

**The church should be an agent of reconciliation, justice and  
unity within the disintegrated society: uniting Reformed church  
in Southern Africa (URCSA) perspective**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I, LESETJA JACOB RABOSHAKGA, declare that: **The church should be an agent of reconciliation, justice and unity within the disintegrated society: uniting Reformed church in Southern Africa (URCSA) Perspective** is my own work and that all the sources that I have quoted were indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature.....

Date: 31 January 2019

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## **SUMMARY**

The researcher in this study focuses on reconciliation, justice and unity in the church and society, Mokopane being the investigative centre. In this study, it has been evident that this was a noble exercise to focus on reconciliation, justice and unity in South Africa. The researcher concludes that much needs to be done in the future to address division in the church and society. The passiveness of the church in the process is jeopardizing reconciliation, justice and unity.

Reconciliation, justice and unity have been explicitly being explained. They are important in a sense that they form the bottom or base live from people and believe system could be well understood and thereby enable them to measure their role in the concept of reconciliation, justice and unity. These are the gospel imperative and unavoidable. Qualitative research was explicitly stated, described and discussed.

The role of both Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa can play to reconcile the people of people in Mokopane. All cases studied serves as a true reflection of people's knowledge on the experience in both past and present history.

Our concepts of truth, justice, reconciliation, unity and peace must serve as a designed model to contribute to theology in demand. Unity as the function of the Holy Spirit, and unity in local church should be witnessed. Thereafter, the church is called to the ministry of reconciliation.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH TITLE	i
DECLARATION	ii
SUMMARY	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v-ix

### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction and orientation	1-2
1.2 Background	3-4
1.3 Relevance of the study	4-5
1.4 Statement of the study	5-7
1.4.1 Disintegrated church as a problem for reconciliation in society	7-8
1.4.2 The passiveness of the church in the process of reconciliation	
1.4.3 Theology of reconciliation and liberation for humanity from internalized Dominance	8-10
1.4 Researchers aims	10
1.5 Theoretical frame work	10-11
1.7 Method of research	11
1.7.1 Research design	11-12
1.7.2 Data collection	

1.8 Ethical commitment	12-13
1.9 Structure of research project	13
1.10 Summary	13

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REFLECTION ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY BASED ON RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND UNITY**

2.1 Introduction	14
2.1.1 Two theoretical angles in the study	14-16
2.2 The concept justice and definition of justice	16
2.3 Clarification and definition of reconciliation	16-20
2.3.1 The understanding of reconciliation in the Hebrews Bible	22
2.3.1 The understanding of reconciliation in the New Testament	23
2.3.2 Important of aspect that comprises reconciliation	25
2.3.1 Healing as a means of reconciliation in the Mokopane context	25-29
2.3.2 Reconciliation as a means of forgiveness	29-31
2.3.3 The building block for reconciliation	31-33
2.3.4 Reparation of relationship	33-36
2.4 Disintegrated church as a problem for reconciliation in society	36-38
2.4.1 The background of the disintegrated church that contributed to the disintegrated Society	38-45
2.4.2 The first actual disintegrated church in the cape colony	45-48
2.5 Truth and reconciliation commission in related to the church as agent of Reconciliation	48-51

2.5.1 The submission of DRC to TRC as the perpetrator instead of agent of reconciliation.	51-55
2.6 The passive of the church in the process of reconciliation	55-57

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	58-59
3.2 Research Methodology	59-60
3. 2.1The concept of socio-theological research	60-61
3.3 Research design	61-62
3.3.1 Quantitative research techniques	62-63
3.3.1.1 Interviewing	63-66
3.3.1.2 Observation	67-68
3.1.3 Document analysis	68-69
3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis techniques	69-70
3.3.2.1 Familiarization and organization of data	70-71
3.2.2 Coding Data	71
3.3.2.3 Summarizing data	71
3. 3.3selection and sampling of population.	71
3.3.3.1 Selection of population	72
3.4 Validity of the study	73-74
3.4.1Mechanically recorded data	74
3.4.2 Low - reference descriptors	74-75
3.4.3 Participant review	75
3.4.4 Triangulation strategies	75

3.5 Reliability of the study	75
3.6 Research ethics	76
3.6.1 Informed concept and permission	77
3.6.2 Anonymity and confidentiality	78-79
3.6.3 Voluntary participation	79
3.6.4 Competency and relationship with participants	79
3.7. Summary	79-80

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

4.1. Introduction	81
4.2. Presentation and discussion of research data.	81
4.3. Theology of liberation for humanity from internalized domination	82-83
4.3.1. Liberation theology as a tool to equip the church to be agent of Reconciliation.	83-84
4.3.2. Internalized domination within Mokopane community.	84-85
4.3.2.1. The role of Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and uniting Reformed church in southern Africa on reconciliation in Mokopane	85-86
4.4. Presentation of data based on case study and interviews.	86-88
4.4.1. Case study 1 (an interview with the worker)	88
4.4.2. Case study 2 (an interview with business man)	89-90
4.4.3. Case study 3. (an interview with ordinary people)	90-92
4.4.4. Case study 4 (an interview with people living on the streets)	90-92
4.4.5. Case study 5 (an interview with DRC minister)	91-92
4.4.5. Summary	93

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. Introduction	95-97
5.2. Findings	97
5.2.1. Presentation of findings	97
5.2.1.1. Findings based on aim 1	97
5.2.1.2. Findings based on aim 2	98
5.2.1.3. Findings based on aim 3	98
5.3. Recommendations	98
5.3.1. Christian understanding of reconciliation	98
5.3.2. Working for justice	99-100
5.3.3. The church role in reconciliation, justice and unity	100-104
5.4. Summary	104
5.5. SUMMARY	104
5.6. KEY WORDS	104
5.7. ABBREVIATIONS	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105-110

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communities form the world's population, and interact on a daily basis. The fundamental point is that the society is formed by communities, which interact and influence each other. These communities, in one way or another, grow, develop, and undergo certain stages, and ultimately the entire society also grows and develops towards a particular point of transition (Bandura, 1997:23). The view that black people are inherently inferior to white people has been referred to as "Old fashioned" racism. Old fashioned racism was both blatant and explicit. Until 1994, apartheid was legalised in South Africa. This legalised system provided an extreme example of structural racism. This brand of racism involved behaviours, practices and attitudes that overflow and define black people as inferior and less powerful to white people. These behaviours and practices have caused a serious division in the society and have left the entire South African society disintegrated.

The loss of power, wealth, privilege and familiar ways of doing things by white people is being met with resistance. This resistance is a modern form of racism (Batts, 1989:18). Distinguishing between old fashioned racism and modern racism is helpful since it helps to recognise and acknowledge the way in which racism has changed. This form of racism has created a sophisticated division amongst the people of God. Modern racism involves the giving of non-race related reasons for behaviours that continue to exclude and discriminate against each other. It is very important to think of

modern racism as internalised dominance, attitudes that are so deeply entrenched that they exist at a subconscious level. While modern racism is often not consciously malicious by intent, it is still based on the assumption that black people are inferior to white fellow human beings. As a result, subtler forms of racism continue to deny access to black people. The negative feelings that are attached to this belief do not change or disappear just because of changes in laws and practices. Instead, the feelings have to be submerged and hidden because of the changes in what is viewed as legal and

politically correct in our society.

There are many forms of innovations namely; religious, cultural, social and otherwise. While these innovations form part of the positive change, it is noteworthy that there are also serious stages which affect change negatively i.e. a state of '*anomie*', which is a stage wherein there are a lot of challenges such as conflict, power struggle and fighting for limited resources in the society. All these form part of life and are practically unavoidable even though something could be done to curb or reduce their escalation towards extremely detrimental effects of life. Hence reconciliation, justice and unity are crucial in the light of communities such as the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) through its Confession of Belhar, which emphasises three pillars: reconciliation, justice and unity, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. Hence this research study intends to investigate the old fashioned racism and modern form racism as both evil, and having no place in the new society or the area under study (Mokopane), and to find how reconciliation, justice and unity can be achieved through the church as an instrument or agent of change in the society.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The study takes place in the area of Mokopane, which includes the former white suburb and the former black suburb. In this study I use white and black suburbs to avoid using the terms town and township which are more legal in terms of the apartheid system. The white suburb is known as Mokopane while the black suburb is known as Mahwelereng, better known as Mokopane. The area under study is historically known as Potgietersrus. Due to the political changes of 1994, it was given a new name called Mokopane. The area is situated in the central western part of Limpopo Province. This province covers the northern part of South Africa and experiences many cases relating to racism and divisions. Hence, this study on reconciliation, justice and unity is necessary in an attempt to restore unity within the disintegrated society of Mokopane.

Mokopane area is a semi-urban and fully-fledged urban area situated in the central western part of Limpopo Province. It is 55km south of Polokwane, the capital city of the province. It was named Mokopane in 2002 by the national geographical name change committee. Due to the new political dispensation and the new municipality system, it was called Mokopane. It is located in Mogalakwena Municipality in

Waterberg District. The historical name of the white suburb was known as Potgietersrus while the black suburb was called Mahwelereng. The lifestyle of the people in this area is fully urban orientated.

The larger part of black middle class residents<sup>1</sup> of the black suburb is moving to the white suburb. As stated, the apartheid system has left a very serious legacy of

division in South Africa. It is not race alone, but also class between those communities.

There is no access to worship for black middle class people in the white suburb churches. Moreover, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) belongs to some family with the URCSA.

## **1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is occasioned by the religious call about lack of social cohesion that could be influenced by faith communities. Two decades ago, the late former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela established the ***Truth and Reconciliation Commission*** headed by Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Many people hoped that since it was led by the man of collar, it would bring a true reconciled society. Unfortunately, results were not as expected since the commission concentrated on political atrocities, leaving the occurrences of a divided society to overlap into the new millennium. Therefore, the study is opportune to observe continuity on a broader scale than now. Many scholars who did research on the subject of reconciliation cited various common primary causes of unsuccessful efforts to create a true reconciled society. They talked about individualism over communalism, civil society versus cultural society, believers against unbelievers and so on. Given the Limpopo Province situation with its unique history, one is to consider this research more relevant than before.

Considering that there are different tribes with different languages and races, and majority being poor with shortage of opportunities, the benefits that might be brought by the study are important.

Since everybody believes that education is an essential factor of addressing problems, given an opportunity, it will maximise and fuel development programmes in our society.

Although people do not talk much about reconciliation due to fear of being labelled as being still in the past, further research is needed. The aim of this study is to investigate ways of bringing the solution.

The study will also provide a better understanding on how to handle reconciliation processes properly in any setting of the society irrespective of history, religion, culture or otherwise. The information thereof will be used to recommend to government and social institutions such as churches, NGO`s, business sectors and so on with a view of how to deal or drive reconciliation forward.

## **1. 4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.4.1 Disintegrated church as a problem for reconciliation in Society**

The reasons for the church divisions have been a mixture of sociological, political, cultural, personality as well as theological factors (De Gruchy, 1991:33). The DRC synod`s decision of 1857 about separate services for coloured members “because of the weakness of some” has become notorious. The next logical step was the formation of a separate church. In 1881 representatives of five mission congregations assembled in Wellington near Cape Town for the first meeting of the DRMC. The DRC reserved the right to veto all decisions by this newly formed church. Also, all its buildings had to be transferred on the DRC`s name. The DRC decided to divide its mission into a “home” and “foreign” mission. The first covered the Cape region, the

second all other provinces of that time in South Africa, including Namibia. In each province, separate churches for blacks and coloureds were formed. The Free State had its own mission church in 1910.

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These aspects cannot ignore the role of reconciliation as a prerequisite to achieve peace and justice both outside and inside the church. Worsnip (1997) observes that Michael Lapsley has become a symbol of truth and reconciliation (Worsnip, 1997.18). In such revelation, one can see the role of injustices of the past and its history, which can ultimately be discovered in biblical terms.

Reconciliation is the term used to refer to the process by which alienated people are brought together in concord. In this sense, reconciliation is associated with the liberation of humanity from conflicting political and social forces that determine human life (Vorster, 1986:1). Reconciliation cannot mean to cover up differences and structural injustice. The issue of reconciliation is fundamental in our era, given how we moved from the past twenty-four years of democracy, listening to politicians and clergy activists over this matter. It seems worth noting and important to study the effects of divisions in the name of history and the doctrine of Predestination in South Africa, particularly in Mokopane area. John De Grunchy also alluded on the importance of reconciliation when he talks about the church and witness to DRCA journal where he said:” Talk about reconciliation is cheap unless it is based on truth and justice” (De Grunchy, 1991.33). In this sense, he makes a point on the situation of contradictions within Christian faith where words not correlate with actions. This emanates from the notion where Christians confess to be united in Christ while they are divided in action. This is one of the problems that the researcher intends to investigate and to recommend a possible solution.

In his critique to Hegel and Nietzsche on reconciliation and redemption, Hicks explores the complex relationships that exist between the concepts of social reconciliation and cultural redemption. He discovered the difference of modern world on the look of the two. He diagnosed that “life in the modern world lacks a kind of unity, coherence and meaningfulness” (Hicks, 2009. 153).

Reconciliation is the main goal and central organising category of Hegel’s ‘social philosophy’. As such, Hegel’s project of reconciliation harks back certain important enlightenment concerns. For example, reconciling liberty and human rights with social cohesion and unity. Belhar confession (1986) is the advocacy of such redemption in contemporary society, South Africa in particular. Hegel insists that this reconciliation is achieved not by manipulation, coercion and propaganda, but by providing the individual with ‘rational sight’ into the true nature of the modern social world and its institutions (Hicks, 2009. 158).

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#### **1.4.2 The passiveness of the Church in the process of reconciliation**

The main problem statement is that the church has played a role in instituting and continually theological justifying separation of black and white people in South Africa. The problem is that the church is passive in initiating and justifying the importance of reconciliation, justice and unity amongst members of society in the post-apartheid era. Saayman (2007) indicated that as far as the National Party then and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) specifically are concerned, the origins of apartheid remain a bit of a chicken and egg situation. It is difficult to come up with a clear-cut conclusion as to who should be regarded as the pioneer of apartheid. It is recorded that the first printed record of the term ‘apartheid’ in the modern sense can be traced back to a

paper read by Ds J C du Plessis at a mission congress of the Free State DRC held in 1929 at Kroonstad (Saayman, 2007). Apartheid, he stated, was the fundamental idea of DRC mission work, emphasising the independent national future of all blacks. In this, sense the very same church needs to be a vehicle of reconciliation, justice and unity, of course with the extended hand of family church members such as URCSA. One can conclude that the main problem that it can be divided into sub-problem statements as follows: “the church is now challenged by a situation that the government of the day and politicians of our times are attempting to reconcile the nation of which Mokopane community is part of”. Of course, one must be tempted to downgrade such effort as it is a positive move on the parallel while the church is either silent or inactive in the whole process.

The dilemma which the researcher is faced with is the problem of finding ways of revising the process that was initiated by DRC in South Africa. The researcher needs to find out how Belhar Confession can be internalised into members of the community of believers so that the church can truly become an agent of that pilgrimage of reconciliation, justice and unity.

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#### **1.4.3 Theology of reconciliation and liberation for humanity from internalised dominance**

The other sub-problem statement is internalised dominance, which existed at the subconscious level within black and white people of South Africa, which makes it very difficult to start the process of reconciliation from the local level, especially at Mokopane area. The question is what happens then, when white people still hold negative emotional feelings towards black people? Because the old fashioned racist behaviours are no longer acceptable. It is like negative emotional responses to black

people will be expressed in subtler and converts ways. However, the impact is that these feelings still act as an obstacle to fundamental pillars of peace i.e. reconciliation, justice and unity in the society.

All that different forms of racism have in common is that the open acceptance of black people who occupy positions of power in both private and public sectors, subtle yet powerful forms of resistance to change the status quo. The loss of power, wealth, privilege and familiar ways of doing things by white people is being met with resistance. This resistance is a modern form of racism (Batt, 1989:18).

When one evaluates South African liberation in terms of Guitierrez's threefold analysis, the researcher concludes that South Africans have achieved political liberation as the first step to freedom, and need to work hard to move towards the second step of liberation, which is more on addressing human beings' wellness and welfare and economically as well. This will correspond with the commitment of the late Nelson Mandela's philosophy of government that he made during his inaugural speech on 24 May 1994, committing his government to 'people-centred society', defining it as follows: 'My government's commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear' (Mandela, 1994).

The people-centred society is the society in which human beings begin to assume conscious responsibility of their own destiny, seize the reins of their own evolution, and become the creators of a new humanity and a society. In this sense, there is a lot to be done; hence this research study emphasised the relevance of liberation theology as doing theology to assist South African people to move towards the

second and third stages of Gutierrez's threefold analysis (Modise, 2015). The following questions are derived from the problem statement to be answered in this research study:

- To what extent has the church contributed towards divisions and inequality amongst the people of Mokopane?
- To what length can the church be involved in this process to bring reconciliation, justice and unity?
- What role can the Confession of Belhar play in the lives of the people?

These research questions lead the researcher to the aims of the research study which are related to these questions.

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS**

**Aim 1:** To demonstrate how the church has contributed towards divisions in the society through its teaching and justification of separation in South Africa in general and Mokopane in particular.

**Aim 2:** To illustrate how the church can contribute towards the reversal of the process of division by bringing true reconciliation, justice and unity.

**Aim 3:** To develop a theology of reconciliation and liberation with special reference to Gutierrez's threefold analysis of liberation.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

It is well known that a divided church disintegrates the interconnectedness of human self, other human beings and God. This study will address the problem of disintegration of the church, which disturbs the process of achieving reconciliation and unity in our society. The approach of this study will be from Gutierrez's threefold analysis of liberation as mentioned under the research aims above, with special reference to Soteriological, ecclesiological and eschatological approaches.

## **1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

### **1.6.1 Research design**

Psychologists, theologians, sociologists, anthropologists and many more have studied the issue of reconciliation. I cannot afford to avoid research methodological designs put in place by these experts because they are collaborative in this study. The present study bases itself on the insights developed by the above mentioned disciplines. Therefore, this study wants to move further and investigate beyond the post-apartheid era with more religious and social vigour.

The methodology has to reflect the problem of failure of reconciliation by the preapartheid generation, and to avoid escalation to current generation. The move from that paradigm can bring the new generation, which has a clear understanding of what reconciliation is and what it means to them. It is for this lesson that the combination of the historical, descriptive and correctional research methodology should be employed. We need to find a theory that will enable us to have understanding.

The most important strategy is that of a qualitative approach. Qualitative is an approach in which procedures are not strictly formalised (Mouton and Marais, 1990.17).

1. The research is inductive, particularly about the problem.
2. Researchers become sensitive to their effects on people within the area of study.
3. It tries to understand people from within their frame of reference.
4. The researchers suspend their own beliefs and perspectives on the matter.
5. Qualitative research methods are humanistic.
6. All settings and people are worthy to study.

The unit analysis of this study are role players such as church leaders, community leaders, business people etc. Although one cannot solely rely on the written materials no matter how relevant they are; one should also ask the informants to relate their own stories and experiences. I will personally administer the interviews, and the findings are not going to be generalised on the area under study.

### **1.6.2 Data collection**

An interviewing method is used for purposes of collecting primary information. Priests, counsellors, business leaders, social institutions, professionals are going to be interviewed. Specific case studies will also be studied. Audio machine such as recorders that are technologically advanced will be used to store primary information.

## **1.7 ETHICAL COMMITMENT**

The findings of this study will be shared with the community concerned with the intention of implementing the objective of building a new attitude towards reconciliation. The names of the people interviewed shall not be recorded manually. The X and Y system of recording will be used on specific cases.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH PROJECT**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Disintegrated church as a problem for reconciliation in society

Chapter 4: The passiveness of the church in the process of reconciliation

Chapter 5: Restorative justice as a means of unity

Chapter 6: Theology of liberation for humanity from internalised dominance

Chapter 7: The model design as contribution to theology

Chapter 8: Summary, findings and recommendations

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

It is clear that the search for a new identity within reformed communities must be accompanied by values such as justice, unity and reconciliation. It must be accompanied by critical analysis of prevailing contradictions of the history, and should provide a basis for new social values. The ingredients to enrich our destiny are richly embodied by scriptures, Belhar confession and reformed history (Calvinism).

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **REFLECTION ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY BASED ON RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND UNITY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The researcher will not be honest in this research study if he does not outline, clarify and define certain terms within the context of the study. The following concepts are of paramount importance in the study: church, society, reconciliation and justice. These concepts will be clarified from different fields of study with special reference to liberation theology as a doing theology. Furthermore, there is a need to outline the framework or angles of this study. This will direct the researcher towards the achievement of his research aims.

### **2.1.1 Two theoretical angles of the study**

In this chapter, definitions, meanings and clarifications of terms and concepts like church, society, reconciliation, justice and unity in diverse literature settings pertaining to the main thrust of research study are clarified within the sphere of church and society. The emphasis on church and society within the perspective of reconciliation, justice and unity does not mean that there is a harking back to the problematic position making God the only player within the sphere of faith and belief, and thereby withdraws God from all other fields or spheres of experience. The experiential pattern of faith within which notions of church, society, reconciliation, justice and unity in the literature are being reflected upon is the pattern of reconciliation to God's means to reconcile with oneself, other human beings and the physical-organic environment one is living in.

Firstly, words, concepts, beliefs and notions of reconciliation, justice and unity in the literature are gathered and reflected on within the perspective of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. The focus is on church and society, reconciliation, justice and unity in Mokopane community. The socio-ecclesiological discourse *is being called the first theoretical angle of the study*. The role played by the church is to disintegrate the society with special reference to Mokopane. In this regard, the focus will be on the Dutch Reformed Church family and its role of supporting and encouraging apartheid, which has left its legacy in South Africa, and how the church can play a role to reconcile the people of Mokopane.

Secondly, in this chapter, words, concepts, beliefs and notions of emotions in the literature are gathered and reflected on reconciliation, justice and unity. The focus is on the impact of sin and evil (Exclusion as sin), disintegrated society and church.

This was done at the hand of *the second theoretical angle* of the study namely; creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation. This shall enable human beings to continuously evolve in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity. The main point is that we make sense of these grand acts of God because of human beings' involvement in them. In our daily experience of our being, our involvement and engagement with sin, evil (the idolising of parts of creaturely reality) and stress, we have an inkling why reconciliation between God, being human and nature, takes place; why there is an ongoing renewal process between God, being human and nature; and where in a future directed process of fulfilment, God, being human and nature, are directed towards the united church and society.

## **2.2 THE CONCEPT JUSTICE FROM DIFFERENT THEORIES**

When the researcher engages with justice, he does not take for granted that he is an African and reformed by nature from Africa. Therefore, he should look into justice from an African perspective alone, but rather from different worldviews since the culture of divisions and exclusion is influenced by different cultures from different worldviews. This research study is approached from a socio-ecclesiological perspective with special reference to justice, reconciliation and unity of human beings in Mokopane area.

### **2.2.1 Clarification and definition of justice**

The researcher will approach the concept justice in this section from a theological praxis in Western Christianity. In Western theology, the concept of God is more

important than the notion of God-human beings-and-nature. In the Greek and Hebrew, the concept justice denotes the following:

- Inter-human justice as divine command
- The just individual
- Thence justice as a divine attribute over sinful humanity
- Forensic as a certain nominalism of justice, and
- A recovery of a sense of inter-human justice as the claim of the divine.

In Western Theology and Christian practice, the inter-human justice has its origin from the ancient Israel, especially the prophets and psalms, instead upon “*sedeq*” and “*Mishpat*” (Hebrew terms for justice) as claim and command of God. The function of these terms is parallel to denote the imperative of inter-human, distributive justice

(*sedeq*) and the divine intervention to establish justice through the vindication of wrongly accused or the violated and vulnerable (*mishpat*). The criticisms of the absence of justice take the form of condemnation of the unrestrained desire and arrogance of the powerful (La Sor, Hubbard and Bush, 1982:384). In most cases, there is a smooth shift from inter-human justice to just individual. The shift from inter-human justice to the just individual while the social and public character of the Hebrew Bible concern with justice is relatively non-controversial. La Sor, Hubbard and Bush (1982:384) indicate that in Isaiah chapters 56-66, salvation is contingent on doing justice and righteousness, and is parallel to deliverance. Since Isaiah’s idea of salvation is connected with the concepts of reconciliation, deliverance, righteousness and justice, it is necessary to take up these ideas to a complete picture of what the prophet meant by the word salvation, which has the connotation of liberation.

Goldingay (1990:41-42) postulates that the Hebrew Bible in general can be a basis for an understanding of the kind of values or principles that should be embodied in human ways of life. When one becomes aware of the hazards involved in directly applying Hebrew Bible commands, or in rightly interpreting Hebrew Bible narratives, it may be attractive to consider underlying principles, which often point to more radical

requirements than do overt commands. In particular, the Hebrew Bible and New Testament emphasise the need to be brought into the relationship. The Hebrew Bible is often reckoned to emphasise justice, while in the New Testament, both sides of this contrast have been exaggerated. According to prophets, love and justice are interrelated; they are two sides of the same coin. Both are embodiments of holiness; justice complements love. Hence the researcher emphasises that the basis of justice is love. In the light of this research study, the basis here is love of God, oneself, other human beings and the physical organic environment. This holistic love leads to justice from God to human beings and from human beings to other human beings and the environment. Furthermore, the current emphasis on the ethical importance of principles like justice or personhood, which the researcher is more concerned about in this research study, is more of total understanding of life and of formation of character that ought not to be allowed to obscure the prominence in Biblical ethics (Goldingay, 1990:41-42).

In the New Testament, reference is made to “*dikaiosyne*” (translated by both for justice and righteousness), which has less often been associated with social relationships and more often with the individual’s relationship to God. Bosch (1993:70) writes:

Linked with God’s reign in a mysterious way is the concept *dikaiosyne*, which is perhaps the most characteristically Matthean notion of all. A careful analysis shows that it is unlikely that Matthew has found this term in his sources; it is introduced by himself at each point, usually in such a way that it contrasts clearly with what he had encountered in his sources... The translation of *dikaiosyne* poses problems, however, at least in English. It can refer to justification (God’s merciful act of declaring us just, thus changing our status and pronouncing us acceptable), or to righteousness (a pre-eminently religious or spiritual concept: an attribute of God or a spiritual quality

that we receive from God), or to justice (people's right conduct in relation to their fellow human beings, seeking for them that which they have a right).

The concept *dikaiosyne* as clarified by Bosch (1993:70), makes sense in relation to the first theoretical angle of this study, but lacks the element of physical-organic environment, which this justice is practised upon. For example, the people of Mokopane experience injustice in terms of land (physical-organic environment) distribution as it was informed by the land Native act of 1913. Black people of Mokopane are overcrowded in the former township called Mahwelereng. This overcrowding has an impact on the physical-organic environment in terms of soil erosion, air pollution, and water pollution, which is injustice to the environment, and which is supposed to enjoy the same rights as human beings. The Greek philosophers have contributed a lot in the usage of certain words in the New Testament.

According to ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, justice is presented as the ideal characteristic of the good society or constitution as well as the designation of the ideal character of the human being. Thus *dike* is the theme of Plato 'The Republic' in which the ideal society and appropriate character of the human person is correlated. While the relation of the person and the state could be understood together in the period of the city state, the emergence of the period of empire relegated the hope for a just social order to the messianic characteristic of emergent Judaism and Christianity, while the just person (apart from the social order) was the theme of stoicism and related movements.

The just individual Alexandrian Christianity inherited the emphasis on justice as the attribute of the good person, but this ran afoul of the narrowing sense of human incapacity for justice, especially in Augustine and his heirs. Thus while God was just,

humans could not. The theme of redistributive justice (God's just punishment of sinful humanity) became the background for an attempt to reconcile divine justice with mercy. The Nominal justice is the idea of forensic justice responding to the problem of the apparent contraction between justice and mercy through the notion that the judge may pronounce the verdict that a guilty person is innocent or at least will be regarded as innocent. This appears as a counter-factual claim that rests upon the judge's sovereign power to declare the guilty innocent. This is accompanied by the claim that the innocent Jesus Christ suffers and dies in the place of the guilty so that the guilty can be pronounced innocent or just, and in that sense justified. This apparent double violation of simple justice does not go unnoticed in the theological traditions. The declaration that those who are guilty are nevertheless innocent may also cut the net of the claims of inter-human justice and indeed, promotes injustice, as has seemed to happen in

Lutheran Germany in the Holocaust or Catholic Latin American during the reign of the death of squads.

In the light of this research study, justice will be understood as inter-human justice as found in social gospel and in modern papal encyclical as a key concept in liberation theology. Furthermore, it will be important to look at the concept justice from an African perspective as the research is conducted on the African soil. The first theoretical angle of this research study is more in the African-Christian approach.

### **2.3CLARIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF RECONCILIATION**

Reconciliation is hard work and must be genuine. We cannot walk away from the table of reconciliation too soon while it took centuries to be internalised in the hearts of

people. People need to avoid being supernatural or naive about implementing the delicate healing of broken hearts, especially as eluded to earlier by Mokopane residents. Most scholars such as Susin, when talking about reconciliation to what he calls world of conflicts says: “in biblical sense and so making greater solidarity possible. But, as biblical etymology warns us, closeness and harm have a common root, so that loving your neighbour and loving your enemy is, in effect, two ways of expressing the same commandment” (Susin, 2003). He correctly assumes that “Love” in a biblical sense can bring two worlds apart together. He was responding to the notion that the current process of globalisation is making the world smaller, and is enabling more people to be neighbours. Reconciliation seems to aim at that goal of bringing people together again (Susin, 2003:7). The ministry of reconciliation and healing was dully observed by many forums on world platforms on mission such as WCC. In its report on mission and evangelism, it stated categorically as follows: God’s mission (Missio Dei) is to reconcile human community, establishing a situation in which differences are promoted and celebrated, and where human beings live in harmony with nature, with each other and with God.

A broader and holistic understanding of reconciliation is achieved when the harm done by injuries to positive relations between individuals or groups are repaired or compensated in such a way that more hinders the establishment of a positive relationship. Although this definition sounds narrow, one has to consider different aspects that are deepening, such as the role of forgiveness, reparation, compensation, justice and healing. The question is what we can observe regarding this kind of definition. We are first to establish two perspectives as observed by Juhant and Zalec, who emphasise that the only reestablishment of a positive relationship which is based on forgetting without reparation of wrong is not

reconciliation. Only the possibility of establishing a positive relationship is based on adequate compensation of the harm caused by injustice, that is, reconciliation.

They further stressed that the reestablishment of a positive relationship must not serve as a condition of reconciliation, rather be the conditions that are fulfilled, and which make possible the actual reestablishment of new relationships. Aspects of reconciliation are essential for further certification. As the researcher is a minister of the Word and Sacraments, it is of paramount importance for him to investigate biblical theology as part of systematic theology, the meaning and definition of the concept reconciliation just like it was employed in justice biblical theology to give the meaning of justice.

### **2.3.1 The understanding of Reconciliation in the Hebrew Bible**

The researcher intends to find out the intention of the semantic language specialist when using this concept in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible concept of reconciliation can only be understood against the background of the Hebrew Bible doctrine of sin (Brown, 1971:150). An offence against Yahweh's covenant laws gives rise to objective guilt (1 Sam 14:2), which sets in motion a destructive force whose disastrous effects fall on punishment on the miscreant and his affairs. Brown (1970:384) stated that in the Septuagint, Isaiah 9:5 which does not appear the same in the Hebrew version reads, "every garment/ measurement that is obtained by treacherous means must be repossessed/ Restored (Greek: *Katallasso*) ...." (Isaiah 9:5 LXX). Reconciliation in this verse means rotation or restoration, and this must be in the context of alienation. There are many other Hebrew Bible accounts that denote a position of enmity after reconciliation has taken place. One of this is the story of Isaac and Ishmael, and the other is that of

Jacob and Esau. A critical analysis of these issues will prove that the enmity between brothers in these passages was caused by antecedent acts of injustice, and is eventually resolved by a joint recognition of the unjust, the willingness to leave the past behind, and the desire to live in mutual respect. The biblical story of Joseph reconciling with his brothers stands as a model of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

### **2.3.2 The understanding of Reconciliation in the New Testament**

In as much as it is an undeniable fact that reconciliation is a theme in the New Testament, very little is said of it in the New Testament. Brown (1971:46) wrote that in the New Testament, *Katallasso* occurs only in the sense of reconciliation or to be reconciled (Matt 5:1ff.). To reconcile is to put to a sour relationship and to substitute it with one of peace and goodwill. The substance of reconciliation lies in the ending of enmity between God and humanity. Hastings (1926:301) says when Paul used the term reconciliation in the second epistle to the Corinthians, he used it with the implication that the previous hostility of mind or heart that used to exist between two people is now part away (Hastings, 1926:301). This process of reconciliation must not be equated with the exercise of conflict resolution. This is so because when doing conflict resolution, issues of conversion and forgiveness is dealt with.

Breytenbach (2010:171) states that Paul utilises the phrase “to be reconciled to someone” in 1 Corinthians 7:1, reprimanding the alienated wife not to remarry or to

be reconciled to her husband. The use of this verb was to denote the alternation from enmity to friendship in an interpersonal relationship. This however is not the same case when the verb is used to denote a change of relationship between human beings and God. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, the word in Greek is mediated by the ambassador; it is part of the process of peace making, denoting change from enmity to peace, and from hostility to friendship. Reconciliation can also be seen as the outcome of peace negotiations, and part of the cease-fire that is agreed upon. Those in wars came forward to be proclaimers of reconciliation and peace treaties. The proclaimers are called ambassadors, and they intercede on behalf of their compatriots they are to propose the reconciliation. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul was entrusted with the message of reconciliation. He has to act as an ambassador representing

Christ. As if God is inviting through Paul, he begs the Corinthians on Christ's behalf to be reconciled with God (Breytenbach, 2010:173-173).

According to Koopman (2007:97), the reconciliation that is confessed in Belhar reflects the two dimensions of reconciliation in Paulinic thought. Reconciliation as *hilasmos* has to do with the expiation of wrongs and stumbling blocks to atonement (at-onement). Reconciliation as *katalassoo* refers to harmony in the relationship with the other. The reconciliation of Belhar has in mind the embrace that Miroslav Volf refers to the embrace of different races, tribes, nationalities, socio-economic groups, genders, sexual orientations, age groups, "normal" and disabled people. The reconciliation of Belhar pleads for the removal of stumbling blocks in the way of peaceful living, and of the embrace. Reconciliation therefore implies opposition to injustices like racism, tribalism, xenophobia, classism, misogyny, homophobia, ageism and handicappism. The way Koopman (2007) defines reconciliation from

Belhar confession and Breytenbach (2010) defines it from Pauline's letter, and is moving close to what is needed in the Mokopane context. In the context of this study, the message of reconciliation is entrusted to denominational leadership who ought to act on behalf of Christ in Mokopane to proclaim the message of reconciliation just like Paul was invited to proclaim the message of reconciliation to the Corinthians to reconcile with God. Reconciliation with God has the bearing on reconciliation with one another. As human beings are the image of God, reconciling with one another implies reconciling with God. Based on what is mentioned above in the biblical theology, there are aspects that the researcher has picked as the most important aspects of this research study.

### **2.3.3 Important aspects that comprise reconciliation**

Simon and Ublijan (2012) indicate that reconciliation is perceived in a particular manner for better understanding in any given context. It differs according to context of people; hence various aspects are to be investigated to draw a common ground for this concept in Mokopane within the South African context of apartheid and democracy. For the sake of this study, the researcher has decided to focus on four aspects only in order to contextualise the research study. The following aspects will be discussed in the following section, namely healing, forgiveness, foundation and reparation.

### **2.3.3.1. Healing as the means of Reconciliation in Mokopane context.**

The researcher has already mentioned that reconciliation has different meanings based on the context of the conflict. In this study, the research will focus on healing as a means to reconciliation. Mukonori (2012:75) indicates ten years' pre-independence and post-independence in Zimbabwe as the model of conflict and reconciliation struggle that the researcher has cited here. The process of reconciliation has negatively affected Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. In this context, it has affected whites and blacks living in Mokopane in particular as the site of this research, and South Africans in general. In the two decades of post-apartheid, the nation has witnessed an increasingly violent service-delivery protests as war of liberation, whilst the post-independence decades caused further hardships and suffering of white and black South Africans in Mokopane. The people who had survived the protracted war of liberation in the area soon faced yet another orgy of violence. This time being perpetuated by their own government. It was a matter of being thrown into the furnace (Mukonori, 2012:75). Mukonori's (2012:75) argument will be useful in this dissertation since the people of Mokopane still feel that national healing and reconciliation do not exist due to exclusion in terms of the legacy of the Groups Areas Act of 1966. Affected people still suffer from psychological, economic and political wounds inflicted upon them by their own government, and it took a long time to address the issues of land. If they are not treated, the unhealed wounds are a time-bomb that will explode sooner or later. The researcher will focus on the process of healing as a means to reconciliation.

Moyo (2015:13) indicates that healing is a complex process that includes the ventilation of pain and the possible resolution of negative memories and trauma, which individuals and communities may have experienced during long ages of

violence and wars. During the period of violence and wars, human beings found themselves broken and bruised in many ways. From time to time, they found themselves in need of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual restoration. Healing presupposed that human beings have lost something wealthy that they once enjoyed, and that it is possible to regain what they have lost. In Mokopane context, the healing process will attempt to create a space for the wounded to tell their stories. In this process, the victims and the perpetrators will be able to partake in the healing of the past, and to present wounds if invited to do so. The healing of memories is linked to the whole process of reconciliation, transformation, empowerment and peace-making (Moyo, 2015:13).

Reconciliation means restoration of relationships and forgiveness. Reconciliation and healing are a pillar to sustainable peace for all people of Mokopane. The process should be genuine and frank in respect of individuals and all groups involved. Reconciliation and healing as pillars to sustainable peace and justice needs the church's intervention. Reconciliation can only materialise when selfishness and superiority complex have ceased because it operates with humility and embracement (Moyo, 2015:14). The process of healing memories is sometimes described as a project aimed at creating an opportunity for the wounded to tell their stories and to be listened to. The project also concerns the role of pastoral and community care and church leadership in trying to attend to the severe trauma of these individual members of the community and faith community.

According to Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse (2003:77), healing is a strategy, process or activity that improves the psychological health of individuals following extensive spiritual, psychological, political, social and economic violation of humanity through violent conflict. Psychological health is understood by the World Health Organization

as encapsulating, among other factors, subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualisation of one's intellectual and emotional potential. Psychological, emotional, physical and social health is not only interlinked but interdependent. It is with such an understanding that it then becomes vital to seek for strategies, processes or activities aimed at rehabilitating and reconstructing local and national communities more broadly as these are also integrally linked to this process. Healing is not just about helping persons to deal with their mental health needs in an isolated way, but is based on and fundamentally linked to the mending and reconstruction of communities and the social context. This implies restoring a normalised everyday life that can rebuild and confirm people's sense of being and belonging.

Van der Kolk (1987:987) indicates that trauma can be understood as destruction of individual and/or collective structures of a society. It is the loss of faith, trust, confidence and belief in oneself, other human beings, physical-organic material and God. It is the loss of faith, trust, confidence and belief, that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe space to retreat within or outside oneself to deal with frightening emotions or experience. In this sense, it is not only vital to assist people deal with the effects of the conflict on them, to help them through, for example, a grieving process in a constructive way. It is also of paramount importance to deal with the roots of distress and symptoms. What needs to be "healed" is therefore the multitude of individual, political, social and cultural responses to a traumatic situation and its aftermath. National healing then refers to the concept that the whole nation has been wounded in one way or the other and therefore needs to be healed from the wounds that have been inflicted in multidimensional ways in one's wellbeing.

The researcher is of the opinion that healing trauma is, in many ways, a life-long experience. It is not an event but a life-long process. The decision to heal does not come naturally and needs to become a work of intent for years and generations to come (Simoni, 2012). This emphasised the highest possibility of reaching it in a matter of time. Achieving this depends on the correct intention to recognise that God's mission (*Missio Dei*) is to reconcile humanity, and if reconciliation is achieved, then the Holy spirit renews humanity not to go back to their old wicked ways, but to aim for consummation as the hope to reach a complete born again humanity in the new earth and new heaven. Therefore, a meaningful, holistic and solid approach towards human beings is only construed through our direct involvement and engagement in the processual continuation of the grand acts of God in our experience. In reflecting on this involvement and engagement, we become aware of God's creation through our creatureliness, aware of our reconciliation on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus, aware of our renewal in the ongoing renewal work of the Spirit, and aware of our consummation and fulfilment in being directed towards the new heaven and the new earth. This is to establish a situation in which differences are promoted and celebrated, and where human beings live in harmony (Naude, 2002). But the nature of the church and to achieve harmony should be in the forefront to participate and to share in God's mission of reconciliation (De Cruchy, 1991). Furthermore, De Cruchy's emphasis was that humanity ought to remember that it is a community in which worshipping and witnessing to both within and beyond the boundaries of the church that healing and forgiveness will be recognised. The healing process as a means to reconciliation should be costly and not cheap like shaking hands, hugging and crying but involves forgiveness.

### **2.3.3.2. Reconciliation as a means of forgiveness**

The South African model of conflict resolution was probably popular and appropriate to restore peace and to begin reconciliation immediately in the country. The theory of reconciliation and forgiveness is popular to resolve conflicts and to bring rebels into the mainstream and to ensure their participation in nation building (Bhuddathoki, 2003).

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. It is psychologically not possible to forget all the traumas of victims through forgiveness. However, this is the best approach to encourage rebels to lay down their arms and to assure their role in decision making processes. The process is complicated but seems quite effective. Even though the victim will not fully agree to amnesty for perpetrators of crime against humanity during the conflict, this may be the only way for national healing. There is no doubt that most rebels have been involved in several forms of atrocities, and have committed numerous human rights violations through killing, abductions, disappearances and threats. Similarly, the security forces and authorities were also involved in human rights violations (TRC, 1998).

One can conclude that for the achievement of reconciliation, all parties need to be involved. Tutu further recommends that all human rights violations and abuses which led to a disintegrated society should be investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. South Africa today should perceive this as a good move to achieve social cohesion, either through trial, reparation and compensation; all human beings should be respected and should have rights to enjoy dignity. Zalec (2012) analysed the relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness based on dignity of humanity, and discovered that both of them are transitional and manifold. He elaborated further that

humanity must be certain that person A has forgiven person B. This means that humanity must establish what person A has forgiven, of which his or her acts were the object of forgiveness (Zalec, 2012). Similarly, it must be true when we say that person A and person B have reconciled by means of forgiveness. This means that humanity must be precise and explicit to say I regard person A and person B reconciled, or which relationship they have established again.

Zalec (2012) further asks whether it is true in all established cases or kinds of reconciliation that forgiveness is a condition for reconciliation. He does not think so.

However, John Milbank disagrees and argues that we are all to offer positive ideas of Thomas Aquinas' stipulated view that we can all offer human forgiveness based on the absence of repentance. But forgiveness is the beginning of repentance. But he also alluded to the fact that divine forgiveness cannot be so offered unless it is based on true faith (Milbank, 2003:45). In other words, repentance is more than attitude.

However, the two thoughts coincide on the point that forgiveness and repentance are granted by the mediation of the grace of God. Forgiveness is the component of both repentance and reconciliation in the theory of restorative justice within the five "R" of restorative justice namely, facing reality, taking responsibility, repentance, reconciliation and restitution. This leads the researcher to the foundation of reconciliation.

### **2.3.3.3 The building blocks of reconciliation**

Reconciliation is not standing on the vacuum but on a strong foundation as mentioned above that it is part of restorative justice. Genuine communication is the basic foundation of reconciliation in a broken relationship. Reconciliation is based on the following foundations:

- A fair confession or estimation of perpetrators and victims of the harm and injury has been done;
- Sincere regret and remorse of the harm;
- Preparedness to apologise;
- Preparedness of the parties in conflict to get rid of anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and harm;
- Commitment of the perpetrators not to repeat the harm; and
- A sincere effort of the perpetrators to repair in possible measurement, the wrong done and compensate harm.

These six steps mentioned supra are surely positive factors of reconciliation. It is hard to say whether they are necessary and sufficient condition of it. However, the researcher cannot imagine of a factual reconciliation to happen without the presence of all of these stages.

Zalec (2012) concurs with Krasovec (1999) and extends this view to a Biblical level. He says that the Bible contains messages of reconciliation and forgiveness, which has highest priority in God's relationship to humanity, higher than punishment. This implies that God is much more merciful than strict justice (Zalec, 2012; Krasovec, 1999). This supremacy is only made possible by the victory of absolute monotheism over effect of polytheism. He was looking from a Hebrew bible perspective. This brings us to a point where the researcher can say God is in essence, God of forgiveness unconditionally, as a result, it becomes a supreme mark of His goodness (grace). An attainment of reconciliation and of unity is the true purpose of activities of God and humanity.

Reconciliation and peace are a key priority in the agenda of the World Council of Churches (WCC) as it reflects on the conflicts in the world. WCC encourages its member churches to participate in the ministry of peace, justice, reconciliation and unity. The council insisted that in situations of conflict, the church as representing God is entrusted with the message of reconciliation and unity (WCC, 2006:5). WCC calls this endeavour a pilgrimage of justice, peace and reconciliation; it is a journey of compromises. Hence the researcher has engaged in this research to pursue justice, peace and reconciliation in Mokopane area. These stages in the process of reconciliation lead to building a relationship that was broken or destroyed. Reparation is the final stage of reconciliation foundation. This is the actual final product of the whole process of nation building through justice, reconciliation and unity.

#### **2.3.3.4. Reparation of relationship**

The final stage of the foundation for reconciliation is more on repentance and building a new relationship. The person who is involved in repentance needs movement. Hence, Senokoane (2016:195) indicates that there must be action and movement in salvation (*Epistrophe*). Blackness soteriology is a movement of black people from sin of acceptance and dependence on whites to the acceptance that they are human beings with full rights and dignity. This is the beginning of repairing relationship in

Mokopane. Roberts (2005:7) indicates that black and white Christians have been living an unauthentic life in America. This is a similar situation in Mokopane, South Africa, where people live in the area of race. Whites have noticed the necessities of love, justice and mercy. They are guilty of malpractice as so-called Christians; whites have been hypocritical and involved in double-dealing in the area of race. Words and

deeds have been antithetical. Deceit and meaninglessness have been common among whites even in integrated congregations and denominational bodies. White Christians have been living and behaving in unauthentic existence (Senokoane, 2016:195). On the other hand, black Christians have passively accepted the dull end of the misinterpretation and malpractice of white Christians that have also lived unauthentic existence. It is the goal of the worthy black theology to lead both blacks and whites to authentic Christian existence (Roberts, 2005:7).

In the context of this research study, black soteriology is a reparation of a relationship as a liberation act of God to save whites from dehumanising black people of Mokopane. Black soteriology is a true life of faith that ought to be for whites; one that would enable whites to accept all humans as equal to themselves. This stage is an enabling stage of liberation where laws, policies and regulations are renewed to enable physical and spiritual revolution. This black soteriology challenges blacks to transform from being receivers (heathens) of the message of reconciliation to be senders (missionaries) of this message in order to repair broken relationships in

Mokopane in particular, and in South Africa in general. Roberts (2005:7) argues that:

Black Christians are to be led to the true self-understanding, selfrespect, true personhood, and fulfilment as children of God. Because it is a liberating as well as reconciliation theology, it combines meaning with protest. Confrontation, empowerment, and development programs may be the means whereby blacks will move on to an authentic life. Therefore, not only the existential posture, but the ministry of Black Power may figure in a theological reflection upon the black experience. Authentic life for black is a movement through liberation to reconciliation. Reconciliation between blacks and whites must henceforth be in “deed and in truth”; it must be through humanness and liberation, and it must be between equals.

In a broader sense, black soteriology is the reparation of relationship of black and white people, and awakens black consciousness about who they are and how they should behave amongst themselves towards whites as other human beings. This salvation is conversion from self-hate, self-undermining and self-disrespect to the transformation of the mind (*Metanoia*) and transformation of action (*Epistrophe*) in the sense of living the life through self-understanding, self-respect, true personhood, and fulfilment as children of God. Soteriology is all about restoring relationship with God, oneself, other human beings and the physical organic environment (Senokoane, 2016:195).

The first question that arises should be what are the possible ways or means of reparation of relationship. Thompson answers this question by saying that the first candidate is restoration. He extends by saying that the problem with restoration is that it is often beyond human capacities to restore the wrong whereby in case of murder, people cannot undo the wrong as an example. Restoration can provide the person affected with murder merely with money, property, psychological support, empathy, compassion etc. The second candidate has reconciliatory reparation. Before we consider it, let me notice that many scholars conclude that reconciliation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of the restorative justice (Lapsy, 1997). It is not a necessary condition because justice restoration can take place even in the case when no reconciliation has happened. For instance, the perpetrator can do anything that is needed for restoration but the victim can be adamant that no act will be sufficient for neither reconciliation nor restoration is a sufficient condition. The sole fact that victims and perpetrators live in peace with each other does not mean that restorative justice has been done (Thompson, 1997: 45-50). The above values may assist the researcher to integrate the modern disintegrated society which makes it difficult to

reconcile for the sake of our future generation. For reparation and healing, human beings cannot walk away from the process of reconciliation.

The definition of reconciliation and unity clearly sounds to be a work that cannot be separated from forgiveness, reparation, and justice and healing. Aspects of reconciliation, the way to healing and any means of forgiveness are popular means of resolving conflicts and of bringing rebels into the main stream and to ensure nation building. The church is a societal structure that needs to be an agent of social transformation, and at the same time, the agent of the message of reconciliation and justice. The challenge that the church is facing is that it is no more the light and salt of the world but the world influences it more than it ought to influence the world. The church is as disintegrated as the society. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the disintegration of the church, which disempowers it to influence the world.

## **2.4 DISINTEGRATED CHURCH AS A PROBLEM FOR RECOILATION IN SOCIETY**

In this section, the researcher will journey through the history of the church and society in terms of church unity and church disunity as a reflection of South African lifestyle according to the nationalists' worldview of life for blacks and whites in South Africa in terms of the philosophy of apartheid. The researcher has observed his own church where he served as a minister of the word and sacrament in Mokopane, how the so-called Dutch Reformed Churches are divided along racial lines, and where the society is moving towards unity in the so-called towns. South Africa is not a different

or isolated country from other African countries. In this sense, it is important to take a brief look at how the church should be in the African context.

In an African perspective, the church is seen as a distinctive form of family, which clearly reflects a sense of reciprocal responsibilities and overarching interdependence that must exist among all church members. Given the traditional African emphasis on the extended family as a place of belonging and a context for a deeper experience of solidarity and care for others, the church as a family provides an apt starting point for African ecclesial reflection (Modise, 2015). Furthermore, Modise (2015) indicates that the family concept of the church in Southern Africa is problematic and not actualised beyond congregational borders as a result of the legacy of the Groups Areas Act of 1966, and it has not been a reality to South African Christians' experience in the Church of Christ, or in the so-called DRC family. The service of God, service to one another and service to the world has not been a reality because of enmity and hatred between whites and blacks, divisions within the church along racial lines, and in terms of class and gender, which are sins that Christ overcame on the cross. These evils are reflections of the community of Mokopane as the site of this research.

This unity (family) was destroyed by sin and had to be restored by reconciliatory work of Christ on the cross; in this sense unity is given through faith in Christ. This church unity is like a reconciliatory (saving) act of God. In fact, as part of a reconciliatory act of God, the church unity is achieved on the cross and is afterwards to be applied by the Holy Spirit in the lives of the people of God. This is the process of reconciliation and unification of the community of Mokopane in the context of this research study. It is unfortunate as per the problem statement of this research study that the church is more disintegrated than united to address the social ills that are existing in this

country in general and Mokopane in particular. The division in the church is the reflection of the socio-politico-economic situation of South Africa.

De Cruichy (1993:33) indicates that division of the church in South Africa emanated from socio-political aspects, which are major contributors to division in the church and in society in South Africa. The idea of separate services for the coloureds and black communities with the idea of “weak of some” played a major role. This is a clear line on which “the weak of some” will follow steps to the successful efforts to achieve the division of the church by DRC (Modise, 2013:5). After proper analysis, the researcher will find whether reconciliation, justice and unity are achievable on historical consideration within Mokopane context.

Every society can achieve peace and unity by allowing the process of reconciliation to unfold without losing identity. However, I will be avoiding using reconciliation as a means to cover up differences and structural injustices as the TRC findings suggest.

The role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) cannot be left unanalysed since it is part of history. This will be viewed by considering submission made by both DRC and URCSA before its completion. This will help us to find the true meaning of reconciliation in the South African society based on truth and justice. Creeds which are confessed by both churches will be critically discussed and analysed later. The researcher will utilise Belhar Confession as the theological tool within confessional theology to set the tone on reconciliation and unity of the church, which has a bearing on the unity of society, in particular Mokopane.

### **2.4.1 The background of the disintegrated church that contributed to the disintegrated society**

There is no scriptural basis for church and society disunity based on racial lines as it is set-up in South Africa through the apartheid philosophy and the democratic set up on the basis of classism. In 1857 DRC took a decision to condone segregational worship services. This was the beginning of a disintegrated church on the colour basis. Since the nineteenth century, the question of how to baptise slaves and other people who were not “born Christian” could be incorporated into the establishment of churches of the Cape Colony to be unresolved (Giliomee, 2003:218). This was evidently witnessed when a mission movement was established, namely Zuid-Afrikaanse Zending Genootskchap (ZAZG). The ZAZG was the major and active local missionary society. This movement was aimed at bringing as many ‘slaves’ to the catechumen as possible. However, few were confirmed in the Reformed and Lutheran congregations. All over the colony, the missionary society organised their followers into separate parishes. In the Cape colony, the churches were now divided into racial lines based on black and white Christians.

Steadily the work to expand segregation was growing. In 1819, Dr John Phillip who was superintendent of the London Missionary Society (LMS) stationed in South Africa, advised the ZAZG to organise its converts into separate parish, as LMS had decided to assist every society should it decide to adapt such policy (Giliomee, 2003:218). The director of LMS agreed to accept Phillip’s offer of how to put converts in separate parishes. Surely, this was an indoctrination approach to people born ‘non-Christian’. Many years later, in 1851, the ZAZG directors submitted a document stating that they had supported the 1819 decision but only on major qualifications. It was unwise in my view as they declared to found separate congregations; instead all illiterates and

heathens should be instructed and be prepared to become members of the established church (Giliomee, 2003:300). This sound too unfortunate as it emanates from 1824 synod.

Unfortunately, the patterns have been set in 1824 when the Dutch Reformed Church convened its first colonial synod meeting to pass a regulation for its own missionary work and ordained L Marquardt as its first missionary. He had strict instruction to administer the sacraments only to heathens he had gathered together in a separate congregation. Although DRC was not hostile to the missionary work, it wanted to bring missionary work done by its members (Saayman, 2007:35) under its own control, particularly since they dominated the rank of the ZAZG and its affiliates, local bodies.

One can have concluded that it was a tactical move by foreign or international. But ZAZG and its associates did not want to be absorbed by the DRC, which would mean sacrificing their autonomy and parting with those members who were Lutherans.

The policy of DRC at the Cape was firm and the church was open to all who had been baptised, and the communion had to be served to all those who were confirmed, regardless of whether they were free or slaves (Saayman, 2007:36). In the researcher's understanding, this should be the status quo of the church from church history and from an ecclesiological perspective. In Systematic theology, the church should be an inclusive community of those who believe in Christ.

The state of affairs of the inclusive church remains a church of Christ until 1850 when the church was divided according to the desire of white Christians in the Cape colony. Nicolas Hofmeyer and two Murray brothers (Andrew and John) had just return to South Africa from their theological studies in the Netherlands. They were full of

evangelic fervour for missionary work as an inescapable obligation of the church. Hofmeyer, who had a high regard for Van der Kemp and his work, found the DRC's poor records on missionary work and embarrassment (Kriel, 1963:49). Using the pseudonym IT, he

(Hofmeyer) addressed the issue of missionary work in a series of articles in 1853 and 1854 in the official journal, die <sup>1</sup>Gereformeerde Kerkbode (Saayman, 2007:38-40). The use of pseudonyms was customary in the journal of the time. He did not want to bring about equating (gelykstelling) by disturbing the differences in rank or station in the social hierarchy that had developed under slavery. Writing from the depth of his evangelical convictions, he had as his priority the need to bring the gospel to souls who otherwise would be lost.

According to Giliomee (2003), Hofmeyer investigated three possible options for the reformed Church's missionary activities:

- First, he rejected the policy of delineating, which would later be known as 'segregation'; the practice of setting up completely separate mission stations or 'congregation' for coloured Christians. In his view, this tended to destroy the bond between whites and coloureds and the influence of the church in society.
- Secondly, he rejected as unsuitable the fusion of white and coloured Christians by identical coloured treatment.
- Thirdly, he claimed that coloured people had a lower level of development, and suggested that the gospel must be brought to them in a simple way. He further

indicated to them that it was important that coloured Christians understood their place in the status hierarchy and not confuse religious and social privileges.

These three options sound strongly ridiculous because Hofmeyer did not have either psychological evidence or biblical reference. Hence, he quoted the experience of the minister who admitted into his parish, with many coloureds who promptly forget their station or estate in life.

Hofmeyer was the pioneer of segregation in the church on a softer note based on his academic and intellectual capacities, while he paved the way to division in the church and society based on the colour of the skin. Hofmeyer was declared to be in favour of a third and second way as a 'means of overcoming the barriers to missionary work and the fear of gelykstelling (equating) every parish would have a minister and missionary; and both a church and separate gesticht (chapel). Hofmeyer illustrates the ideal of separation between a mother and daughter church that would be intimately bound together. This scenario suggests that the minister would conduct the service in the church, which coloured members would always attend, and the missionary would use the equating for religious instruction tailored to the needs of the coloured Christians. This means that in the chapel (gesticht), the minister would perform all baptism and confirmation ceremonies and administer Holy Communion (Hofmeyer, 1853).

However, Hofmeyer failed to be a reformed theologian or reformed minister where theology is justified by biblical support, because in the reformed tradition, the Bible is a point of departure. Instead, Hofmeyer was unreformed since he did not quote any

biblical text to justify his thinking or authorities on mission policy. Instead, he pointed two of what he calls successful stories, that is, models of Cape Town. One was St

Stephens' parish of mainly slaves in Cape Town who shared a minister with a white Lutheran parish, and the other was the Presbyterian Church which housed white and coloured parish meetings in the same church but at separate times. The success stories were relative to the pioneer of segregation in the church of God, which have a negative impact on the current church and society, where human beings were rated according to the colour of their skins and not as the image of God.

At this stage, one can conclude that there were two churches in one with the same identity. Again, not only DRC engineered the process of segregation of churches, but other denominations are in the picture, such as Lutherans and Presbyterians. So it will be unfair to blame DRC alone in the whole saga of church and community disunity in South Africa.

There were no clear stories in the church journal or article in the Gereformeerde Kerkbode during this period that favoured segregation (Loubser, 1987:87). The debate came to a head at the Cape Town synod of 1857. The item on the agenda caused some disputes in the town of Ceres in the Western Cape, where a conflict between elders ensued. They wished to establish a *gesticht* (segregate) to bring the gospel to coloured people. On the other hand, church ministers argued that this was in conflict with the 1829 synod; a decision that stressed the unity of the church. Andrew Murray, a senior minister in Graaff-Reinet, was particularly aware of a dispute in the parish of Stochsletroom. This parish was composed of a small white minority in a large KhoiKhoi congregation. The former wished to receive the Holy Communion separately. Most important to note also at this synod (1857) was a

special commission for mission work, who reported that the time was not ripe for a coordinated effort to extend missionary work. In response, the synod appointed a new committee composed of Hofmeyer, Murray brothers and Albertyn. It promptly informed the synod that with the necessary zeal, progress would indeed be possible. A formula was needed, and this was what Hofmeyer's scheme would provide.

In the synod debate on the issue whether to permit segregate facilities, several participants called for a reaffirmation of the church's policy of non-discrimination. Hofmeyer, one of the last two speakers, insisted that there was a more important issue that addresses prejudice. That issue was to identify the most effective way for the church to promote the Christianisation of the heathen. According to newspaper reports, after he had spoken, the debate took a new turn. At the end the Synod, a compromise and unbiblical resolution were accepted, which was proposed by Andrew Murray senior, a prominent evangelical and mission enthusiast. The resolution declared that it was 'desirable and according to the scriptures to absorb members from the heathen population in existing congregations wherever possible. However, in cases where 'the weaknesses of some' hindered the spread of the Gospel, the synod agreed that people might enjoy their Christian privileges in separate buildings (Kriel, 1963:54-59). This resolution sanctioned separate facilities but not segregated parishes, and it was not in conflict with what other protestant churches were doing at the time. So the line was visible for separate churches but in one parish. In such situations, many questions were raised. Such as: was there no objection towards such move? Was there biblical justification for such a decision? Or was this a clear form of biological racism. These questions are endless. He did not object to separate church building or chapels, as they were called, if they could accommodate the

special needs of non-whites. He believed that synod had erred for focusing on white prejudice (Huet,

1860:28-53). One could conclude that it would be wrong to blame sponsors of the 1857 (foreign mission) decision to condone segregation in the DRC. The entrenchment of segregation was a process; insidious process some would say. This legacy is still with us today. These separate churches have a bearing on the separate society, as the colour of the skin determine where one needs to worship. So it also determines where one wants to stay, study and work, hence Mokopane as the site of this research.

#### **2.4.2 The first actual disintegrated church in the Cape colony**

The 1857 synod decision has produced the first actual disintegrated church in the form of a home and Foreign Service, which in the South African context relates to black and white churches in the same place. The researcher will focus on the home and foreign services as a form of legitimising the 1857 synod's decision. Saayman (2012:89) indicates that in 1880, the DRC synod decided to make it possible for its mission parishes to join the segregated new order (Saayman, 2012:89). In 1881 five congregations, including one stemming from Faure's Wynberg Congregation, formed the first synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC). Faurie did not protest against the synod's decision, but also did not force coloured members to leave. None of those who left the building complained of discrimination. They clearly believed their own parish would give them greater scope. No one at this stage could anticipate that the DRC would later be so miserly and authoritarian in its control of the mission, and

that relationships in the DRC 'family' will be severely strained. Segregation in this case produced strife, hence they became disintegrated (Saayman, 2012:89).

DRC decided to establish its mission into what they call home and foreign mission. This mission intended to achieve what was formed several years earlier separated churches. This was after representatives of five mission congregations were assembled in Wellington near Cape Town to form what is viewed as the first synod of DRMC. However, DRC reserved the constitutional right to reject any legislation that suggests the independence or autonomy of the so called black or coloured church.

The DRC simply continued to ignore the theological injunction contained in racial segregation in ministry and mission in many congregations. They made sure that in these congregations, the missionary and the minister responsible for sacraments is attained (Giliome, 2003: 218-219). From 1857 to date, the DRC was a church divided along racial lines. Even those who are in this new church (URCSA), they are there physically, but their souls are somewhere else.

Thomas (2002:63) explains that in South Africa, the DRMC had been established for coloured people by 1881. Its purpose was not the same as that of the mission society involved in church planting, but was rather to entrench racial segregation. The DRC saw the mission not so much as a church moving towards autonomy, but rather as a coloured department of the mother church.

The establishment of the DRCA was the outcome of the mission work undertaken by the African population through the variation of synods of the DRC. At first, African converts were simply added to the DRC. In time separate churches and synods for

African converts were established. The first to be created was the synod of the Orange Free State in 1910. Similar synods were created in the Transvaal in 1932, the Cape Province in 1951 and Natal in 1952. The separation between these synods came to an end in 1963 when the DRCA was formed. Eventually in 1968, the Reformed Church in Africa (for Indians) came into being (Thomas 2002: 194; Meiring, 2004: 120).

The DRCA was based on racial segregationist principles, had the same structure, doctrine, traditions, and customs as the mother church which retains extensive control over it by supplying 80% of its budget. Its clergymen were not allowed to white congregations, and inter communication between the two churches and these ministers were to be watchdogs of two mission work (Thomas, 2003:214).

From its inception, the DRC enjoyed independence or autonomy as a church. It was started in article 4 of the church order of 1932 of the DRC, which was handed over to the black church. The DRC must have representatives at all levels of the black church.

In other words, at church council, presbytery and synod level. This arrangement was very disturbing to many theologians and ministers of the word within DRCA and DRMC (Modise, 2013; Meiring, 2004: 122-128).

The disunity in the DRC family was questioned, and the need to become what the church originally was, one church, was expressed. Believers from the black church, coloured church and Indian church wanted to be accepted as believers in Jesus Christ (as in the articles of URCSA today), and constantly to be classified as black or coloured or Asian Christians. The DRCA therefore called for church unity in its

different synods (NGKA Akta, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991). These synods sitting gave birth to what is known today as the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa-URCSA. The church, as ecumenical church, cannot even promote or advocate reconciliation in the society due to its ecumenical disintegration in terms of operation while claiming to be united in terms of affiliation to the South African council of churches or other bodies. The churches gave testimonies of their participation in apartheid and how they can restore the damage caused by this policy in the truth and reconciliation headed by Desmond Tutu. The church in South Africa in the real sense was not supposed to appear before the commission, but to institute the commission and to drive

reconciliation and nation healing as the agent of reconciliation. In the next section, the researcher will critically discuss the TRC in relation to the church as an agent of reconciliation and truth.

## **2.5 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH AS AGENT OF RECONCILIATION**

In this section, the researcher will discuss the TRC in relation to the church as agent of reconciliation and truth for the two reasons. Firstly, the church is the body of Christ, who said he is the truth. So the church should represent Christ on earth by being the truth, hence the church is relevant to handle the TRC. Secondly, Paul said the church should be the ambassador of reconciliation. Hence, the government of national unity instituted the TRC with the idea that the church ought to drive this process forward by

utilising credible church leaders like Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine to head and facilitate this process in a theological-political context.

Central to the business of reconciliation and peace-making is the quest for the truth (Meiring, 2009:59). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) received submissions from faith groupings and Christian denominations in reaction to calls from the TRC for a special hearing for all faith communities in relation to human rights violations under apartheid. This study will specifically focus on how the DRC and URCSA have dealt with the history of apartheid in their submissions to the TRC.

In reaction to the struggle for unity, justice and reconciliation, and ultimately everlasting peace, there are key elements for both victims and perpetrators in both churches (**DRC and URCSA**). Given their vast different backgrounds and experiences of the traumatic past and the way these formed their identities, it is obligatory for healing and reconciliation that they share it in public with each other. Suppressed and forgotten truth is part of the healing process and a form of communal identity.

How we understand the truth is essential to how we are able to make our past redemptive (Thesnaar, 2013:66). This was emphasised by the head of the TRC, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu when he said “there can be no healing without truth” (TRC Report, Volume 4. 1998:115). The TRC argued vigorously that the truth should also be understood as healing and restorative truth over and against a factual and objective understanding of truth, namely relational, personal, subjective and narrative understanding of truth (TRC Report Vol 4, 1998: 115).

The aim of this study is firstly, to highlight and discuss some of the most prominent themes in the struggle for justice from the two reformed churches (mother and daughter) as they reflected on the apartheid past (from 18<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century) in their submission to the TRC. Secondly, the aim is to make a constructive contribution towards dealing with the past and contributing to healing and reconciliation by identifying some lessons learnt from the past, live in the present and move towards a peaceful future.

When planning around the commission, on truth and reconciliation, the government did not forget that this is the competence of the church as per scriptural mandate.

Hence, it appointed clergymen to head this commission. Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine headed the commission. The researcher highlighted brief biographies of the two clergymen to illustrate their connection to the church.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a South African Anglican cleric and theologian, was born on 7 October 1931. He is known for his work as a passionate anti-apartheid and human rights activist. Tutu served as the Bishop of Johannesburg from 1985 to 1986. Thereafter, he was appointed the Archbishop of the Church of the Southern provinces based in Cape Town from 1986 to 1996. In both cases, he was the first indigenous black African to hold the position. Theologically, he sought to fuse ideas from black theology with African theology; politically, he identifies himself as a socialist. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1960 and moved to the United Kingdom 1962 to study theology at King's College London. In 1966, he returned to southern Africa and taught theology at the Federal Theological Seminary and then the University of Botswana,

Lesotho and Swaziland. Back in southern Africa in 1975, he served first as dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg and then as Bishop of Lesotho, taking an active role in opposition to South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and whiteminority rule. In the years 1978 to 1985, Desmond was general-secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Although warning the National Party government that apartheid would lead to racial violence, as an activist, he stressed non-violent protests and foreign economic pressure to bring about change.

Also in 1986, he became president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, resulting in further tours of the continent. After President F. W. de Klerk released the antiapartheid activist, Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, and the pair led negotiations to dissolve apartheid, Tutu assisted as a mediator between rival black factions. After the 1994 general elections had resulted in a coalition government headed by Mandela, the latter selected Tutu to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate past human rights abuses committed by both pro and anti-apartheid groups.

The other clergyman who was appointed by the government to head the TRC was Alex Boraine, who was born in Cape Town and grew up in a poor white housing area. Due to economic reasons, Alex left high school in Standard 8, just two years before matric. He worked as a ledger clerk; his decision was a secret to his parents. His theological career started as a lay preacher of the Methodist Church in 1950. In his early twenties, he studied at Rhodes University in South Africa where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology and Biblical Studies in 1956. He was ordained as a minister of the word and sacrament in the Methodist church in 1956, where he served Pondoland East as the first congregation of his career. He furthered his

studies in England Mansfield College at Oxford where he obtained Master of Arts in 1962. A further scholarship saw him attend Drew University in the United States where he obtained his PhD in Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies in 1966. In 1970, he was appointed the youngest ever President of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, a position he held until 1972. Boraine was one of the main architects of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The brief biographies of the two clergymen that serve in the leading and facilitation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission illustrate that it is recognised that the church ought to be an agent of reconciliation in the society. It is disturbing that the Dutch Reformed Church, the Uniting Reformed Church and other churches have submit to the commission, instead of being key role players to reconcile the society. The researcher will focus on two churches that made submissions to the TRC, namely DRC and URCSA as the foci of this research study.

### **2.5.1. The submission of DRC to the TRC as the perpetrator instead of agent of reconciliation**

The scriptural consciousness of the DRC was not at ease to submit to the commission as the church. Leading up to the inception of the TRC and thereafter, the Afrikaans media was prominent in spreading negative rhetoric regarding the TRC (Meiring, 1999:96-97). It referred to the TRC as a witch hunt, and a one-sided process where the Afrikaners will be placed in the dock. The effect of this negative rhetoric created scepticisms and instruction among the Afrikaans community towards dealing with the apartheid past, in particular the work of the TRC (Gaum, 1996:6). The DRC did nonetheless take cognisance of the aim and work of the TRC (Gaum, 1996:1). It made a conscious decision to support the work with prayer as early as the end of 1995, and specifically requested the TRC to act fairly to all sides (Meiring, 1999:20).

Meiring, as a member of both the TRC and DRC, urged the DRC to participate in the TRC process by giving support, pastorally caring for the victims and perpetrators (and their families) and to pray for the commission. He also assured them that it will be an opportunity to testify if the DRC could submit a report that will not only explain their role during the last three to four decades, but will also help future generations to understand how the church felt about apartheid, and why they did what they did and what they failed to do (Gaum, 1995:6). The call by Meiring to participate in the TRC process was supported by then moderator of DRC, Rev Freek Swanepoel as well as the decision by the DRC in the Eastern Cape to call on its members to testify before the TRC (Meiring, 1999:86).

The submission by the DRC presbytery of Stellenbosch at the TRC hearing in Paarl was indeed a response to the call from Meiring as well as a prophetic and significant step by any religious organisation, especially the DRC, to start dealing with their role in the apartheid past (presbytery of Stellenbosch). The public and the commissioners present were all touched by the submission, but soon it was clear that not everybody within DRC corridors was as excited as they were (Kerkbode, 6<sup>th</sup> Dec1996).

In an editorial on the Die Kerkbode 18, the editor stated that in no uncertain terms that the presbytery of Stellenbosch has placed General Synod of the DRC in a very difficult situation and that their submissions only indicated the role of the DRC in the dark part of our history. In a split of this criticism, the Western and Southern Cape synods of the

DRC continued to become the only regional synods of DRC to submit a report to the TRC at its extraordinary synodical meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1997. It is however commendable that the Northern Transvaal Synod, although deciding against

submitting to the TRC, missed the opportunity by a mere 18 votes out of 400 present (Thesnaar, 2013: 55).

Although initially the General Synodical Commission (GSC) decided against the submission, it was a positive and wise move to submit an official confession before the TRC (Meiring, 1999:95). Instead of an official submission, the GSC requested Dr First Gaum to compile a document (Journey to Apartheid) to explain the journey of the DRC with apartheid legacy to its congregants for inputs (Thesnaar, 2013:56).

The moderator (Rev Freek Swanepoel) made submission as instructed by GSC even though the entire DRC was not in agreement that it should be done that way. But both outside and inside saw the move as significant, and as an example to its 'family's church.'

### **2.5.2 The submission of URCSA to the TRC as the perpetrator instead of agent of reconciliation**

There was no hesitation from URCSA to make submissions to the TRC. Their goal was to provide the TRC with a clear reflection of their understanding of being church under apartheid in their own words. The historical and contemporary self-understanding of the church is portrayed in the slogan (the church-site of struggle) that the church as an institution in society aimed not to remain unaffected by the all-encompassing influence of apartheid (URCSA submission, 1997:4).

It is on the basis of this background that it is imperative for URCSA to become a major participant in the reconciliation process. It needs to be upfront and provide a strong

advocacy as an agent in this national project of reconciliation, unity and justice. This move is good because it will make it (URCSA) to champion this process and to adhere to a gospel call of oneness in Christ.

The reflection on the document “Journey with Apartheid” by DRC to the TRC was essential because the TRC’s report states that both DRC and URCSA championed and reinforced the acceptance of the apartheid cause in their minds and often demolished their opponents (TRC Report Volume 1-4, 1998:67).

This precludes the fact that initially, the URCSA was in support of apartheid, mainly due to being part of the larger DRC church family, and as indicated earlier, being dominated for many years by conservative white missionaries. This virtually placed the church in a position where they had no choice but to accept theology, which legitimised apartheid and remained silent about ways the policy was implemented (Boesak, 2005: 64). This reality and the Calvinistic theology as it was preached from the mentality of the church and its members made them compliant to their policy, and critical of those who sought to take an anti-apartheid position (Thesnaar, 2013: 57).

URCSA confessed that it failed to live up to its faith convictions, and that it found it difficult to implement its decisions against apartheid in practical actions. Hence, today it should be an agent for those decisions. In its submission, URCSA indicated that in fact, it watered them down, that it did not give the necessary support to young people and those who suffered, or to organisations engaged in the struggle against apartheid (URCSA submission to the TRC 1997:10). Indeed, it states that the ‘absence of decisions’ and the actions represent a blatant omission and silent approval of the cancelations, and is the main cause of human rights violations (URCSA submission to

the TRC, 1997:6 & 7). It is in the content of its submission to the TRC and the message of Belhar Confession that it became instrumental and made URCSA to stand tall and serve the people in the name of unity, justice and reconciliation. It took a victim from history.

Although several theses agree that socio-political aspects are major contributions to a divided church and society in South Africa today, whereby the idea of separate services plays a part, it is not late to achieve unity and peace. Reconciliation is a gospel call. Every society can achieve peace and unity provided the affected parties are committed. The submission by both DRC and URCSA to the TRC was a milestone to the future. Considering the historical role played by missionaries, one is tempted not to go closer to avoid reviving internalised dominance. The church has submitted to the TRC instead of being key role players in the process of reconciliation following their scriptural mandate that they ought to be agents of reconciliation. Pauline's letter to the Corinthians says that churches are the messages of reconciliation. Instead, the church has been passive in the whole process of reconciliation of the society. The researcher will focus on the passiveness of the church in the process of reconciliation in the next section.

## **2.6 THE PASSIVENESS OF THE CHURCH IN THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION**

Banana (1991:2) asserts that the role of the church is to reconcile all men and women, and to bring them into union and fellowship with one another across cultural, religious, racial and regional boundaries. He further writes that the church has a mission in society: the mission of renewal, reassurance and reaffirmation of basic

human rights among the oppressed and the marginalised. In terms of this view, the church has a strong and a positive role to play in national development. Thus, it must exercise a prophetic voice, and democratise that voice in the sense that it becomes an expression of popular will of its entire membership. Briefly, the church must have the concerns of the people at heart.

However, Tshaka (2009:159) is of the opinion that the silence of the church and its leaders in public issues was surprising in a democratic South Africa. It is nevertheless interesting to observe that this silence of church leaders on public matters is in no way unique to the South African context, but has become a worldwide phenomenon (Tshaka, 2009:159). In the context of this research study, the church has been inactive in the process of reconciliation during and after the TRC. It is the understanding of the researcher that the church has been passive during the reconciliation era in South Africa. Therefore, the church ought to be a carrier of TRC recommendations to the point of actualisation.

Boesak (2005:243) speculated that the church is not a sociological phenomenon. This is an interesting comment, mainly because of the way in which the church expresses its weaknesses, internal strife and insecurities in newspapers. The church is not just another non-governmental organisation which is trying to draw attention to single issue agendas. The church needs to realise that it is the church of Christ, called and mandated by God to speak to the whole of human existence in the whole of society, and to seek the Lordship of Jesus Christ by challenging, subverting and changing structures by adapting to the norms of the Kingdom of God.

The involvement of the church in the process of reconciliation began when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by the Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu invited it. This serves to the advantage of the church, as it initially did not understand its role and its tasks at the TRC. A basic task of the church is closely related to the understanding of the essence of the church. The fulfilment of the tasks demonstrates what the church is. The task to overcome broken relationships is close to the essence of the church. To fulfil this task gives orientation about the mission of the church as such. The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa explains explicitly this view in Belhar Confession (1986). Belhar confession (1986) indicates:

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and that with one another.

This is an affirmation that the Belhar confession attests to the fact that the church ought to be agents of reconciliation as it lives and acts according to its confession. It saw reconciliation as the main task of the church. Furthermore, the church confesses that

God has entrusted to His church the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. The church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Church is called blessed, for one reason: it is a peacemaker. It is evidenced by both words and deeds to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. The church has biblical and confessional mandate to act as agents of reconciliation instead of being spectators in the process of reconciliation. The appointment of certain clergymen to the process of reconciliation in the country is a clear indication that the church was asleep or chose to be passive to this process.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

The literature is the brain-holder in the researcher project since it support the problematic subject since it support the researcher. In this chapter, most of the theoretical aspects and implications are put forth as a way to clarify the problem of disintegrate society as a result of the church in history.

Reconciliation, justice and unity have been explicitly being explained. They are important in a sense that they form the bottom or base live from people and believe system could be well understood and thereby enable them to measure their role in the concept of reconciliation, justice and unity. These are the gospel imperative and unavoidable.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the literature review was conducted to explore how the church can be an agent of reconciliation, justice and unity in the society. The success and the failure of the church was discussed in the context of Mokopane in Limpopo Province, South Africa. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the research method on how to collect and interpret data. O'Leary (2004:85) explains that methodology can be described as the framework associated with a particular set of model assumptions that can be used to conduct research. The study is multi-dimensional, hence it needs a research method. The researcher has chosen to use the qualitative method with a bit of quantitative method. The discussion in this chapter presents the research design, population, sample, research instruments and data collection procedures of the study.

The population and the selection of the sample are also discussed.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A research method is of paramount importance in the sense that it assists in data collection, and allows the researcher to conduct an authentic research study. This will be achieved through interviews, surveys, other research techniques, and the use of both present and historical information. The researcher uses the qualitative approach, specifically interviews and report analysis. The research method is designed to assist the researcher to understand the meanings people assign to social, religious and political phenomena, and to clarify the mental processes underlying certain behaviours. In the qualitative paradigm, the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection, and the results may differ greatly depending on who conducts the research (McConney et al., 2002: 87; Steckler et al., 1992:146-156). Qualitative research allows for the collection of subjective data, and the use of complimentary approaches provides a means of eliminating gaps, which can be present, if only one type of approach is adopted.

The main advantage of using the qualitative method is that it generates rich, detailed data that leave the participants' perspectives intact, and provide a context for health behaviour (McConney et al., 2002:86). This why its processes differ from those of quantitative research, which address correlations between variables. However, the main disadvantage of qualitative research is that data collection and analysis may be labour-intensive and time-consuming (Steckler et al., 1992:151). The qualitative data gathered from fieldwork highlights different perceptions on the relevance of church involvement in politics. This will then lead to an assessment of the possibility of reconciliation, justice and unity within Mokopane, where the church plays a major role as an agent of reconciliation.

### **3.2.1 The concept of socio-theological research**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (1985:4) and Briggs and Coleman (2007:14-15), research is a systematic process of collecting and analysing information, and a critical enquiry which aims to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge in the field of study, in this regard, the knowledge in systematic theology in the doctrine of anthropology and femininitic theology. The inquiry holds certain principles and aims to contribute towards the construction of a theory as carefully and accurately as possible to develop knowledge for and of society. Empirical research, as stated by Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006:19), is the application of scientific approach to the study of socio-theological phenomenon.

Academic research is a method or a technique where researchers acquire dependable information about the academic process. The ultimate goal is to discover general principles or interpretations of behaviour that researchers can utilise to explain, predict and control events in socio-theological situations.

This definition implies that the research undertaken will make information known to others, which was not known before the study was undertaken. Hence, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that research as a systematic process is aimed at the cumulative understanding of the phenomenon about concerns and interests of the researcher. Its main purpose is to discover responses to meaningful questions by applying scientific procedures. In this study, the researcher intends to increase the knowledge of theologians and the community of faith about the interplay of power and sex in the modern communities as discussed in chapter two.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

As indicated above, the researcher has chosen to use the qualitative research method due to the nature of the research, which is highly subjective and deals with a heated debate on contemporary phenomena. This phenomenon is the issue of reconciliation that ought to lead to genuine unity in the South African communities, in particular Mokopane as the site of this research. According to Bailey (1982:104), the qualitative method allows the researcher to unearth deeper into the subject matter for the researcher to reach people's feelings and attitudes in their organisation. Qualitative data subscribes to a phenomenological, inductive, holistic, subjective, process oriented and social anthropological worldview. Qualitative research is based on the constructivist philosophy that assumes reality as multi-layer, interactive and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals. Qualitative researchers believe that reality is a social construction, that is, individuals or groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific entities, such as events, persons, processes or objects. People form constructions in order to make sense of entities and to re-organise these constructions as viewpoints, perceptions and belief systems (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:396).

In short, people's perceptions are what they consider "real" to them and what direct their actions, thoughts and feelings towards other people or objects. Hence, qualitative researchers seek to interpret human actions, institutions, events, objects and customs. The ultimate aim is to portray a complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that someone who has not experienced it can understand it (Ary et al., 2006:450).

Qualitative research is usually seen as richer, more vital and having greater depth and as more likely to present a true picture of a way of life of people's experiences, attitudes and beliefs. Guided by Johnson (1994:174), the researcher found that selecting the research method was of paramount importance for the purpose of this research study. The research techniques to be used in data gathering will include interviews, case studies, observations and documents analysis. The study of literature will help the researcher to gather background evidence of the possibility of reconciliation, justice and unity in society.

### **3.3.1 Qualitative research techniques**

Qualitative research depends on multi-method strategies to collect and integrate data.

Hence, interviews and observations are primary data collection techniques in qualitative research. Qualitative research is an interactive face-to-face research, which requires relatively extensive time to systematically observe, interview and record processes as they occur naturally (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:428; Ary et al., 2006:474).

Qualitative researchers study participants' perspectives through interactive strategies.

Each qualitative strategy is particularly matched for obtaining a specific type of data (Ary et al., 2006:474):

- Observation is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual contexts;
- Interviewing is optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences; and
- Document analysis is to gain understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The researcher used an interview as a primary data collection strategy as well as observation and documents analysis in this study to verify and corroborate data.

### **3.3.1.1. Interviewing**

Interview in a research study is a technique used to collect data of the subject in the research study. It is a method used to obtain information in face to face situations. It is prepared where the investigation concerns matters of personal nature. The interview ensures that the respondent understands what is required. In this way, the interviewer is able to stimulate and encourage the respondent. According to Ary et al. (2006:480), the interview strategy is one of the most widely used methods to gather qualitative data on subjects' opinions, beliefs and feelings about a situation in their own words.

Interviews provide information that cannot be obtained through observation or can be used to verify the observation.

Briggs and Coleman (2007:208) share a similar definition and view about interviews as preferred tactics to explore people's views, and to report findings as much as reasonable in their own words. The interview technique is therefore ideal for acquiring information that is personal and complex. The researcher is therefore required to establish rapport with the subject. According to Cohen et al. (2007:349), the use of interviews marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulating data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between human beings, often through conversations. Knowledge is

regarded as interaction with individuals.

The interview is a direct method of collecting information in a face-to-face situation, and an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The interchange is between the participant with experiences and the researcher who acquires knowledge and experience in order to provide findings to a research question. The most important feature of this research method is the sharing of power between the researcher and subjects in order to construct meaning. Reflexive conversations make it possible for subjects to become participants and lead expansion of the number of interpretations appropriate to postmodern epistemology. Reflexive conversations involve the researcher as an active participant of the research, rather than as an observing expert. In several respects, knowledge produced in an interview comes close to post-modernistic conceptions of knowledge as conversational,

narrative, linguistic, contextual and inter-relational.

Furthermore, the interview is a flexible tool of data collection because it allows the interviewer to make adjustments as the situation requires. It enables interviewers and interviewees to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their point of view.

Interviews are usually divided into two broad categories, namely, structured and unstructured interviews. In the structured interview, the researcher takes the lead in the interview schedule and types of questions asked, while in the unstructured interview, the researcher conducts the interview without preconceived ideas.

An interview, according to Ary et al., (2006:480), has the following advantages:

- Provides insight on participants' perspectives on the subject of study;

- Provides the meaning of events as they unfold for the people involved in the research study; and
- Provides in-depth information for investigation.

One disadvantage of an interview as a data-gathering strategy is that the interviewees may not be willing to share information or may even offer false information. An interview also requires a great deal of time to conduct and later to transcribe the audio or the notes (Ary et al., 2006:480).

Qualitative research interviews are usually more probing. Hence, each participant will be asked the same set of questions, but with some latitude in the sequence of the questions. All the interviewees will be made aware that their responses will be used for research purposes only, and that the research report will be made available to them to scrutinise.

In this study, the structured interview strategy will be used to collect data. This will involve open-ended questions asked to respondents and their responses will be recorded. Open-ended questions have advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of open-ended questions are:

- They impose no restrictions on the respondents' responses, which could be used when the researcher is uncertain or has limited knowledge of the subject matter.
- They are used where a wide range of opinions are expected, to find out which information the respondents are prepared to divulge.

- They help to get down to more details, and more deep-rooted motives like sensitive behaviours are explored.

The disadvantages are as follows:

- They are time-consuming. Interviewers have to write down responses, thus writing may interrupt the interviewing process.
- Writing of responses accurately is another issue.
- They may not produce more specific responses. Some responses are vague, and may be difficult to analyse.

The interview guide will include four main questions with sub-questions. These main questions are based on the research questions in chapter one of this research study.

The researcher will also ask the participants about their biographies in order to establish contact, and for best understanding of the interviewees. Short biographic details of participants will be given in chapter four.

### **3.3.1.2. Observation**

Observation is regarded as the most powerful, flexible, and 'real' data collection strategy because it is not dependent on the respondent's personal views but seeks explicit evidence through the eyes of the observer directly or through a camera lens.

It is a holistic approach concerning the observation of 'everyday' events and the description and construction of meaning (Briggs and Coleman, 2007:237).

Cohen et al. (2007:396) indicate that the distinctive feature of observation is that it offers a researcher the opportunity to gather “live” data from naturally occurring situations. It is characterised as non-interventionist, where the researcher does not seek to manipulate the situation or subjects, does not pose questions for the subjects, nor does she deliberately create new provocations.

When observing the site or events of study, the researcher is either relatively outsider or in the case of ethnography (type of qualitative inquiry that involves an in-depth study of an intact cultural group in a natural setting), a participant. The primary advantage of conducting observations is flexibility. The researcher can easily shift focus as new information becomes known. Recording events may be problematic as well. Written notes are often insufficient to capture the richness of what one is observing. From information obtained through observation, the researcher constructs a complex yet integrated picture of how people spend their time (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:158 &195).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-41), observation is an “interactive technique of ‘participating’ to some degree in naturally occurring situation over an extended time and ‘writing’ extensive field notes to describe what occurs”. The researcher does not collect data to answer a specific hypothesis; rather explanations are inductively derived from the field notes. Observation can be done using a naturalistic approach (participant observation) or a formal approach (systematic observation). In the former, the researcher is drawn as a participant in specific events and contexts either overtly or covertly. In the latter stage, the researcher is nonparticipatory and often uses systematic observation strategies as a means of gathering data (Briggs and Coleman, 2007:240).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:41) also state that a structured observation is a particular kind of data-gathering in which the researcher directly observes and systematically records the resulting observation. The researcher has pre-determined, specific categories of behaviour that will be recorded.

For the purpose of this research study, both participant and systematic observation techniques will be used to observe the role of the church in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity in Mokopane area.

### **3.3.1.3. Documents analysis**

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007:281), document analysis is a form of qualitative research that requires the researcher to locate, collect, collate, interpret, analyse empirical data, and draw conclusions that describe, interpret or explain what has occurred. In terms of data collection, this involves transferring significant quotations from documents to a field notebook.

The term documents, according to Ary et al. (2006:482), refers to a wide range of written, physical and visual material, including what other authors may term artefacts. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:451), artefacts are tangible manifestations that describe peoples' experiences, knowledge, actions and values in the form of personal documents (such as diaries and letters), official documents (such as memos, minutes, working documents and proposals) and objects (such as symbols and values).

Documentary analysis allows sufficient data to be collected for researchers to be able to:

- identify the significant features of a particular event;
  - establish a plausible interpretation and explanation of data; □
- test for the credibility and validity of these interpretations; and □
- Construct an argument based on these interpretations.

For the purpose of this study, mandatory newspapers, and dairies of the participant will be analysed.

### **3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis techniques**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007:159), data analysis refers to a process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that the researcher accumulated to present findings. Data analysis involves working with data, organising data, breaking data into manageable units, coding data and searching for patterns. In short, it is making sense of data in terms of the participants' definition of the situation, by noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

Johnson and Christensen (2004:500) further state that data analysis in a qualitative research study is reliable. Qualitative researchers alternate between data collection (e.g., interviews, observations and documents) and data analysis (creating meaning from raw data). This means that data analysis in qualitative research is done concurrently or simultaneously with data collection through an interpretative, recursive and dynamic process (Ary et al., 2006:490).

This enables the researcher to focus and shape the research study as it proceeds. It also enables the researcher to develop a successively deeper understanding of their research topic and to guide each round of data collection.

In this study, analysing data will be managed by breaking down data into three key stages, namely, (1) familiarisation and organisation, (2) coding and (3) summarising data (Ary et al., 2006:490).

#### **3.3.2.1. Familiarisation and organisation of data**

According to Ary et al. (2006:490), data analysis, first and foremost, involves familiarisation and organisation of data which is the essential step to coding. The researcher will familiarise herself with collected data by rereading notes and transcripts, reviewing documents and listening repeatedly to audiotapes.

Transcription of data, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:502), is the process of transforming data from interviews or field notes into typed text. A completed transcription will be read repeatedly and notes will be written on the margins of the transcript indicating key ideas to familiarise one with.

In organising data, the researcher will start by creating a list of data sources (name of participants coded to conceal their identities). Each page of the transcript will be marked to indicate the page number, kind and source of the data.

### **3.3.2.2. Coding data**

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:502), coding and recoding is the process of marking segments of text data with symbols and labels for assigning units of meaning to descriptive information compiled during the study.

The researcher will read and reread the transcription and look for units of meanings, phrases, sentences, behaviour patterns, and events that seem to appear regularly. He will then assign a code to identify that particular unit. After coding all data, the researcher will place all units with the same coding together.

### **3.3.2.3 Summarising data**

According to Ary et al. (2006:499), once he has sorted data into categories, the researcher will examine all entries with the same code and then merge these categories into patterns by finding links among them.

The researcher investigates the role of the church as agent for reconciliation, justice and unity in Mokopane area. He will then code the data into categories of research questions as mentioned in chapter one of this research study.

### **3.3.3 Selection and sampling of population**

Selection and sampling processes are used to determine the target group that is going to be investigated. Selection focuses on the larger population to be investigated whilst sampling involves choosing a small subset from the larger population.

### **3.3.3.1 Selection of the population**

The first step in research design is to choose the population of the study. Factors such as expenses, time, size and accessibility must be taken into consideration when determining the population of the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:169) regard a population as a group of elements or cases, whether individual, objects, or events, that conforms to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalise the results of the research study. Even if it was possible, it is not necessary to collect data from everyone in a population in order to get valid findings.

The population of this study is people in South Africa, specifically Christians within the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa in Mokopane area, which is where the research will be conducted.

### **3.3.3.2 Sampling**

A qualitative study, according to Cohen et al. (2007:146), relates to not only on the appropriateness of the methodology and instruments used in the study, but also on the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. In qualitative research, only a sample of a population is selected for any given study.

The study's research objectives and the characteristics of the population (such as size and diversity) determine which and how many interviewees are selected. A sample is selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population from whom data will be collected.

Purposeful sampling, as a dominant strategy in the qualitative approach, has been adopted in this particular study. Purposeful sampling, according to Ary et al.

(2006:472), in contrast with probabilistic sampling, seeks to select information-rich cases which can be studied in depth. The researcher selects particular subjects from the population that will be representative, and provide maximum insight and understanding about the research questions. Information-rich cases are those from which the researcher can learn a great deal about issues under investigation.

### **3.4. VALIDITY OF THE STUDY**

Validity of a measurement is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. A test is valid if it measures what it purports to measure. Validity is a degree to which a test is capable of achieving certain aims. The instrument will be valid if it is capable of achieving the aims of the research study. Validity in research is concerned with soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:31).

Earlier versions of validity, according to Cohen et al. (2007:132) and Ary et al. (2006:243), were based on the view that it was a demonstration that a particular datagathering instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The focus of recent views on validity is not on the instrument itself but on the interpretation and meaning of the scores derived from the instrument.

The term validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), means the degree to which scientific explanations of the phenomenon match the realities of the world. The explanations about an observed phenomenon approximate what is reality and truth, and the degree to which the explanations are accurate. These comprise

the validity of the study. In other words, the validity of qualitative designs is the degree to

which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher. The researcher and the participants agree on the description or the composition of the events, especially the meanings of these events.

If a piece of research is invalid, then it is worthless.

In qualitative research, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), validity rests primarily within honesty, depth, richness, scope of data collection and data analysis techniques. This means that if the above processes are adhered to from the beginning of the study, validity will be enhanced.

The strategies advocated by Johnson and Christensen (2004:249-256) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407-410) to enhance validity in qualitative research are participant review, mechanically recorded data, persistent field work, participant verbatim language, multiple researchers, member checking, low-inference descriptors and triangulation. In this study, the researcher will use the following strategies to enhance validity.

#### **3.4.1. Mechanically recorded data**

A digital and video camera will be used to record some observations and all interviews conducted to enhance the validity by providing accurate and relatively complete records. The main interviews and several scenes will also be recorded in

the field notebook. Professional transcripts will be made, and due to cost considerations, some transcripts will be done by the researcher.

### **3.4.2. Low-inference descriptors**

Concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations will be the hallmark of this study to identify patterns in the data. This means that during the interviews, descriptions will be literal and must be understood by the participants. This will ensure accuracy between the meanings of the interviewees and the researcher's perceptions of those meanings.

### **3.4.3. Participant review**

The researcher will ask the participants to review and verify the transcripts, or what were heard and seen during the interviews, observations and analysis of documents. The participants will further be asked to modify some of the information or interpretations of the transcripts. Then, the data obtained from each school will be analysed for a comprehensive integration of the findings.

### **3.4.4. Triangulation strategies**

Triangulation allows for cross-validation among data sources and data collection strategies, time periods, and theoretical schemes (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:478). To find regularities, the researcher compares different sources, situations and methods to see whether the same pattern keeps recurring.

In this study, verbal clarifications will be triangulated by written references. Three data collection methods, namely, observation, interviewing and analysis of

documents are used. This reliance on corroboration amongst different methods will serve to enhance the validity of this investigation.

### **3.5. RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY**

Reliability of a measurement instrument is the extent to which it yields consistent results when the characteristics being measured remain unchanged throughout (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:99). Reliability is the ability of a test to achieve similar results under similar conditions. Reliability of a measuring instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures. It deals with matters of accuracy and refers to consistency with which an instrument produces equivalent scores.

According to Cohen et al. (2007:146), the meaning of reliability differs in qualitative and quantitative research. Reliability in quantitative research is essentially a synonym for dependability, consistency and reliability over time. On the contrary, reliability in qualitative research is regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occur in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of the coverage of the investigation process. Reliability in qualitative research requires and embraces the truth and neutrality of the setting being observed.

These elements of reliability will be taken into consideration during this investigation. The multiple data collection and data analysis methods used will enable the researcher to record the actual, natural and comprehensive meaning of settings, and to eliminate any researcher bias. Therefore, it will make the findings more accurate and reliable.

### **3.6. RESEARCH ETHICS**

Whenever human beings are focus of investigation, researchers must look closely at the ethical implications of what they (researchers) are proposing to do. Most ethical issues in research fall into one of the four categories namely: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:107). Research ethics, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:94), are principles and guidelines that help researchers to uphold data that researchers regard as valuable. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420) state that the qualitative researcher needs to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection process, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. Emergent designs require that ethical principles be considered throughout all phases of planning and data collection. Most ethical situations require the researcher to determine situational priorities, which involve discussions with participants. Ethical guidelines include, but are not limited to, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

#### **3.6.1. Informed consent and permission**

Qualitative research necessitates obtaining consent, co-operation and permission of the subjects who are to assist in the investigation in the institutions providing research facilities (Cohen et al., 2007:52). Informed consent, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421), is regarded as a dialogue and procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate after being informed of the purpose of the study and facts that would influence their decisions. Informed consent encourages free choice of participation. Before a participant can participate in a research study,

the researcher must give the prospective participant a description of all the features of the study that might reasonably influence his or her willingness to participate.

The principle of informed consent, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:105), refers to the fact that a participant, once given pertinent information, is competent and legally free of the desire of others to make a decision as to whether to participate in a given research study.

In this study, the researcher consulted each participant and requested her consent. Identified participants confirmed and indicated their willingness to participate in the study (See Annexure C as the consent letter send to participants in this study).

### **3.6.2. Anonymity and confidentiality**

In general, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:108), McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) and Cohen et al. (2007:64), any research study should respect participants' right to privacy and confidentiality. Under no circumstances should a research report be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved. There is a strong feeling among researchers that settings and participants should not be identifiable in print. A researcher must keep the nature and quality of participants' performance strictly confidential. If any particular person's behaviour is described in depth in the report, he or she should be given a pseudonym to assure anonymity. The emphasis for the need of confidentiality of participants' identities and the essence of anonymity is that information provided should, in no way, reveal their identity. The principal means of

ensuring anonymity is by not using the names of the participants or any other personal means of identification. Johnson and Christensen (2004:112) state that anonymity and confidentiality are important to avoid connecting the participant with any information that would be embarrassing or harmful.

Participants in this study were given full assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Other than identifying factors such as gender, race and general location of the participants, no personal identifiable information was divulged. Each participant was assigned and identified by a code letter.

### **3.6.3. Voluntary participation**

Voluntarism entails applying the principle of informed consent and thus ensuring that participants freely choose to take part in the investigation, and guarantees that exposure to risk is undertaken knowingly and voluntarily (Cohen et al., 2007:52). In this study, each participating individual was requested, and each willingly confirmed, to be interviewed. All participating individuals were fully informed of the purpose of the study in advance and given an option to discontinue their participation, for any reason whatsoever, at any time during the process.

#### **3.6.4. Competency and relationship with participants**

According to Cohen et al. (2007:52), competence implies responsible, mature individuals and skilled individual participation in the interviews. The researcher has to ensure that he does not engage individuals incapable of making decisions because of immaturity. The researcher has passed his module in theological research, and he is a facilitator at the training centre for the Methodist church in Pretoria. Therefore, the researcher possesses a high level of competency and skills in undertaking this research study.

#### **3.7. SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on the empirical research. It stated the context of the research problem, design and methods. Qualitative research was explicitly stated, described and discussed. The chapter also indicated the research design employed to collect and analyse data. As indicated in the design, this study is interpretive, and ensures reliability and validity of data.

The next chapter will focus on data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results as discussions of the empirical investigation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the research methods and design, while the current chapter will focus on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the research data collected from the research site. Furthermore, throughout the study, the researcher has handled reconciliation, justice and unity issues within the disintegrated society. In this empirical research conducted over a period of five months, the researcher presents, analyses and interprets data in this chapter. It

entailed the collection of data, interviews and observation. The researcher aimed at unearthing whether the church has played its role of reconciliation, justice and unity amongst the people of God.

#### **4.2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH DATA**

The researcher presents data that need to be analysed and interpreted based on the literature study conducted in chapter two of this research study. The researcher aims at two things: to check the correlation between the literature study and the current socio-political situation in Mokopane in terms of reconciliation, justice and unity of the society, as well as the success or failure of the church as an agent of reconciliation. The researcher will first present data from literature based on liberation theology, which illustrated that there was unity, and then division, and the church ought to strive for reconciliation. The researcher is of the view that there is still oppression and domination, which he called internalised domination.

#### **4.3 THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION FOR HUMANITY FROM INTERNALISED DOMINATION**

One of the problem is the internalised dominance by both black and white communities, especially in Mokopane. This exists at the subconscious level of black and white communities. As a result, it makes it difficult to start the process of reconciliation, justice and unity from the local level, where everybody can be involved and participate to the fullest in the process.

Outsiders will ask a question that 'what happens then' when a white community still holds negative emotional feelings towards black people and vice versa. How will liberation for humanity be achieved if the internalisation of the past is still dominant with these two faces. In true liberation theology, it should have reciprocal influences (Begg, 2007: 317).

Because the old fashioned racist behaviour is no longer institutionalised and acceptable, it is likely that blacks respond emotionally to express in more mysterious ways. To whatever extent, the impact is that these feelings still play as a thing that obstructs progress to reconciliation, justice and unity in society. This brings to what Batt calls a modern form of racism, which comes in different displays because of black people who occupy positions of power both in public and private sectors, but the status quo remains.

When one evaluates the South African liberation, one is compelled to consider Gutierrez's analysis of the situation. It is an undisputable fact that South Africans have achieved political liberation as a first step to freedom, which addresses human beings' wellness and welfare. In this study, we have to focus on the three problem statements shown earlier. **Firstly**, the extent to which the church in history has contributed towards the current state of affairs, and use liberation theology as a major reference tool to Mokopane people. **Secondly**, the extent to which the church is directly involved in bringing the most needed environment such as peace, unity and reconciling the Mokopane community. **Lastly**, to consider the key role by the modern confession of faith (Belhar) in the lives of these people.

### **4.3.1 Liberation Theology as a tool to equip the church as agent of reconciliation**

Americans and South Africans have one thing in common socially, politically and historically. The economic imbalances of the 1960's and 1970's have similar taste. Blacks on the two continents have often seen themselves as brothers of the African diaspora. In both Northern America and South Africa, Christianity made its way to respective society via the white man (Bagg, 2007: 319). As I said earlier, in the 1960's and 1970's, blacks on both sides of the world were fighting similar social injustices perpetuated by the very people who had brought them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Both environments produced individuals such as Malcom X, Athens, Allan Boesak, Takatso Mofokeng, Desmond Tutu, Itumeleng Mosala and many more.

The rise of theologians such as Allan Boesak, who was influenced by his own experience in the ministry, played a fundamental role in the liberation of South Africa, let alone the rest of the continent. As black theologian, Boesak emerged within the context of a theory of liberation as a new way of looking at the world we live in and the responsibility of the church in the world. Black theology as a component of liberation theology signifies an irreversible recording of the ecumenical agent (Boesak, 2004: 05)

In terms of liberation theology, the United States and South Africa had an influence on each other for the demand of theological calls for justice. There is an undisputable fact that the internalisation of dominance by history is and was visible in those parts of the world. Looking at Mokopane community, it is essential to tackle it through liberation as a third eye and a fundamental tool.

#### **4.3.2 Internalised domination within Mokopane community**

The researcher observed the situation in Mokopane within the racial lines of South Africa. The researcher finds that the expectation of local and international communities about South Africa is different in Mokopane. It has been widely expected that in a new democratic South Africa, internal power and internal superior and inferior complexities would come to an end. In fact, black political leaders indicated this assumption as the main reason during negotiations at the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA) discussion. Twenty five years later, the opposite was observed, especially after the TRC process. This commission came into being in an effort to bring reconciliation, justice and national unity through the healing process. It was believed that the stories from the past had to be narrated before the past could be buried (Du Toit, 1999: 15). This is observed through service delivery protests, racial divided settlements and class division of people in terms of high profile settlement areas. This is the reflection of churches in Mokopane area, moreover the DRC and URCSA, which are the same church with the same origin, and same doctrinal teaching but divided along racial lines. These racial divided churches disempowers its members agents for reconciliation. In the next section, the researcher will focus on what is observed in terms of the role of churches in Mokopane area.

#### **4.3.2.1 The role of the Dutch Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa on reconciliation in Mokopane**

The researcher has observed that churches in Mokopane are divided along racial lines and areas of settlements. The DRC is still exclusively the church for the white people with rules that maintain the old divided society, while the URCSA have an open policy in terms of membership. The involvement of the church (even other denominations) is always significant irrespective of the circumstances. However, since 1994, the different denominations have almost been silent on issues of reconciliation to such an extent that questions were asked. Where have all prophets' opinions gone (Mayson, 1999: 55)? Mayson is of the opinion that religion does not know which way to go, and concluded that religion did not find its role in the new South Africa (Mayson, 1999:58). This is the spirit to surrender quickly. People such as Frank Chikane made huge contributions although in a different approach. The loudness of the excitement of freedom might be too strong to overcome the prophetic voice. In its final report, the TRC also emphasised the role of the church in the process of reconciliation, and stated inter alia the following (TRC, 1998 Volume 5:316): "Faith communities enjoy a unique and privileged position in South African society. In my view, it should take an upfront role, and the government of the day to provide such environment/space". They are widely respected and have far reaching moral influence. As such they should play a key role in healing and reconciliation initiatives. It is therefore important that the role of the church and its foundation (theology) be clearly defined. The last chapter of this work brings ideas on how theology can contribute to the betterment of such role. A model has been designed to address the issue at stake.

Unity is practically possible on the ground where all role players are participants. The inclusiveness of both insiders and outsiders with similar challenge is essential. This will enable the internalised dominance about each other to be eliminated from the conscious. Two historical faces will equally be in the same ship as captains. Such engagement shall drive towards a relevant theology. This means that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be at the centre stage.

Liberation theology is still relevant as it can be applied in the diaspora of the upcoming theologians. Collaboration of DRC and URCSA at local levels is inevitable in Mokopane community. A sound and common prophetic voice is needed on both sides of the compass needle of faith communities. In the next section, the researcher will present data based on a case study and interviews.

#### **4.4 Presentation of data based on case study and interviews**

##### **4.4.1 Case 1 (An interview with a worker)**

Case study one is based on a disintegrated church that encouraged a disintegrated society. As indicated above, churches in South Africa are racially divided. Moreover, DRC is exclusively a church for white people in South Africa. Mr Molepo is a black male adult person who is sixty-two (62) years old residing at Mahwelereng Township. He worked for Mr Hofmann (white male adult) in one of the suburbs in Mokopane for eleven (11) years. This indicates the relationship that they have with each other. One day Mr **Molepo** was on duty on particular Sunday in the garden while Mr Hofmann was at church for the Sunday service. Suddenly, an electric box burst and smoke came out of the box. Due to the fear that the house might catch fire, he ran to the

church where his boss was worshipping. On his arrival, he silently sat down and moved his eyes looking for his boss. He suddenly heard the preacher (pastor) saying “Oh God vandag die vlik het in die melk in geval” (Oh God today the fly has fallen into the milk). Immediately people turned and looked at the back, and that is where his boss also saw him. Mr Hofmann came to him quietly and Mr Molepo explained what happened. By that time, Mr Molepo was upset as he was absorbing what he has just heard because he was a Christian too and could not make sense of what was said. Mr Molepo came to a conclusion that because he is black among the whites, so the meaning was loud and clear. These words angered both Mr **Hofmann** and Mr Molepo. In the interview between the researcher and Mr Hofmann, the latter left the church as his pastor could not explain the saying. Mr **Molepo** was perplexed by finding that the name of the church is closed to that of his (NGK/NGKA). The good thing about Mr Molepo was that he could not hold grudges against Mr **Hofmann** as he apologised to him. The question is why the pastor could do that to a fellow human being. During this research, the pastor retired and is not living around, leaving a scar amongst fellow Christians.

The researcher found that there was a relationship between Mr Molepo and Mr Hofmann, that of internalised domination and oppression. Mr Hofmann attended the very same church as Mr Molepo's church, but Molepo was not in the church service on that particular Sunday. A black person was supposed to work while a white person must go to Church. Secondly, the church where Mr Hofmann attended was a church of white people, not of blacks. The church that was not prepared to reconcile the people of God, as per the remark made during that Sunday when Mr Molepo entered the church building. It is clear that the colour of a person's skin is still a serious challenge even in a democratic South Africa. The church in this case study has failed

to act as an agent of reconciliation, but has played a role in dividing people amongst themselves and with God.

#### **4.4.2 Case study on businessman**

Information provided in this section indicates how the colour of one's skin determines their future in Mokopane in the Limpopo area. Mr Kwena was interviewed on 23 April

2010, and said the following: "I feel that South Africa has not changed from the old apartheid behaviours, being black is not advantage to business venture in places like Mokopane." Furthermore, he argued: "I was denied an opportunity to open a business in the centre of the town as a black person but my business plan was used to advance other people of a different race." From the information provided above, it is clear that racism is very strong in Mokopane as the researcher has observed as a former minister of the word and sacrament in the area. The decline of the business of Mr Kwena was always followed by similar businesses in that areas. There is a tendency of internalised domination and oppression. Due to internalised domination, Mr Kwena still felt that white people can assist him to open a business, to the extent that he disclosed his plans to them. Hence, a similar business was the result of his business plan. People's colour of their skin and their background were used to exclude their life opportunity, and their intellect might be stolen. My view is that regulations are required towards such behaviour as it has no space in our era.

#### **4.4.3 Case study and interview from ordinary people**

I conducted interviews with ordinary people in the streets of Mokopane during the research just to get the feeling of the people about the state of affairs in the country, particularly in their own space. Both black and white were interviewed. Both Chuene

and Viljoen agreed that there is a possibility of reconciliation in South Africa, moreover in Mokopane. Chuene argued: "There are still chances of reconciliation in this area, as

long as the pastors, ministers and congregation can prayer and actualise reconciliation." Viljoen indicates in response to the question "Is reconciliation possible in Mokopane?" Viljoen responds: "If God has reconciled his people through his Son what can make it impossible for the South Africans to reconcile?" He further said: "The churches are standing far from each other, this make this process of reconciliation very slow." But according to interviewees, this might take decades if both do not come close to one another. Viljoen is sharing the view that the community is already doing things together. The spirit of extreme negativism has decreased. **Chuene** feels that government must do more to achieve social cohesion. More opportunities should be opened to improve the life of ordinary people, particularly the youth. They alluded to things such as education as a strong tool to develop human beings to stand on their own. Viljoen is of the opinion that social cohesion is a non-existent theory as people are united in Christ. Blacks do jobs that are known to be white people's jobs.

Opportunities are available for everybody; so it is an advantage for one to grab them. In terms of opportunities at our space, Chuene is of the opinion that they are channelled to historically advantaged people (whites) while they are excluded. Viljoen agrees as he alludes to the fact that policies are designed to exclude them in the name of BEE. That is a deliberate exclusion in a new fashion. The two interviewees are on the same stance that government is not doing enough to improve the lives of ordinary people as adequate services are not provided; instead officials enrich

themselves or rather channel the resources otherwise. In other words, those in power are accused of stealing resources if allocated.

What is common about the twos is that institutions such as schools, hospitals and industries must be developed to reduce immigration from black to white communities. This will enable white people to also operate businesses in black communities and vice versa. Again, the two do not see the possibility of worshipping together as their languages, cultures and standard of living differ. Hence middle class groups (blacks) who stay in town go back to their place of origin to worship their God. It is clear that blacks and whites in Mokopane still live like water and oil. As a result, an element of finger pointing, especially the government, is high and unfortunately the church seems to be folding arms, and do nothing to curb the historical imbalances by using the gospel as a weapon.

#### **4.4.4 Case study and interview from people living in the streets**

The researcher encountered two people who are staying in the streets of Mokopane (homeless). They turned this place as their home. Mr **X** and Mr **M** were friends for the past nine (9) years living in the streets. They share the environment as they do almost everything together for survival. They beg for money at robots, collect scrap metals for selling and beg for food at shops during tough times. What is more painful is that they seem to take days with no normal bath or clean clothes.

The history of Mr **X** is that he was raised by a single parent in Lephalale area after his father passed away when he was still at primary school. His mother died in 1996. His wife left him after he lost his job as driver in 1997. This situation makes him live a crime life in order to survive. One day he got a job from a company which was drilling water around Limpopo. This company used to fetch and drop them in the streets of

Lephalale where they worked for two weeks. In the morning of pay day, the man did not show up but disappeared. Because he was borrowing money from neighbours, they did not accept his story, and he was afraid that they might harm him. Hence he ran away and found himself living in the streets of Mokopane.

Relating his story, Mr **M** was born in De Aar in the Northern Cape sixty six years ago. He lost both parents in the 1980's. His parents were not rich and were working for other farmers as assistants. After they had passed away, he could not get anything as he found that his parents did not even have a bank account. After he had confronted his parents' boss about their pension or any money to show that they were working, he was expelled.

He took lifts to Johannesburg and lived in the street. One day he was robbed of his belongings, including his identity document. That is when misery began because in trying to get it, he was told to submit documents such as his former school records, affidavits from relatives etc. He started a crime life where he was arrested and sentenced to two (2) years in prison. On his release, he left Johannesburg and arrived in Mokopane. That is where he met Mr **X** in 2009 and they have been together ever since.

The story of the two was a traumatising experience for the researcher. People are still suffering under those with power today. The drilling businessman could not even pay what is due to **X**. **X** was innocent as he did not even have an idea of details about the man. Mr **M** is the victim of both past and present history. Instead of providing him with the service, they opted to sophisticated policies. I think the matter of the two men

should be forwarded to the Public Protector's office. Family policy should be developed to secure good home environments.

For government not to be able to provide shelter for those in need is a failure. Where is the church? This is an opportunity for URCSA to stand where God stands. If DRC provides services in the form of language and culture, why it is not the same in the case of Mr M? This makes many to question the spirit of Ubuntu among people of faith and those in power.

#### **4.4.5 Case study and interview from DRC minister**

The minister has been with the congregation for the past sixteen (16) years. His congregation is the biggest and fastest growing in Mokopane. This is alluded to the fact that the church is in a new developed area of the town. They call it Hulp and Hoop

(help and hope). He confirms that his congregation is involved with unity issues with URCSA. But his personal challenge is the model in place. In his view, it is not necessary to put structures in place, but practical activities are a true evidence of the gospel.

He believes that language is a strong medium to spread the gospel, therefore using different languages than the mother tongue will be disadvantageous. Asked why not use an alternative medium, he made it clear that God created his language with the purpose of affording him to communicate efficiently. So he does not want to be disadvantaged when coming to the issues of the gospel in the name of unity.

Recently, they are running projects in URCSA facility in Mokopane such as soup kitchen, camping for young groups (black and white), and continue to provide subsidy to the salary of the minister and the centre for disabled. An URCSA member manages the centre (DRC and URCSA are trustees). They are committed to the course, and to him, that is a visible unity. Cooperation in the mission is the call of God, and not a coming together because someone may be disadvantaged. According to this minister, unity is not what URCSA sees to call of the coming together to witness the Gospel. I think he misses the point where God is not interested in colour, race or language because he created them to glorify his creation. Not to identify himself through them.

Reading the mind of DRC, one concludes that there are no scriptural grounds not to achieve unity in our lifetime. DRC betrays the element of confession on the authority of the scripture as articulated in Article 5 of the Belgic confession. This was a mistake by Israelites where they believed that people from other nations are not of God, hence Jonah could not go to Nineveh at first call.

Generally, DRC is not committed to unity and reconciliation. Hence in a 2002 synod in Pretoria, they wanted Belhar Confession to be excluded as a relevant confession. Generally, Synod of URCSA in Pietermaritzburg was right not to accede to that demand (2005 Acts of Synod-decision 63). URCSA views the call of unity as gospel imperative and nothing else. In other words, URCSA could not accept any effort to proceed with the establishment of unity structures that compromise the Belhar confession. Under no circumstances that such conditions will be good for the call of this gospel imperative. URCSA says that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the basic tenet of Reformed faith. So the foundational truths of the confession Belhar and the

obedience to the Lord compel them to pursue genuine unity with DRC family of churches within the reformed traditions in Southern Africa. So the demand of the DRC to a model or process which is biblically founded will put the integrity and faithfulness of URCSA at stake.

URCSA General Synod enables Regional Synods, presbyteries and local congregations who desire to do so based on the acceptance of the Belhar Confession, to unite to the fullest extent possible in ministry, including structural unity. Localising services is essential as it will bring two (2) churches closer and closer. The existing partnerships bring a hopeful future, hence liturgical forms are steadily nearing to one another.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter of study is reliable outsource analyses and interpret the data collected from liberation theology point of view. The role of both Dutch reformed church in South Africa and uniting reformed church in South Africa can play to reconcile the people of people in Mokopane.

All cases studied serves as a true reflection of people's knowledge on the experience in both past and present history.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

It has become evident that this was a noble exercise to look for progress on this subject of reconciliation, justice and unity in South Africa and to find who is in the lead or at the back seat. One can conclude that much needs to be done as the journey is still long to advance unity as the church is still highly divided, and ultimately, it is a problem for the gospel effort to reconcile society. The church is still passive in the process of reconciliation whereby unity and justice seem to be an everyday dream. But hope is in our hands.

Relevant theological components such as liberation theology and others shall be used to restore and repair the past for the sake of visible unity. However, because of the internalised dominance by both URCSA on Belhar Confession and DRC on superiority,

visible unity will be difficult to achieve.

Many scholars define reconciliation as a way to healing, a means of forgiveness and foundation of reconciliation. They conclude that the disintegrated church is a problem for the reconciliation of society. In other words, the church is not living what it preaches.

As a result, it fails the true gospel. The role of DRC on the notion of 'weakness of some' and the thinking of forgive and forget will not help the process. Both churches should take advantage of confessions at their disposal.

What needs to be open to all is to be careful in applying impunity in the name of justice as highlighted in Chapter 2. We rather extensively consider three conditions i.e. human forgiveness, repair and restore injustices so that we can repent and allow for the confession of sins.

The theology of liberation to address internalised dominance is a relevant tool as it has reciprocal influences. This will bracket the old fashioned racist behaviour and avoid emotional black response. We are compelled to consider Gutierrez's analysis of the situation in South Africa's liberation theology. A critical and an undisputable fact is that South Africa achieved political liberation as a first step to freedom and to address the wellness and welfare of human beings.

Three problems statement were shown earlier. These are the extent to which the history contributed towards the current state of affairs, how the church can be directly involved in bringing the three pillars of unity, justice and reconciliation, and lastly,

consideration of the key role by the modern confession of faith such as Belhar in the lives of the people of God. Liberation theology will be on the forefront.

Our concepts of truth, justice, reconciliation, unity and peace must serve as a designed model to contribute to theology in demand. Unity as the function of the Holy Spirit, and unity in local church should be witnessed. Thereafter, the church is called to the ministry of reconciliation.

## **5.2. Findings**

This section provides the general conclusion as figured out by the researcher. The section focuses on the aspects which the researcher thought need attention for further study. It also focuses on some motivational aspects on feelings that they could be of help in solving the challenge at hand with regard to the collected data.

### **5.2.1. Presentation of findings**

This part of the work focuses on the major findings of the research after the process of data collection. It is the mid-phase of the research whereby interviews on different cases and the general information as taken from informants are recorded. The findings in this section are both from primary and secondary sources.

**5.2.1.1 Findings based on Aim 1:** To demonstrate how the church has contributed towards divisions in the society through its teaching and justification of separation in South Africa in general and Mokopane in particular.

- It was found from the literature review and from data presented from interviews that the church has played a role in dividing the society in South Africa in general and Mokopane in particular.
- The church (DRC and URCSA) has indicated in their submission to the TRC that they participated directly or indirectly in dividing the society in the country during the apartheid era, and the legacy of that division is still hurting the church.

**5.2.1.2 Findings based on Aim 2:** To illustrate how the church can contribute towards reversing the process of division by bringing true reconciliation, justice and unity.

- It was found that there is process of uniting the DRC and URCSA that will address the disintegrated society as a united church.

**5.2.1.3 Finding based on Aim 3:** To develop a theology of reconciliation and liberation with special reference to Gutierrez's threefold analysis of liberation.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The best way forward is to intensify the struggle of unity, reconciliation and justice to be well conceptualised in the hearts of believers. Failure to realise that reconciliation is a dynamic and adaptive process aimed at building and healing the torn fabric of interpersonal and community lives and relationships is being ignorant of gospel imperative. This is to mean that people in real situations must find a way forward together and Christians have one bond which is Jesus Christ our Lord.

### 5.3.1. Christian understanding of Reconciliation

The Christian definition of reconciliation needs to include specific assumptions of a theological anthropology; that is, it will need to attend to its presupposition about God, the human person and the community, for only in relation to God and others can an individual be properly understood (Barry, 2006:708). Barry's observation sounds truly the best way forward towards the realisation of reconciliation to both Christians and the world. A catholic priest called Mark Hay is in agreement with Barry. He says the fundamental role of reconciliation is the notion of *katolaso* and *hilasmos* together (Hay, 1998:105).

The notion of reconciliation as broadened by Hay is true in the sense that at the heart of the Christian message is the conviction that God is holy, just, righteous, loving, compassionate, merciful, and gracious on the other hand, and human kind is fallen, separated and alienated from God, unable to restore the break on the other. The above values of God are fundamentally important to the redeeming of mankind.

For the break to be closed and for God and mankind to be made one again or reconcile, God has taken initiatives and man must respond. God is already in motion as we have seen in cases 2 & 3 above. He begins with a series of covenants whereby humanity is called to God, hence the call is made to those in business people in case 2.

All covenants are precursors to that made in Jesus Christ; in this new covenant God identifies with humanity; "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). On the cross, he reconciled humanity to himself and gave the ministry of

reconciliation (*the first, second and third word on the cross*); that God was reconciling the universe to himself in Christ, not counting our iniquities, their sins against them, and has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5: 8, 17, 5:19).

### **5.3.2. Working for Justice**

The church must learn to act publicly to promote peace and work for justice. The following sectors should be at the forefront of the pillar, the church, theological institutions, human rights movements, judicial systems, etc. Social justice will be advanced and will bear fruits thereof. Serving justice efficiently is a challenge to modern Christians as they do not understand how to use the power that they possess. Congregations or churches should accommodate all people of all races regardless of their status in society, and the power to speak as a collective to bring about a systemic change in society.

Thinking and talking about power and how to use it with love shall help Christians to increase their impact in society. The best way to do this is to discuss it in the context of prayer and biblical reflections.

### **5.3.3. The Church's Role in Reconciliation, Justice and Unity**

Pauline's teaching on the subject at hand is backed by what theologically is called *koinonia*. *Koinonia* should serve as an imperative to Christians, imploring them to be true to their faith and to bear witness by sharing the life-in-fellowship in our country in these times. The Greek word 'koinonia' describes a close fellowship and sharing of life, frequently including the sharing of resources. The corresponding verb either means "to participate" or "to enable others to participate".

The concept *koinonia* is especially found in the letters of the apostle Paul from whom early church also inherited meaning. He gave birth to the word *koinonia* in the context of the Christian faith. Let us view several dimensions of *koinonia* which will help us to conclude which route should take us to the pilgrimage of unity.

- *Koinonia* and Holy Communion

Participation in the life of crucified and risen Lord changes the relationship towards one another. Allowing changes of believers to participate in the life of God and in the victory of the risen Lord that overcomes the forces of death appears to be the main thrust of *koinonia*. Not to exclude or marginalise the poor and to share with fellow believers is of importance in the *koinonia* of congregations.

- *Koinonia* and the sharing of resources

The fact that God has gone out of his way to overcome our forsakenness by entering our situation in Jesus as a human should motivate Christians in Corinth to go out of their way to participate in the situation in Jerusalem by sending them collection as a symbol of their unity. Such *koinonia* would enrich the lives of those who contribute. "Those who were far off have come nearer"- DRC to URCSA.

- *Koinonia* and justification by faith

The purpose of justification is the transformation of humans into subjects who do justice and who liberate the truth that is being held captive by structures of injustice. God's final aim is not merely to save humans from his wrath, but to enable them to fulfil his will by faith.

- *Koinonia* as solidarity in sharing suffering

In Paul's proclamation of the Gospel, *koinonia*, the participation of Christians in the life of the crucified and risen Lord through the Spirit is the counter force against all forces of exclusion and division that disrupt humankind and creation. Christians should give one another mutual support in suffering and should also share joy and sorrow.

- *Koinonia* and the Triune God

The Belhar Confession of the 21<sup>st</sup> century offers the following fundamental insights of the Christian faith (Article 1). *We believe in triune God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who through the Word and Spirit gathers, protects and cares for the church from the beginning of the world and will do to the end.*

- *Koinonia* and the cosmic dimension of the Church

From the outset, the intervention of God in Jesus Christ confronted structures and practices, which excluded people from access to God's Kingdom. God's love and forgiveness was to be extended to all humankind.

In his (Paul) new political, economic and cultural context within the Roman Empire, the apostle Paul highlighted the cosmic dimension of the Church and the *koinonia* that holds it together. The Church of Jesus Christ transcends all structures of exclusion. The empire relied on controlling the resistance of subjugated nations by military power, by making use of the divisions between people and co-opting collaborators. These were methods of control that were incompatible with the Gospel. The result was recurring persecutions of

Christians in different parts of the empire.

On the basis of koinonia, the challenges of the church in South Africa have is build the community by proclaiming and living gospel, which implies the willingness to become involved in the following:

- Efforts to re-read the Bible from the perspective of marginalised people in order to help the church to come to a deeper and clearer understanding of the meaning and implications of reconciliation for personal and civic life.
- Partnerships with government, other institutions and poor communities in structural developmental campaigns to alleviate and eradicate poverty.
- Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the society, the children, the youth, people with disabilities and the elderly.
- Resisting structures of the exclusion in the church, in society, in the economy and in the state on local, national and international levels.
- Educating the people to recognise the significance of development, economic redress and tangible transformation for reconciliation.
- Endeavours to overcome denominational, religious, class, gender, social and other divisions that obstruct the workings of the Holy Spirit inside, through and outside the church.
- Initiating alternative economic and ecological models of responsible stewardship and sharing of resources.

- Attending to the needs and the suffering of other human sections of creation.
- Developing a responsible personal lifestyle that avoids the squandering of resources.
- Developing an understanding that justice is not enough; it needs to be tempered by forbearance (the public function of tolerance and forgiveness in the N T).
- Critically reviewing our Christian engagement in social actions of reconciliation with respect to other traditions, teachings, languages, customs, and social patterns.
- Restoring the identity and integrity of a people or community, which have been distorted by the racial superiority and the collective self- interest of other groups.
- Raising leadership to take the movement forward towards people of strong conviction who can promote the cause even in the midst of indifference and hostility.

Finally, this understanding of *kononia* is basic of all Christians, united in their faith, in their atoning, reconciling and redemptive Lord Jesus Christ; and their conviction that His followers are to be agents of reconciliation and promoters of love, justice, unity and peace. Christians in the Church are called by the gospel to be agents of reconciliation, unity and justice amongst groups and peoples caught in a history of conflict and enmity.

## **5.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter of study is reliable outsource analyses and interpret the data collected from liberation theology point of view. The role of both Dutch reformed church in South Africa and uniting reformed church in South Africa can play to reconcile the people of people in Mokopane.

All cases studied serves as a true reflection of people's knowledge on the experience in both past and present history.

## **5.5 SUMMARY**

It became evident that this was a noble exercise to look for progress on these subject of reconciliation, justice and unity in South Africa and to find who the lead is or at the back seat. One can conclude that much need to be done as the journey seems to be long this divided church. The passivenesses of the church in this process jeopardize effort made.

Relevant theological component such as liberation theology can help to search for truth in the sense of the world. For a church not to live what it preaches, it loses gospel imperative. Applying correctly and rightly the message of justice in Belhar confession by URCSA and its sister Gospel bodies is essential now. This will enable the church to voice loud and propel prophetic voice. Hence we are all called to restore and repair broken relationships.

What we need to be open is to be careful of applying impunity in the name of justice .We rather extensively consider three condition e.g. human forgiveness, repair and restore injustices of the past

Theology of liberation to address internalized dominance is relevant tool as it is reciprocated influence .This will bracket the old fashioned basics behavior and avoid black response emotionally. It is critical importance to analysis this undisputable fact

that South Africa achieved political freedom meant for wellness and welfare of its human beings.

Finally, our concept of truth, justice, reconciliation, unity and peace must serve as design model to contribute to theology in demand. The unity of the keyword mention above is the function of the Holy Spirit, and the unity in local church should be witnessed and thereafter the church is called to the ministry of reconciliation.

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## **5.6. KEY WORDS**

<b>CHURCH</b>	The institution of Christian religion.
<b>RECONCILIATION</b>	To bring people together who were enemies for a period of time
<b>JUSTICE</b>	The fair treatment of people irrespective of race, colour, culture and creed
<b>UNITY</b>	The situations in which people are in agreement and working together

## **5.7. ABBREVIATIONS**

URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.
DRMC	Dutch Reformed Mission Church.
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGKA	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika

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