖ ὁ δὲ ζητῶν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ πέμψαντος αὐτόν οὗτος ἀληθῆς ἔστιν καὶ ἀδικία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν (1933/53-Vertaling: Jesus antwoord hulle en sê: My leer is nie myne nie, maar van Hom wat My gestuur het. As iemand gewillig is om sy wil te doen, sal hy aangaande die leer weet of dit uit God is, en of Ek uit Myself spreek. Hy wat uit homself spreek, soek sy eie eer; maar Hy wat die eer soek van dié Een wat Hom gestuur het, Hy is waaragtig en daar is geen ongeregtigheid in Hom nie.)
- 33 Senior (2003:125) dink dat εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ verwys na die verbale en nie-verbale kante van kommunikasie: “Those who speak should do so as if speaking an ‘oracle of God.” Hy is van mening dat dit gaan oor die feit dat ’n mens moet oordra dat sy krag en die gesag van sy aksies op God berus. Petrus verwys egter geensins na die wyse van praat of verkondiging in hierdie verband nie. Die standaard wat hy voorhou is ὡς λόγια θεοῦ. Oor hoe dit gedoen moet word is daar verder geen voorskrifte nie. Hierdie siening het wye steun onder die kommentare, wat gevolglik Senior se siening verwerp. Balz & Schrage (1973:110): „Ihr Wort soll Gott und nicht sie selbst zur Sprache bringen.“ Bratcher (1984:116): “As one who utters the oracles of God: His words should be as though they were God’s own words, ‘as one who has received his message from God.’ Or ‘Whoever preaches should proclaim the very message of God,’ ‘Whenever

Sommige navorsers (soos Michaels 1988 oor 1 Pet 4:11) maak baie van die feit dat die bepaalde lidwoord weggelaat word by εἴ τις λαλεῖ ὡς λόγια θεοῦ. “Indien iemand praat, laat dit wees volgens die geopenbaarde Woord van God.” Hoewel die gebruik van “praat” in vandag se Afrikaans aanvaarbaar geword het, sou “verkondig” kon aandui dat die outeur dalk onderrig in die gemeentekonteks in gedagte het. Dit is egter onnodig om te veel te maak van die ontbrekende bepaalde lidwoord. Dit word immers in die Grieks dikwels weggelaat, veral in voorsetsel-konstruksies (vgl. Blass, Debrunner, Rehkopf 1990:205-206) of wanneer die outeur juis ’n definitiewe konsep beoog wat algemeen aangewend kan word. Met ander woorde, dit gaan in 1 Petrus 4:11 om ’n begrip, verskynsel: die verskynsel van orakels, die versameling Godsprake, die geopenbaarde Woord van God.

By moderne Westerse tale is die funksie van die lidwoord dikwels omgekeerd. Om hierdie rede word ὡς λόγια θεοῦ in Engels korrek vertaal met ’n bepaalde lidwoord: “as *the* oracles of God” (AV); of “*the* very words of God” (NRSV, NIV). Dit gee ’n aanduiding van ’n inherente kwaliteit, nie van ’n gevoelsmatige uiting nie. Dis nie maar net “soos God sou praat” nie. Die uitdrukking ὡς λόγια θεοῦ gaan baie verder as dit. Dis ’n oproep om gehoorsaam te wees aan spesifieke orakels van God, wat in die meervoud sonder bepaalde lidwoord voorgehou word as ’n begrip wat in hedendaagse Afrikaans vertaal kan word as “die Skrif” of: “geopenbaarde Woord van God”.

Christelike verkondiging het net gesag vir sover dit ooreenstem met die Bron. Dit verwys nie na die krag of die gebare waarmee dit gestel word nie, maar na die inhoud van hulle woorde.³⁴ Hulle wat aanspraak daarop maak om vir God te lewe,

anyone speaks, his words should be as the words of God.” Spicq (1966:152) vertaal: “comme les paroles de Dieu.” Bolkestein (1963:164) stem saam dat dit gaan om die band met God: “Wie geroepen is tot spreken, moet erop letten, dat zijn woorden ook werkelijk dienst aan het woord van God zijn. Het moet het instrument van Gods eigen spreken zijn, Het moet, in één word, dienst zijn.”

34 1 Pet 4:11 laat ’n mens dink aan die Ou-Testamentiese geskiedenis van die profeet Bileam wat sy profetiese boodskappe moes onderwerp aan die orakels van God. Numeri (LXX) gebruik dieselfde woord λόγια in daardie verband. Soos Petrus se lesers was Bileam gebonde aan God se orakels. Hulle was die maatstaf vir sy profetiese verkondiging. Num 24:4: φησὶν ἀκούων λόγια θεοῦ ὅστις ὄρασιν θεοῦ εἶδεν ἐν ὑπνῷ ἀποκεκαλυμμένοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ. Dit blyk ook later in Num 24:16: ἀκούων λόγια θεοῦ ἐπιστάμενος ἐπιστήμην παρὰ ὑψίστου καὶ ὄρασιν θεοῦ ἰδὼν ἐν ὑπνῷ ἀποκεκαλυμμένοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ. (τὰ λόγια) in vrees en waarheid ontvang het.” (Vgl. Lake 1977:43-44.) Hierdie gehoorsaamheid is nie net van toepassing op die eerste ontvangers van daardie orakels nie, maar ook vir latere geslagte wat die optekening daarvan het in die Skrif. 1 Klemens LIII: “Want julle, geliefdes het ’n goeie verstaan van die heilige Skrifte, en julle het die

moet sy gedagtes deurgee³⁵ en nie hulle eie godsdienstige praatjies en stories nie.³⁶ Dit is in die eerste plek 'n oproep gerig tot dié wat preek en onderrig gee in die Kerk, in die samekoms van die gemeente of in pastorale arbeid,³⁷ maar dit kan ook wyer toegepas word. Klemens van Rome praat oor die orakels van God wat na die heidene geneem moet word. Daarby verwys hy indirek na Petrus se gedagte as hy sê dat hulle wat die orakels van God in hulle mond neem, ook 'n voorbeeldige lewenswyse moet hê wat God eer.³⁸ In hulle woorde en dade het gelowiges die Here in die oog.³⁹

Orakels (λόγια) van God bestudeer.” (Vgl. Lake 1977:98-99.) Sien ook 1 Klemens LXII: “Ons het baie goed geweet dat ons geskry het vir uitstaande mans wat gelowig die Orakels van God se onderwys bestudeer het.”(Grieks: εἰς τὰ λόγια τῆς παιδείας τοῦ θεοῦ.)

- 35 Om die Here se insigte te verkondig veronderstel 'n persoonlike verhouding tot God. Die onmiddellike konteks van 1 Pet 4:11 is een van afhanklikheid van God. Holmer & Boor (1976:151) bring dit tereg onder die aandag: „Im Griechisch ist nicht nu rein Vergleich gebraucht, sondern die Wirklichkeit bezeichnet. Der Redende soll Worte sprechen, die wirklich von Gott her kommen. Wo das geschieht, wird es - zu Gottes und nicht zur eigenen Ehre- ein wirksames Reden sein, vom Heiligen Geist und seinen Gnadengaben bestimmt.“
- 36 Miller (1993:307) is van oordeel dat die orakels van God in 1 Pet 4:11 opgevat moet word as Apostoliese verkondiging: “One who dares to speak for God to others must be as one who utters oracles of God rather than his own ideas, thus giving the apostolic faith control of all future developing tradition.” Petrus beklemtoon egter die openbaringsfenomeen, maar kwalifiseer dit nie in 4:11 nie. Sy nadruk is op God wat gepraat het. Dit is moontlik om die apostoliese verkondiging daartoe te reken, maar indien dit wel die geval is, dan benadruk Petrus die feit dat dit God is wat praat. Aangesien die outeur geensins verwys na die apostels nie, is Miller se standpunt onwaarskynlik.
- 37 Die huishouding van God, die Gemeente, is waarskynlik die plek waaroor Petrus praat met die oog op die orakels van God wat die standaard moet wees. Holmer & Boor (1976:150) is reg as hulle voorstel dat dit prediking en pastorale gesprekke insluit: „Da es hier um den gegenseitigen Dienst (V.10) geht, wird Petrus mit „reden“ sowohl an die Rede in der Gemeindeversammlung denken, als auch an das persönliche Wort von Bruder zu Bruder.“
- 38 2 Klemens XIII.3 (Lake 1977:149): “Want as die heidene uit ons mond die Orakels van God (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ) hoor, is hulle onder die indruk van hulle skoonheid en grootheid. Wanneer hulle egter na die tyd uitvind dat ons dade nie ooreenstem met ons woorde nie, verruil hulle die bewondering vir lastering en sê dat dit alles net mites en misleiding is.”
- 39 1 Pet 4:11 benadruk die realiteit van God se invloed in die Kerk. Verkondiging en diensbaarheid moet plaasvind in organiese eenheid en afhanklikheid van God. Van Houwelingen (1991:158) verduidelik dit gepas: "Anders gezegd: God zelf moet in

5. FILOLOGIESE GEVOLGTREKKING IN I PETRUS 4:

Petrus gebruik die spesiale orakelwoord λόγια met toevoeging van θεοῦ as verwysing na die versamelde Godsprake, God se openbaringswoorde, vir alle praktiese doeleindes: die Skrif. Hy gebruik hierdie woorde in 'n konteks wat beklemtoon dat God se waarheid en genade die inspirasie moet wees vir die Christen se gedrag. Die erns van die oproep wat die woorde ὡς λόγια θεοῦ bevat word versterk deur die eskatologiese inbedding.⁴⁰ Die einde van die wêreld soos ons hom ken, is naby. Volgens Petrus is die nabye einde 'n bemoediging, aangesien die veronregting dan vir die kinders van God gaan stop. God gaan immers alles oordeel volgens sy standaard en dit is hy wat die regter gaan wees waaraan almal sal moet rekenskap aflê (cf. 4:12-19). In hierdie ernstige situasie moet die lesers van 1 Petrus beseft dat dit die geopenbaarde Woord van God is wat die standaard verskaf vir preek en pastoraat in die Gemeente, asook vir die Christen se verbale gedrag in die algemeen. Die kollektiewe gebruik van λόγια θεοῦ is 'n aanduiding dat dit in Afrikaans en Engels in vertaling die bepaalde lidwoord moet byhê. Dit gaan om “die Woord van God” of “die orakels wat God vir ons gegee het”. Petrus stel hiermee duidelik dat Christelike kommunikasie gemeet moet word aan en gegrond moet word op die geopenbaarde wil en voorskrifte van God. Hierdie λόγια is die instrument in die gelowige se hand om God in beheer te laat wees van sy verkondiging. Hy wat praat namens God, moet praat volgens God se openbaring. Dit wys in die eerste plek op verkondiging. Die openbaringskarakter is inherent aan λόγια en die hemelse oorsprong word versterk deur θεοῦ. Gevolglik is die λόγια θεοῦ, God se gesagvolle uitsprake, die maatstaf vir Christelike kommunikasie.

de gemeente aan het woord komen, zijn krachtadig werk moet merkbaar zijn. Hij schenkt begaafdheid binnen de gemeente die sommigen profetisch, anderen dienstbaar maakt. Impliciet is hiermee de grootst mogelijke verantwoordelijkheid aangeduid. Zonder God kan men immers geen zinnig woord uitbrengen en niemand is gediend met daadkracht zonder het werk van de Geest."

- 40 Die lyding van gelowiges word eskatologies ge-positioneer in 1 Petrus 4:12-19. Eskatologie word in die konteks van 1 Petrus 4 nie gebruik as 'n fondament vir die gesag van God se orakels nie, maar slegs om te benadruk dat hulle van besondere belang is in 'n situasie waar die wêreld ten einde loop en God al die mense gaan oordeel. Hulle lewens, hierdie wêreld met sy lyding en vervolging is maar net tydelik. Met ander woorde, die outeur roep sy lesers op om God se standaard op hulle lewens toe te pas, aangesien dit God gaan wees wat hulle woorde en dade gaan beoordeel as regter en hulle ewige toekoms gaan bepaal.

'n Afrikaanse vertaling van 1 Petrus 4:11a wat reg laat geskied aan hierdie gevolgtrekkings is: "As iemand praat, laat die geopenbaarde Woord van God die maatstaf vir sy woorde wees."

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TREFWOORDE

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