

**“To stand where God stands”: The mission praxis of the Melodi ya
Tshwane congregation**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

Masters of Theology

in the subject

Missiology

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISER: PROF T.D. MASHAU

January 2016

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABBRECA	: Alliance of Black Reformed Churches in Southern Africa
ANC	: African National Congress
CBD	: Central Business District
CEC	: Conference of European Churches
CODRUP	: Committee for the DRC Unity in Pretoria
CRCNA	: Christian Reformed Church of America
CMM	: Christian Men Ministry
CYM	: Christian Youth Ministry
DRC	: Dutch Reformed Church
DRCA	: Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRMC	: Dutch Reformed Mission Church
JPIC	: Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation
MyT	: Melodi ya Tshwane
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
NIV	: New International Version
NTS	: Northern Theological Seminary
OT	: Old Testament
RCA	: Reformed Church in Africa
RCC	: Reformed Confessing Community
SACC	: South African Council of Churches
TLF	: Tshwane Leadership Foundation
URCSA	: Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa
WARC	: World Alliance of Reformed Churches

ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the understanding, attitudes and application of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession by Melodi ya Tshwane (MyT). The aim specifically outlines the current mission praxis of MyT and its missionary activities, the church's missionary calling in line with Article 4 of Belhar , evaluate the extent to which Article 4 of Belhar is applied, and to propose missionary praxis for MyT . The research findings include: participants have a narrow understanding of missions; conducting outreach activities in the form of charity. Some gaps identified include: lack of understanding of God as the missionary God, and a narrow interpretation of justice. Guiding principles on being missional include: missions should be Christ-centred, relational, collaborative, transformational, and lived out in word and deed. Proposed mission praxis consider the following approaches: the church as an institution, as a living organism and the church's corporate service, and missional consciousness.

Keywords

Belhar Confession, mission praxis, outreach, justice, Melodi ya Tshwane, Article 4 of Belhar Confession

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The church is missionary by nature and when it ceases to be missionary, it fails one of its primary tasks and ceases to be a church. The church is bound up to with its call to live out and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth until the end of time (Kirk, 1999). Mission, therefore, is the fundamental reality of the Christian life. This holds equally true for Melodiya Tshwane (MyT) in Pretoria. It is called to be a missionary church.

Melodiya Tshwane (MyT) is a congregation of the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA). The name of the church has a long history. It is a Sotho expression which means “the birdsong of Tshwane”. It was a name given to “The Fountains” by the African inhabitants of the area before the Voortrekkers arrived in South Africa (<http://www.mytchurch.com>). This church is located on the corner of Bosman and Madiba Streets in the city of Pretoria (<http://www.mytchurch.com/>). The congregation is currently divided into 11 prayer wards in order to provide services to its members in the City of Pretoria. The wards are led by ward leaders nominated by the Church Council. Wards were established to provide pastoral care and support to members in their daily lives, struggles and difficulties. Special attention is given to visiting the sick, lonely, bereaved, imprisoned and traumatised. The congregation has about six hundred members. Church records show that, on average, between 450 and 600 people attend Sunday services at MyT. Member demographics reflect that the church consists of 96% Blacks, and among those Black members there is cultural diversity; this group consists of Sothos, Zulus, Pedis, Vhavendas,

Shangaans, Tswanas and Xhosas. Coloureds form 2%, Whites 1% and Indians 1% of the church membership. The current full-time minister is Dr Jacob Nthakhe. He is assisted by two tent-maker ministers, Professor Johannes Nicolaas Jacobus Kritzinger and Reverend Peter Maruping.

Current missionary outreach activities at MyT are driven by the MyT Outreach Committee. The Committee guides and records outreach activities taking place within some of its eleven wards and ministries. Current mission outreach activities are conducted on a voluntary basis by members of different wards and church ministries. They include: identifying needy and marginalised people within and around the City of Tshwane (Makgati and Nkosi, 2015). They organise or collect food, clothes and toiletries and distribute them to identified needy communities around the City of Tshwane. According to Verster (2000:55), “the church should bring new hope of God to the situation in which people live. The new situation will bring hope to the poor, needy and lonely in the church”.

The call to engage in mission by MyT is also mapped out in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. According to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, “God is in a special sense the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged” and “the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands” (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belhar.pdf; Reformed Churches in America, 2016:4).

According to Kritzinger (2006) the statement: “God is in a special sense the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged” echoes the prophetic message in the Hebrew Bible that God cares about widows, orphans, and strangers (e.g. Isaiah 1: 17), and that God prefers a fast that consists of the breaking of yokes, the removal of

chains, and the sharing of bread with the hungry. Jesus continued with this prophetic tradition by living in solidarity with the people side-lined and stigmatised by the oppressive purity system of second temple Judaism. Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and prisoners in his parable of the last judgement (Mt 25: 31-46). The church in its mission should therefore engage political rulers, managers of businesses and other societal structures, to address issues related to the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, rape survivors and so on.

The statement “to stand where God stands” means to stand with the wronged against injustice; that, in following Christ, the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. Psalm 109:30f clearly states that God stands at the right hand of the needy. God stands on the side of abused women and children, unpaid workers, the sick, widows, orphans and strangers, the elderly and the unemployed. The above discussion describes, in effect, mission as expected by Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is therefore relevant in the context of the City of Tshwane. The City of Tshwane is characterised by a high crime rate, unemployment, foreigners from neighbouring African states in search of work, street children, homeless people, the financially comfortable and the wealthy (who are predominantly from the white minority) and who are reluctant to surrender their historical privilege and share their wealth with the poor (Breetzke, 2010). The City of Tshwane is the capital city of South Africa and many government departments have offices here. The majority of Pretoria’s employed work in government offices. The richest and the poorest people reside in the city. If the wealth of the city could be shared more equitably, poverty in the city of Tshwane could be alleviated.

This study wishes to explore the mission outreach activities of MyT in the light of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. How the Belhar Confession is understood and lived by Christians at MyT in their mission activities remains critical.

The main research question of this study is:

How can MyT, as a URCSA congregation, best embody the vision of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession in its outreach activities?

The individual research questions (sub-questions) of this study are:

- What is the church's missionary calling according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?
- What are the outreach activities of MyT at present?
- What attitudes and understandings are found among members of MyT towards, and about, Article 4 of the Belhar Confession
- In what ways do they apply/connect Article 4 with their outreach activities?
- What missionary praxis – one that integrates Article 4 of the Belhar Confession into missionary activities – can be proposed for MyT?

The main aim of this study is to investigate the understanding, attitudes and application of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession by MyT Christians in their outreach activities.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

- To study and outline the current mission praxis of the MyT and its missionary activities
- To study and outline the church's missionary calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

- To study and evaluate the extent to which Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is understood and has been applied by MyT in their mission activities
- To propose missionary praxis (lived faith or strategy) for the MyT, one that seeks to integrate Article 4 of the Belhar Confession in their outreach activities.

1.2 RESEARCH RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

According to Callahan (2010:55) strong, healthy congregations deliver mission outreach.

Weak congregations deliver none. They are preoccupied with matters inside their congregations and hardly notice the community around them. “Outreach is not simply about sending money and prayers to the mission field on the other side of the planet (though this is a good thing)” says Harney (2011:13). Likewise, having a committee that plans outreach activities is not enough, though it can be helpful. There is a need for organic outreach. Organic outreach is what happens when evangelistic vision and action become the domain of every ministry in a church and the commitment of every member of the congregation. It does not happen by accident. It happens when every leader and each church ministry is gripped by a commitment to fulfil the Great Commission. As a result of this commitment, outreach will not be an add-on activity or an occasional ministry project. It will become part of the culture of the church. It becomes a natural and integrated part of the whole life of the church, not a fabricated add-on. This is called organic outreach (Harney, 2011:13). If MyT wants to be a strong and healthy congregation, it has to serve the

persons and groupings in its immediate community, in the wider City of Tshwane and beyond. To provide such a service, the congregation has to develop a mission praxis that is aligned with its confession. One of the confessions accepted by the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa is called “the Belhar Confession”. In brief, the Belhar Confession was formally adopted in 1986. It is now one of the standards of unity of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). It confronts the sin of racism and has made reconciliation among the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa possible (Adonis, 2006; Tshaka, 2005; Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2013). “The Belhar Confession is a call to action in order to change ideas, beliefs and behaviours on unity, justice and reconciliation” (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2014:318). Article 4 of the Belhar Confession informs how mission praxis can be understood and applied by Christians belonging to the Uniting Reformed Churches of Southern Africa (URCSA). The main issues raised in the Belhar Confession are described in section 1.6.6 of this Chapter. In brief, it emphasises that God wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people. He is God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged. God calls the church to follow Him in bringing justice to the oppressed, and in giving bread to the hungry; the church must stand by people experiencing any form of suffering and needs to witness against any form of injustice (Naude, 2010: 222).

Unfortunately there is still misunderstanding among members in terms of their responsibility and mission. Mission is still viewed from a more traditional perspective, that is, as a commission, rather than as a radical igniting of the whole people of God to be agents of transformation wherever they are.

After noting that the outreach activities were not well-coordinated at MyT, the Church Council established the Outreach Committee. Its function was to coordinate and guide outreach activities at MyT. Challenges experienced include the following:

- The Christian outreach activities at MyT seem poorly aligned with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.
- According to members of the Outreach Committee, Lebang Nkosi and Mercia Makgati (2015), Outreach activities at MyT lack coordination because church wards and ministries simply initiate outreach activities on their own and inform the Church Council later.
- Outreach activities lack purpose and some activities, worthy as they are, consist of simple charity. Outreach is confused with charity. The observation of the Outreach Committee is supported by Prof Kritzingler, a part-time minister at MyT. In his own words, Prof Kritzingler said, “I believe we are not doing our outreach well. I don’t want us to do charity”.
- There was no direction on how the outreach activities should be conducted. Church members conduct outreach activities in the way they understand them. One member of the Outreach Committee said: “We have individual outreach, and individual outreaches do not have impact in the communities we serve” (Nkosi, 2015).
- The Outreach Committee itself is not fully aware of the contents of the Belhar Confession, especially Article 4, which describes the mission praxis. The Committee finds it difficult to operate effectively without knowledge of the call embodied in the Belhar Confession or a clearly defined mission praxis.

- According to Prof Kritzinger (2014:12), “the spirituality of the church (URCSA) should be renewed from the narrow missionary pietism into a spirituality that is concrete, reformational, ecumenical and justice-seeking”.

The challenges mentioned above clearly show the need to develop a missionary strategy that integrates Article 4 of the Belhar Confession into this congregation. Terry and Payne (2013: 3) define strategy as “a plan of action” or “a plan that aims to give the enterprise a competitive advantage over rivals through differentiation” or simply “the process that determines how your ministries will accomplish its missions”. All the definitions given above have in common the notions of “future orientation” and “a plan for a process”. It is therefore vital that MyT starts to research and propose a mission strategy that is well planned and future-oriented. In order to accomplish this, both the current mission praxis of the MyT and its missionary activities need to be studied and analysed. Aims, objectives and contextualised methods of operation or guidelines should be clearly stated. As explained above, narrow missionary pietism should be transformed into “a spirituality that is concrete, reformational, ecumenical and justice-seeking”. This expresses the relevance of this study.

1.3 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is not going to focus on the broad scope of missions. Its focus is on the mission outreach activities of MyT as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The research process will demand visiting selected wards of MyT at their centres spread throughout the City of Tshwane. Meetings with wards will take place after working hours when all members are back from work. The following wards will be

interviewed: wards 2, 4, and 9. The wards were selected because they are active in outreach activities and they include men and women above the age of 18. This will require the researcher to travel at night which is risky in a city with a high crime rate. The following church ministries will be interviewed: MyT Youth Ministry will be interviewed as a pilot project. The other ministries are the Christian Youth Ministry and the Christian Men Ministries. They were selected because they included males and females above the age of 18, at different socio-economic levels, and they include both students and employed men and women. Church ministries will be interviewed after church service on selected Sundays. The focus group interviews will demand the use of a good quality digital voice recorder or video recorder. The use of ordinary recording tools like cell phones may compromise quality in the recording process. There are few books or articles written on the interpretation of the Belhar Confession and, therefore, the interpretation of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession will be based on the few resources that are available. Some of the eleven wards of MyT are not active and therefore focus group interviews will be conducted only with the selected wards. Some members of MyT may not be aware of the confessional issues raised in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. In this regard, the researcher will have to read the article with the group.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to investigate the understanding, attitudes and practice (or application) of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession by MyT Christians in their outreach activities.

The objectives of this study therefore are:

- *career-oriented*, as this MTh programme is part of my ministry studies prior to being ordained as minister in the URCSA. The personal objective of my study, therefore, is to qualify as a minister of the word; *academic*, in order to contribute to missiological reflection in the RCSA on Article 4 of the Belhar Confession; *strategic*, in order to stimulate discussion on mission in the light of the Belhar Confession in the Tshwane Presbytery URCSA. This includes:
 - to study and outline the current mission praxis of the MyT and its missionary activities;
 - to study and outline the church's missionary calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession;
 - to study and evaluate the extent to which Article 4 of the Belhar Confession has been applied by MyT in their outreach activities; and
 - to propose a missionary praxis for the MyT, one that seeks to integrate Article 4 of the Belhar Confession in the church's outreach activities.

1.5 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND DESIGN

The qualitative Research Framework Critical Realism (realistic position)

The Critical Realism approach for this study was chosen for the following reasons:

Critical Realism is a way to describe the process of "knowing" that simultaneously acknowledges the reality of the thing known as something other than the knower (hence realism) and fully acknowledges that the only access we have to this reality

lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence critical) (Wright, 1992: 35). Wright is a New Testament scholar and retired Bishop of Durham (Anglican). Theologians in this field aim to show that the language of science and Christian theology are similar and can form a starting point for dialogue between the two. According to Lyubimov (2011) critical realism theory states that the theory of knowledge (epistemology) is different from a theory of being or ontology.

According to Morton (2006), a central idea of critical theory is that natural and social reality should be understood as an open stratified system of objects with causal powers. The three strata are the domains of the **real** (mechanisms that have generated the actual events), the **actual** (actual events which have been generated by mechanism) and the **empirical** (observable experiences). In this study, the real, actual and empirical domains of MyT Christians will be explored in terms of how they conduct their Christian outreach activities and how their activities reflect on Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

Ontology

Ontology is the way we understand reality. This study investigates how Christians at MyT do their mission outreach or missiological praxis in the light of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession in the city of Tshwane. The validity and reliability of any statements they make about, for example, culture, economics, politics, or God, will reveal their ontology. In this regard, God is understood as God of mission. He reaches out in love to save the fallen created order by using Christians. God calls and sends out faith communities such as the MyT Christians to be instruments of the

transformative Reign of God in history. Human participation in God's work on earth is seen as God's mission. Missions are initiated and guided by the Holy Spirit. For example, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 initiated the mission outreach activities of the apostles.

Epistemology

Critically realistic epistemology is proposed. It adopts an approach of sensitive critical realism which can lead to a hermeneutic of love. In this regard, the interpretation of texts, human actions, or situations becomes a conversation in which understanding is possible and attainable through patient listening (in dialogue). This kind of epistemology is relational and inter-subjective. In this regard, knowing, understanding and sense-making are also possible within an interpretive community. This can lead to mission outreach activities that are communal and ecumenical. All the saints are included as recommended in Ephesians 3: 14-20. It is more holistic in nature and open to finding truth from poems, songs, stories, and meditations.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The section below discusses the literature consulted in the study.

1.6.1 Theology of missions and mission praxis

Scholars have defined the concept of mission in different ways. Some important definitions that can help us to understand mission are as follows: Christopher Wright (2006:23) defines mission as "our committed participation as God's people, at God's

invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of the world for the redemption of God's creation". In this regard, the church must understand mission as its participation in the mission of the triune God. Mission is also defined as the "communication of the Gospel" Goheen (2014: 25). It is the task given to God's people everywhere to communicate the good news not only with their words but also with their lives and deeds. Mission is therefore witness in life, word and deed (Goheen, 2014: 25). Mission is also defined as "the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole person in the whole world" (Goheen, 2014:25). It is important to note that it is the whole church, not just pastors, ministers, missionaries, or evangelists that should take part in the mission of the triune God.

From an African point of view, Mercy Amba Oduyoye in Muzorewa (1991:77) defined mission as "a movement both to and from six continents. Each church in each area of the world is both a sending and a receiving community. There are no longer 'mission fields' and 'missionary churches', but 'partners in mission'. Christianity has no seat in Europe from which emanate all missionaries and all theological wisdom". Africa is therefore in need of an authentic African spiritual life that is relevant to the present day Africa. One that will bring about peace, justice, and reconciliation among humans just as Christ came to do (Shorter, 1978:74; Sesi, Mutua, Mekonnen, Rasmussen, Shaw, Sesi & Chul-Soo Kim, 2009: v).

According to van Engen (2004:45), the theology of mission has to do with three areas. These are: the Biblical context, the faith community and the missional context. All three areas are interlaced by what is called the "integrating theme". A brief explanation of these and related concepts follows:

Biblical context

The concept of Biblical context refers to Biblical and theological presuppositions and values. It is theological because it involves reflection about God. It seeks to understand God's mission, God's intentions and purposes, God's missional use of humans, and God's working through His people in His world. Theology of missions allows the Bible or Scripture not only to provide the fundamental motivations for mission, but also to question, shape, guide, and evaluate the missionary activity (van Engen, 2004).

Faith community

Theology of mission is oriented toward and for missions (faith community). In this area, Biblical and theology presuppositions and values are applied to the enterprise of the ministry and mission of the church. Basic reflection in this area is found in books, journals and other publications dealing with the theory of missiology. Studies and reflection should lead to action and participation within or outside the local community (van Engen, 2004).

Missional context

In this area, reflections are applied in the context of specific activities carried out in particular times and places. It is an applied theology. It deals specifically with issues that have to do with the mission of the church in its context. The context can be rural or urban.

In this study we focus specifically on the urban context of the City of Tshwane (van Engen, 2004).

Mission praxis

Mission praxis is a helpful way to interface the reflection and action of the three areas by way of the process known as “praxis”. Orlando Costas (1976) in van Engen (2004:48) describes Missiology as:

“fundamentally a praxeological phenomenon. It is a critical reflection that takes place in the praxis of mission. It occurs in the concrete missionary situation, as part of the church’s missionary obedience to and participation in God’s mission, and in itself actualised in that situation. Its object is always the world ...men and women in their multiple life situations. In reference to this witnessing action saturated and led by the sovereign, redemptive action of the Holy Spirit ...the concept of missionary praxis is used. Missiology arises as part of a witnessing engagement to the gospel in the multiple situations of life”.

The concept of “praxis” helps us to understand that both reflection and actions are part of the theology that seeks to discover how the church, including MyT, may participate in God’s mission in God’s world. Action informs reflection which, in turn, interprets, evaluates, critiques and projects new understanding in transformed actions. Thus, reflections and actions offer a transformation of all aspects of our missiological engagement with our various contexts. Praxis is therefore a critical reflection on historical as well as contemporary experiences (Abraham, 1996). A rebirth of Africa, for example, according to Tshaka (2007:537) in Nel and Makofane, (2014:240), poses a number of challenges for African Christians. Christians can no longer ignore the issue of Africanisation in their congregations in terms of their missiological praxis. Migration, and xenophobic and Afrophobic violence are

challenges that must be addressed. An ethos of equality, inclusion and unity should be the theological focus in Christian mission praxis.

Integrating theme

The three areas or ideas mentioned above are brought together by the concept “integrating theme”. This concept is where all three areas interconnect. The integrating theme is selected on the basis of being contextually-appropriate, significant, biblically relevant, fruitful, missiologically active and transformational (van Engen, 2004).

1.6.2 Urbanisation and city missions

Greenway and Mashau (2007: 6) define urbanisation as “the process in which the number of people living in the cities increases compared with the number of people living in rural areas”. It is generally caused by a combination of economic and socio-cultural factors. When more than 50% of people live in the urban environment, a country is considered to be urbanised (Greenway and Mashau, 2007: 6). Urban populations are growing at a fast rate throughout the world. Since 2008, according to Sweeney (2012) more than half of the world’s population resides in and around cities. In Africa, fast-growing cities include Lagos in Nigeria, Nairobi in Kenya, Cairo in Egypt and Johannesburg in South Africa. Urbanisation in Africa is mainly caused by migration. Generally, migration is caused by natural, economic, social and political factors (Verster, 2000:20). Urbanisation in developing countries, including Africa, created new problems for cities, including poor living conditions, transport problems, housing shortages, squatting or informal settlements and extreme poverty in informal settlements. The pull factors that attract people to cities include

employment opportunities, better and higher education, better living standards and political freedom. This is what Verster (2000:37) calls positive aspects of city life. The shift creates a different set of needs and requires different kinds of response from the church. People in cities live differently compared to those in rural areas. Life in the African city is attached more to employment than to clan and family. Social networks in cities are different from those in rural areas. In cities, the missionary is not separated from the rest of the city community, he or she is a city dweller, working with ethnically diverse populations, putting up with public transportations and traffic jams and tries hard to influence those in local neighbourhoods and networks. All of these trends should be considered when Christians plan their mission activities. Consequently, there is a need for a strategy that will make the greatest impact for God's Kingdom.

According to Siebert (1985), urbanisation as a world trend is a challenge for churches. The contemporary city is constituted of three subsystems, namely: the urban need system, the administration of justice system and the policing system. A brief description of the systems follows:

The urban need system

The urban need system consists of human needs which have become more differentiated in the urbanisation process. The needs include highly specialised needs for food, sexual satisfaction, clothing, housing, education, leisure and many more.

The urban need system also includes an extreme division of labour which is characterised by mechanisation, automation, computerisation and cybernetisation. The division of labour further subdivides city dwellers to the very roots of their

existence, and the city is therefore characterised by anonymity, populated by a lonely crowd which lack hopes and dreams for a better urban future (Siebert, 1985). According to Smith (2001:301), some city neighbourhoods are “plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness and low-achieving schools”. The church needs to perform its missionary activities in these difficult conditions.

The administration of justice subsystem

Siebert (1985) states that the administrative subsystem of contemporary cities includes laws which are not rooted in any form of divine law. Courts apply pure legality without social morality. The intervention of the church is therefore essential to transform cities into areas where communities live abundant life.

The subsystem of policing

The subsystem of policing means policing not only of urban traffic or of crimes against life and property, but means policing the city in its totality for the purpose of its survival. Policing is made necessary by the many contradictions experienced, for example, between man and nature, individuals and collectives, producer and consumer, owner and worker, luxury and misery, rich and poor classes (Siebert, 1985:435). Unemployment, especially of the youth, Blacks and women is also a characteristic of the city. In 2011, the South African unemployment rate was 24,2% and youth unemployment was 32,6 % Statistics South Africa (2011). The City of Tshwane’s population increased from 2,1 million to 2,9 million people in 2011 and it is projected to increase owing to the migration of people from the surrounding provinces to Gauteng in search of economic opportunities (City of Tshwane, 2013). The majority of the city’s population is made up of young people under 35 years of age. Addressing urban youth-related issues such as unemployment, education,

security and participation presents one of the most critical development challenges for the city. Other challenges related to the rapid rise in the urban population include: pressures of migration, globalisation, economic development, social inequality, environmental pollution and the impacts of climate change (City of Tshwane, 2013:40; Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2013).

Social challenges within the city include landlessness, homelessness, poverty, marginalisation, systemic inequality, economic injustice, domestic violence, child abuse, displaced and trafficked girls and women, xenophobic violence in both Tshwane and Johannesburg, rape and sexual violation of women, ethnic rivalries, and informal settlements (Walemba, 1988; Kuljian, 2013; Mashau and Kritzing, 2014).

If churches want to preserve their identity and actuality they are compelled to deal with the need system of the city, with the administration of justice and the policing subsystem and various city crises. The churches need a well-informed mission strategy to deal with city challenges. It is important to note that strategy without an embedded spiritual dimension tends to fail (Banda, 2010). According to Cumpsty and Leatt (1976), the objectives of urban ministry should include: the ministry of co-operation in the construction of the future, the ministry of justice and forgiveness, and the ministry of study and research. The urban ministry should be concerned with the church's pastoral care of the society. According to Hake (2011:180), God demands a response from all human groups as groups and from individuals to participate in mission. God's Kingdom is concerned with humans' total life, including secular life and material needs, not only with spiritual things. The City of Tshwane is no exception in this regard. All of the above-mentioned challenges fit the characteristics of the City of Tshwane. MyT as one of the churches in the City of

Tshwane cannot ignore the mission task that it is obliged to perform, hence the importance and relevance of this study.

1.6.3 Key theological concepts in redefining missions

The main theological justification for the redefinition of missions can be captured in the popularisation of the following three concepts: *Missio Dei*, Trinitarian Ecclesiology and the Kingdom of God (Pergamum, 2005). This section also discusses the approach to mission that can lead to the realisation of a new world order of morality, justice and peace (Carroll, 1985: 392).

Missio Dei

Missio Dei, “the Mission of God”, is a concept injected into the bloodstream of mission thinking by the Global Conference of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, Germany, in 1952 (Goheen, 2014:75). This Latin term emphasises that God himself initiated and sustains his purpose to restore all of creation. The restoration is universal, extending to social justice and rescuing people from cultural, political, social and economic dehumanisation, as well as from their spiritual alienation from God. Mission is regarded as an attribute of God, for God is the one who creates, speaks, commands, loves and calls people to be holy. Through Christ, God sends the incarnate Son to engage people in a message of redemption and truth. Taylor (2000: 192) sees God as source, originator and end of mission. In Acts,

God used the Holy Spirit to attract people to the gospel. In response to the God of mission, Christians should be part of the missionary church and carry out the divine mission of redemption and restoration (Banks *et al.*, 2013; Gaventa, 1982). David Bosch (1991) articulates several elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission. He sees mission as the church with others, *missio Dei*, mediating salvation, the quest for justice, evangelism, contextualisation, liberation, inculturation, common witness, ministry by the whole people of God, witness to people of other living faiths, theology and action in hope.

Trinitarian Ecclesiology

Trinitarian ecclesiology emphasises that God sent his Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son. The Trinity sends the church to carry out a holistic mission, where one seeks to redeem every aspect of society. This is based on the commission scripture in John 20:21, Christ's sending of the church should emulate the Father's sending of Christ which included healing the sick, feeding the poor and freeing captives (Pergamum, 2005:3). When mission is recognised as God's mission, and the triune God as the source and owner, the following major implications follow:

- "Mission is bigger than the church, that is, God may work outside the church too. The church cannot be arrogant about its mission or itself.
- The church is derived from mission, and not the other way round. Mission cannot be incidental to the life of the church.
- Mission cannot be reduced to conversions and church membership. God has bigger, wider things in mind." (Nussbaum, 2005:96).

According to Bosch (1991:370), the *missio Dei* institutes the missions' ecclesia. In this regard, the sending God is the motivation for the missionary activities of the church. It is not the missional church that sends Christians on a mission, but that it is the church that is sent by God. The church should recognise that the proclamation of the gospel, church planting, works of justice, of compassion and so forth, are all grounded in and directed towards *missio Dei*. It should be understood that the mission of the church is essentially about the nature and essence of the church. According to Yates (2009:74), Bosch sees the church as "a divinely given agent of mission". He was against any marginalisation of the church in mission. He also opposed an ethnic approach to mission because, according to him, it would bolster a separate ethnic approach to black Africans which denied the catholicity of a mixed race congregation (Yates, 2009). This was "totally incompatible" with the community of Jesus. An African theology of transformational praxis is therefore "aimed at giving account of the Trinitarian heart of ecclesia and Christian identity and the consequences of these for living a life of reconciliation, justice, and peace" (Ilo, 2012: 203).

The Kingdom of God

Missiologists seek to exterminate every form of evil and suffering in the world. Believers should therefore bring in the kingdom in every way. The church in its mission should witness to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participate in the on-going struggle between the reign of God and the powers of darkness and evil (<http://missionsmandate.org/pdf/sgi12/Current-Trends-in-Missions.pdf>). God's will was perfectly carried out in Jesus Christ. He revealed and lived the will of God. In

his mission Jesus clearly stated that the Kingdom of God is near (World Council of Churches, 1988).

1.6.4 Mission trends and approaches

In the past, missionaries from the West failed to understand the profound importance of the social and cultural context of the people they targeted. Colonial policy and mission rated indigenous cultures extremely low on the Darwinian evolutionary scale (Sanneh, 1984:423). This failure ensured that the message preached would be irrelevant to the communities they sought to convert (Carroll, 1985:390). Mission took place within the context of European colonial expansion (Schreiter, 1999). The end of the colonial period saw the emergence of a model of mission characterised by the concept of “accompaniment”. In this regard, missionaries began to define their task as one of intense involvement with the changing society, contextualisation and inculturation, dialogue, and commitment to join the struggle for justice and liberation (Schreiter, 1999). In recent times, missionaries are trying to correct the problem of socio-cultural irrelevance. “Contextualisation, incarnation theology, and the accent on acculturation are watchwords of the missionary enterprise” (Carroll, 1985:390). A theology of mission in our times should evangelise the structures of society and

disciple the nations by working for clear vision of a new social order which can be described as truly liberating of all people. There is a need for a vision of human life and of the whole world which can inspire all people to work toward world communion in justice and understanding. There is a need for a vision which respects the dignity of every person irrespective of gender, race, social strata, culture, and religious belief (Carroll, 1985).

The new world order envisaged by Carroll (1985:392) is characterised by the following:

- One in which every human person is guaranteed the basic human rights of life and is respected, without discrimination, as a person.
- One in which each society is able to provide the essential requisites for a decent life for its people and for its own cultural development.
- One in which planet earth is cared for and not treated in such a way that it becomes unsuitable for present or future life.

Since values, attitudes, and ideological mind-sets are the underpinnings of the social structures and relationships through which people engage each other, they must change. The approach to mission theology should flow from an ethical and a moral reality which can transform human values in pluralistic societies. The relationship between socio-political power, structures, and strategies, and the values prevalent in a given culture, should stand under the constant critique of the gospel. In the City of Tshwane, the challenge of homelessness and landlessness is clearly observable. The homeless sleep everywhere in the city including in front of government buildings, business stores and offices, in dilapidated buildings in the city, shelters, in bushes near streams and informal settlements. The homeless population includes Blacks, Whites, men, women, youths, children, locals and foreigners from

neighbouring countries (Mashau and Kritzinger, 2014: 21). The battle for space in the city is described as a spiritual battle. It is a battle for the soul of the city and a battle of values with current political, socio-economic, cultural and even moral considerations (Mashau and Kritzinger, 2014: 23). For the new world order to be created, the prophetic role of Christianity in mission should be clear. Christianity will rather need to use 'prophets in such a time as this' who are willing to speak out from the heritage of faith to criticise the existing social order. In ancient Israel, when the people of God deviated away from the will of God, prophets were the only ones who understood what was happening. They confronted the wealthy and powerful and introduced radical changes in order to enforce justice for the poor (Carroll, 1985). This call remains contemporary and it is what Christians should be doing in today's mission.

Pergamum (2005) identified five current trends in missions. Four of these are relevant to this study. These trends are:

- (1) the changing context of mission - the shifting geographic centre of Christianity,
- (2) the changing focus of mission: the modern people-group focus,
- (3) the current trend of short-term missions, and
- (4) the healthier attempts towards broad, cooperative evangelical efforts replacing unhealthy ecumenism.

This discussion includes the "serving the whole person" strategy of Sweeney (2012), reconciliation as a model of mission (Schreiter, 1999) and Jesus' inclusive mission. A brief discussion of these trends follows:

The changing context of mission - the shifting geographic centre of Christianity

The traditional idea about mission is that mission is a unidirectional activity that proceeds from the West to other parts of the world such as Africa, Asia or Latin America (Goheen, 2014: 15). Muzorewa (1991: 15) is of the opinion that the 20th-century development of the traditional Protestant theology of mission was narrow because, primarily, it had been the work of Europeans and Americans whose views reflected their Western bias. According to Sweeney (2012), the geographic centre of Christianity has shifted. Christianity can no longer be seen as a Western religion (Pergamum, 2005). Mission is no longer from the West to the Rest. The majority of missions are now from the non-Western world; for example, Latin America, Africa and Asia are blooming while Europe and America are declining. Missionaries now come from almost everywhere and go almost anywhere to spread the good news. Since the current church is culturally diversified, there is a need for Christians to be more diversified in thought and expressions of worship and in their missionary activities. This strategy enables indigenous believers to mobilise local bodies of believers to reach out to their communities in a God honouring manner (Sweeney, 2012). Mainwaring (2014: 17) sees mutuality as a postcolonial praxis for mission. The Christian ministry should therefore nurture and commission people to seek justice and peace, in communities.

The changing focus of missions: the modern people-group focus

The concept of people-group focus was introduced by Ralph Winter in the late 1970s. According to Winter and Hawthorne (1999), instead of focusing on political nation states, missions should focus on cultures within countries possessing ethnic and linguistic identities distinct from others. The theological basis for the people-group focus is derived from Rom 15:18-21. Paul desired to focus on pioneer

frontiers to win people so that God would be praised by all peoples (Rom15:11). The goal in discipling the nations is in winning more and more peoples, ethno-linguistic groups, some from every tongue, tribe and nation. Furthermore, the goal is to win souls and plant churches among as many unreached peoples as possible and to cross barriers with the Gospel. Various people-groups are identified, quantified and targeted so that new workers can allocate resources effectively to speed the Great Commission.

Short-term mission programmes

Krabill (1998:125) identified short-term experience or short-term missions, whether educational or missional in nature, as an approach to missions with enormous opportunities and pitfalls. It is defined as an event in which young people are given an opportunity to do missional activity for a short period that can vary from a weekend or to a year or two. This short-term approach to missions in North America has experienced phenomenal growth in recent years. Participants across the United States rose by 500% since the 1980s. Short-term participants in missions are described by the functions they do. For example, some are called “world shakers”, “fishers of men”, “God squad” , “desert angels”, “Kingdom-builders” and many more. One of the ultimate goals of short-term experience is to create more enthusiasm and commitment among participants for local, domestic service *and* for outreach.

Research has identified weaknesses attached to the strategy such as the following:

- participants do not stay in a place long enough to learn about the communities' language and culture;
- Some of the projects are little more than summer camping for the youths involved.

For short-term missions to be effective, more critical issues should be addressed. Their potential includes the following: short-term missions can transform church members into radical disciples, and they offer reality therapy for those with negative attitude towards missions.

Howel (2009:211) gave four suggestions to improve short-term missions. The four suggestions are summarised as follows:

- spend more time in the preparatory phase focusing on, for example, the history, politics, and religious context of the destination;
- the return presentation should be made more constructive by deliberately selecting photos that depict local Christians and others in positions of authority and power rather than focusing exclusively on team members themselves;
- build, at congregational level, a partnership approach to short-term missions and to cultivate specific relationships over the long-term;
- frame every trip in terms of the larger *missio Dei*. This would include relationship-building activities, conversation with local leaders, and time spent listening to those in the field. This can stop the problem of dictating to outreach destinations.

The healthier attempts towards broad, cooperative evangelical efforts replacing unhealthy ecumenism

Some believers have negative experiences of ecumenism advocated by the World Council of Churches. At present, new efforts at ecumenism are on the rise and they are strongly undergirded by basic evangelical doctrinal safeguards. Missions are organised across denominational lines. This contributed towards the formation of the

Student Volunteer Movement. The advantages of the healthy ecumenism include shared resources, broad cooperation, avoiding duplication of services and a decrease in interdenominational infighting. Despite some weaknesses, these cooperatives are seen as positive development in mission activities. According to Moritz (2008:28), the nine practices of Emerging Churches can enhance healthy missions. These are:

- 1) identification with the life of Jesus;
- 2) transform the secular realm;
- 3) live highly communal lives;
- 4) welcome strangers;
- 5) serve with generosity;
- 6) participate as producers;
- 7) create as created beings;
- 8) lead as a body; and
- 9) take part in spiritual activities.

Serving the whole person by the whole people of God

This is seen as a major shift from thinking of missions as merely 'cross-cultural evangelism' to thinking of them as ministering to the whole person (Sweeney: 2012). The shift is based on the idea that God is not only interested in converting people; he is concerned about their physical, emotional, and social well-being as well. True religion is not just preaching the message, but also entails practically looking after orphans and widows in distress (James 1:27). The tendency should be to look at missions as the church's attempt to be the outward, visible expression of the kingdom of God. Its tasks should include: church planting, Bible translation, medical

work, disaster relief, pastor training, business as missions, community development, education and a host of other concerns.

According to Robert (2013:113), Mina Tembeka Soga demonstrated this kind of mission in South Africa. Her mission could be described as follows: she brought good news, serving the blind, the aged and the destitute of Queenstown. She organised soup kitchens for the hungry and a blanket fund for the poor. She built a hostelry at Lady Frere to accommodate the homeless black people of the area. The centre was a place of prayer and debate on African affairs. Research on Black churches in America revealed their understanding of the concept “serving the whole person”. Their outreach programmes include the following: child development, youth service development, educational programmes, family support and aid, adult individual programmes, elderly services and aid, and community service and development (Billingsley and Caldwell, 1991:434; Thomas, Quinn & Caldwell, 1994:576).

Reconciliation as a model of mission

Ikenga-Metuh (2001, 16) explains reconciliation as “to connect things together, and therefore means to re-establish broken or disrupted relationships. It therefore implies that all is not well, and that relationships have gone sour due to some mistakes on one or both sides”. Reconciliation describes “the restoration of broken relationships or the coming together of those who have been alienated and separated from each other by conflict to create a community again” (LenkaBula 2005: 108).

A theology of reconciliation in Africa demands more than the proclamation of the word. The acceptance of the message of salvation should bring reconciliation, redemption, healing, wholeness, freedom, peace and spiritual liberation to those who

accept the message (Ilo, 2012: 1014). Archbishop Desmond Tutu emphasises the fact that reconciliation should lead to restorative justice rather than retributive justice (Chaudary, 2010:119).

According to Boesak (1984:32), "In the process of reconciling God with the world, confrontation with evil almost made Christ give up. But it was necessary. It was necessary to unmask human nature for what it really was". In this regard, true reconciliation cannot take place without confrontation. Reconciliation means "coming to grips with evil, it means death and suffering, giving up one's life, for the sake of the other" (Boesak, 1984:32).

According to Schreiter (1999), the changing world demands changing mission. "Mission is both challenge and response: a challenge to address a perceived need and a response intended to meet that need" (Schreiter, 1999:9). Reconciliation as a model of mission can be achieved by creating communities of memories and communities of hope. A community of memory is best explained as a community of hospitality. It gives a space of recognition and safety wherein damaged personhood might be restored. In this regard, persons and communities might tell their stories and restore their narratives. A community of memory is also a place of truth-telling, where the lies of violence, injustice and oppression are overcome. The ministry of reconciliation continues the struggle for justice, for full reconciliation requires justice. A community of memory is also described as a place of connection. It connects those who have been separated out and reweaves them into the fabric of the community. It also connects the story of the community with the narratives of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It fosters communities of hope and constructs a new society. It creates programmes and projects that focus on the building of a new and just society. A new model of mission should therefore,

embrace reconciliation, the healing of humanity, the pursuit of justice, telling the truth, and connecting together the shreds of broken lives and realise the vision of a healed planet (Schreiter, 1999:15).

An all-inclusive mission

According to Bosch (1991:28), Jesus introduced an inclusive mission. Jesus' mission embraced both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressors, both the sinners and the devout. Jesus' mission dissolved alienation and broke down walls of hostility and crossing the boundaries between individuals and groups.

In pursuing strategy, tactics, methods and techniques of missions, Taber (1983:243) suggests that Christians should not lose sight of the saving word of God, articulated by prophets, incarnate in Jesus Christ, and recorded for our learning in the scriptures.

Other issues to be considered in mission trends include technology and missions, mission entrepreneurialism, and foreign-supported indigenous workers. A brief description of these trends follows:

Technology and missions

Modern missionaries are deep into technology. Technology can therefore be used to enhance missionary activities. Digital projectors and laser printers, for example, can be used to present messages or to print important documents. Communication by computers, Internet or social networking is available anywhere any time. A word of advice is that technology should not be used to avoid direct human contact that

creates deep relationship or fellowship with others. Deepen and strengthen this with literature that speaks to the issue of globalisation (Sweeney, 2012).

Mission entrepreneurialism

In this regard, businessmen and businesswomen take on the ministries of helping the poor in job creation, poverty alleviation and the provision of basic needs to communities. Through business ventures people come to realise that God is concerned about every aspect of their lives (Sweeney, 2012). Christians are encouraged to combine their Kingdom-building ideas with business know-how. In this regard missions cannot depend solely on charity. Business as Mission is a Christian movement that promotes doing business according to Kingdom values of stewardship, reconciliation, justice, dignity and peace (Johnson, 2009).

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/pioneer.leaders.explore.mission.and.entrepreneurship/28955.htm>). Ward (2009:170) calls for visionary, entrepreneurial, missionary leadership in the church. According to him, “visionary leaders have the ability to imagine God’s future and to cast the vision of how God’s future and the giftings of a particular community can meet”. Entrepreneurial leaders “see lemons and make lemonade” and make “the most of what is available, in any circumstances, to creatively engage God’s mission” (Ward, 2009:171).

Jorgensen (2007) reports on women’s mission groups in Norway during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Actual activities of the women’s group included raising funds as follows: “When the sheep lambled in the spring, one or two were set aside as mission-lambs from which the profit from wool and meat was sent to the mission”. Women also produced knitting wool and knitted clothes that were sold for the benefit of the mission.

Foreign-supported indigenous workers

In this regard, overseas Christians support indigenous people with knowledge and skills. Local people are trained not be dependent on foreign aid, but rather learn to do things for themselves for sustainability. In this way, people's lives are transformed for the better.

1.6.5 Missionary activities

According to Barth in Bentley (2009), the church's mission is portrayed in the way it interacts with those who do *not* form part of its community. The inclusive and welcoming practices of the church should testify to its recognition of God's acts of revelation and salvation. Missionary activities which do not please God are mere human efforts (Bentley, 2009: 25). This section gives some examples of missionary activities that churches can employ.

One mission outreach

Strong, healthy congregations should participate in mission outreach (Callahan, 2010: 54). The missionary activities are described as follows:

- shares one major mission outreach in the community;
- helps directly with one of these: a life stage, a human hurt and hope, a common interest, or community concern;
- delivers concrete, effective help with persons and groupings in the community; and
- is well-known and well-respected in the community.

The poor and missions

Globally, city churches are faced with the challenge of poverty. In Latin America, for example, worsening social conditions are creating many victims who become a new challenge to Christian compassion. The number of street children who are victims of exploitation is the result of family disintegration, loss of basic Christian values and growing poverty (Escobar, 2003:65). In South Africa, one of the major problems the country faces is poverty. Unemployment and wide social and economic gaps between Blacks and Whites are clearly visible. The situation was created by past economic policies from the colonial period through to the apartheid era. South African cities, the City of Tshwane included, are characterised by groups of people living in formal serviced residential areas and those living in informal settlements which lack such basic services as hot and cold running water, electricity and sanitation (Greenway and Mashau, 2007:12). Another pertinent problem facing South African cities is the marginalisation of some groups of people. These groups include legal and illegal foreign migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring and other states. As a result of these challenges, the cities are

characterised by the unemployed, the homeless, street children, prostitutes, alcoholics and substance abusers. It is therefore essential that the church should preach and act in order to give hope to impoverished city communities (Greenway and Mashau, 2007:13).

Missionary activities and projects are developed in response to these challenges. Activities in these areas include: providing services for the material needs of the poor in the city. It is interesting to note that social planners and city governments have acknowledged the problems generated by the current economic system (Escobar, 2013:66). However, city governments cannot solve the problem alone. They need churches to assist. According to Siebert (1985:432), some churches have started fighting on the side of the poor classes to restructure the late modern city. Sociologists in urban Brazil, South Korea and South Africa have come to see churches as a source of hope from which the urban poor gain strength, courage and the language to cope with poverty (Escobar, 2013:66). The church must always be committed to make the presence of God visible in time and space (Mwaura, 2009; Escobar, 2003:66).

Evangelism and holistic mission

The rediscovery of the holistic dimension of biblical teaching challenged the Western individualistic and dualistic reading of the Bible. Christians could read for themselves stories in the New Testament of Christ's transforming power, especially in the lives of the poor. The records in the New Testament revealed that Christ and the Apostles were not only concerned with preaching the word or evangelism, but with compassion for the poor, the marginalised and oppressed and this is a distinctive

mark of Christian character modelled by Christ himself. Tutu (1982:29) says: “We qualify ourselves for Heaven by whether we have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, or those imprisoned”. A holistic mission “combines the evangelistic, and the social and does so unashamedly, and believes that good news and good works belong together and that without good works the good news lacks credibility” (Samuel and Sugden 1999:236). Evangelism and good deeds are therefore seen as essential dimensions of mission (Kritzinger, 2011; Escobar, 2003:147; Taylor, 2000:201) According to Samuel and Sugden (1999:227-231), mission should be seen as transformation. The same idea of transformation is shared by Ilo (2012: 195) when he says: “African Christianity today is a missional theological praxis for transformation and hope”. The prophetic dimension of mission should bring justice and change in the world. Components of mission as transformation should include the following:

- There should be an integral relation between evangelism and social change; social change is not possible without relation to Christ. The two cannot stand on their own;
- Mission should be seen as witness and a journey within the world and not as judgement made outside it. Mission should therefore be seen as a journey with people and communities towards God’s intentions;
- Mission in context. Mission as transformation should show that Christian faith is shaped by context.
- Practice and theory. Praxis says there is no neutral relationship to the world. Mission should therefore show commitment to change in the direction of abundant life, equity and love.

- Freedom and power. John 8:36 says “if the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed”. This is the liberating and empowering dimension of the Gospel. Everyone, rich and poor alike, needs liberation and empowerment.
- Mission as transformation leads to reconciliation and solidarity. The Gospel should reconcile individuals with God and people with people; and
- Mission as transformation should build up communities of change. The Gospel should change people’s lives and inspire hope as we see in the Book of Acts.

In the early church, evangelism took place in three settings: public evangelism, personal evangelism (one-on-one) and household evangelism (Zuck, 1998). Examples of one-on-one or family-to-family activities include: have a family over for a meal and for fun; go to an event together, such as a ball game; do recreational things together; participate in neighbourhood activities such as parent-teacher associations (Liggins, 2013; Gaitskell, 2000). These are opportunities for sharing the Gospel (Zuck, 1998:226). Examples of group-harvesting activities include: evangelistic home Bible study; evangelistic entertaining events; local evangelistic functions such as a concert; seasonal parties in one’s home such as Christmas; Christian films shown in one’s home, among others. These activities are effective because some people are reluctant to attend church, but are willing to go to a social event in a person’s home or other neutral location (Zuck, 1998:226).

Proclamation of the word and service

The Scripture in Acts 6: 1-7 shows that the holistic approach to mission by the Apostles involved both the proclamation of the word and service. The missionary

activity of the apostles focused on preaching “service of the word” and the mission activity of those who were appointed focused on the distribution of food to the poor, “service of the table” (Escobar, 2003:150). Stowe (1984:49) gives the goal of mission as evangelisation. Other possible goals include conversion, Christianisation and experiencing the Kingdom of God. Mission occurs through witnesses who proclaim to the world, by word and deed, the truth about Jesus Christ (Gaventa, 1982:423). In this sense, mission activities should integrate both proclamation and services to those in need. According to Costas (1979), mission is proclaiming God’s name, God’s Kingdom and proclaiming God’s moment.

Outreach and mission

The great commission parish sends members of the church out to engage actively in the ministry. At St Dunstan’s Episcopal Church, outreach activities include works of charity, feeding, and clothing the homeless (St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church, 2014).

The missionary practice of Jesus and the early church

According to Bosch (1996), the missionary practice of Jesus and the early church was characterised by the following:

- The early Christian mission involved the person of Jesus Christ himself;
- The early Christian mission was political and revolutionary. In this regard, Cameron (2012:5) speaks of being pastoral, practical and political;
- The revolutionary nature of the mission manifested itself, *inter alia*, in the new relationships that came into being in the community; and
- The authentic mission was presented or ministered in weakness.

1.6.6 Church’s missional calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession

By September 1948, the policy of apartheid was already called a church policy (Adonis, 2006). Belhar is a township close to Cape Town which witnessed moments of historical importance in 1982 (Smit, 2008). According to Damon (2013), the Belhar Confession is rooted in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. It was drafted in 1982 by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC). The confession was formally adopted in 1986. It is now one of the standards of unity of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). It confronts the sin of racism and has made possible reconciliation among some of the Reformed churches of Southern Africa (Adonis, 2006; Tshaka, 2005; Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2013).

The Belhar Confession addresses three key issues of concern to all churches. These are:

- Unity of the church and unity among all people;
- Reconciliation within church and society; and
- God's justice.

This study focuses on the interpretation and application of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The content of Article 4 is given below:

Article 4 of the Belhar Confession (Naude, 2010: 222)

Below is the text of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

"We believe:

- That God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

- That God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;
- That God calls the church to follow him in this, for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- That God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
- That God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;
- That for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;
- that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right (Deut 32:4; Luke 2:14; John 14:27; Eph 2:14; Isa 1:16-17; James 1:27; James 5:1-6; Luke 1:46-55; Luke 6:20-26; Luke 7:22; Luke 16:19-31; Ps 146; Luke 4:16-19; Rom 6:13-18; Amos 5);
- That the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;
- That the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.”

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following research methodologies were used in this study: critical theory and the pastoral cycle. Appropriate methods for research used are the literature review, focus group interviews, personal communication and the observation method. A brief discussion of the research methods follows:

1.7.1 Critical theory and the pastoral cycle

Basically, critical theory and the pastoral cycle can be used to explain the research design in this research. Abraham (1996) states that if we take missional thrust seriously we need to reflect on theological praxis as methodology for our education. Theology must therefore be a “critical reflection on humankind, on basic human principles” (Gutierrez, 2010: 9).

The research design will follow the Pastoral Cycle or Praxis Matrix.

According to Kantor (2013), the Pastoral Cycle method was developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot to assist groups responding to social issues. The method has roots in the “see, judge, act” method of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, the hermeneutic circle of Juan Luis Segundo, the methodology of modern Catholic Social Teaching and the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola (Kantor, 2013). It is a flexible framework that can be used for pastoral, academic or community action purposes. Figure 1 shows the main components or moments of the Pastoral Cycle.

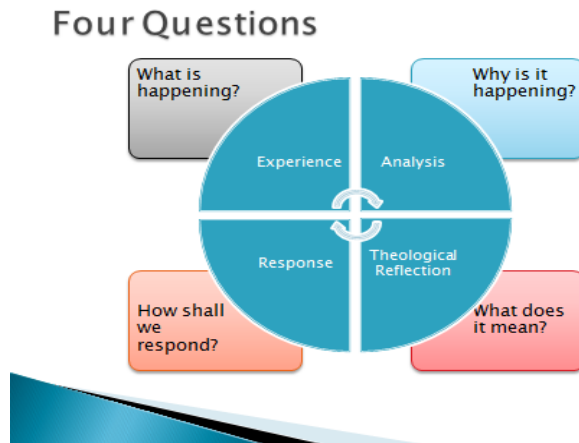


Figure 1.1 Pastoral Cycle. (Source: Kantor, 2013 (jointpublicissues.org.uk)).

The four main questions in the Pastoral Cycle can lead to the responses given within the Cycle. For example, different questions lead to different responses as shown below:

What is happening? – Experience

Why is it happening? – Analysis

What does it mean? – Theological reflection

How shall we respond? – Responses

Holistic engagement is as follows: The method is holistic in the sense that it engages our heads, hearts, and hands. Experience and analysis help us to achieve better understanding using our heads; immersion or contact in the experienced moment help us to get in touch with feelings using our hearts; theological reflection helps us to get in touch with deeper values, aligning our heads and hearts with the will of God; and planning for improved responses to issues and situations is possible by using our hands.

In this regard the following order of questioning may be followed:

1. Agency: Who are the actors? Answer: Christians at MyT in the City of Tshwane. Their identity, culture, socio-economic status, history, etc. Method: interviews and literature study will be applied.
2. Contextual understanding: How the Christians at MyT see their context in terms of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession and their Christian outreach activities in the City of Tshwane. Their knowledge and understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is explored: Method: observations, personal communication and interviews.
3. Ecclesial scrutiny: How MyT Christians view themselves in terms of their mission outreach in the City of Tshwane. Method: Interviews.
4. Interpreting the tradition: How the MyT Christian reads the Bible, worships and interprets the Bible in terms of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. Method: Interviews
5. Discernment of actions: Christian outreach activities that MyT Christians are engaged in. Example, outreach programmes, poverty alleviation, etc. Methods: Observations and interviews.
6. Flexibility: How MyT Christians learn from their experiences. Methods: Interviews.
7. Spirituality: What experiences of God direct and motivate their actions of faith with specific reference to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession and their Christian outreach activities in the City of Tshwane. Methods: Interviews.

1.7.2 Literature review

A literature review is a “critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles” (<http://uwp.ass.duke.edu/wstudio>). Boote and Beile (2005) describe it as an evaluation report of studies found in literature related to the selected area of study. Section 1.6 above discusses Christian mission by different scholars focusing on the following concepts: theology of mission and praxis, urbanisation and city missions, redefining missions, mission trends and approaches, missionary activities, and the church’s mission calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The Melodi ya Tshwane church website (see <http://www.mytchurch.com/>) was used to retrieve information on the origin and development of MyT. Books and articles on the Belhar Confession were used to find information on the Belhar Confession and the interpretation of Article 4.

1.7.3 Focus group interviews

Focus Group Interviews were used to collect data on qualitative issues. Focus Group Interviews can be described as organised discussions with a selected group of individuals to gain collective views about a research topic. Focus Group Interviews are interactive; the group's opinion is at least as important as the individual's opinion. Focus Group Interviews can be used for a multitude of purposes such as: co-constructing new knowledge, gauging opinion, evaluating services, generating theories, interpreting cultures, reshaping people's views and the empowerment of marginalised groups (Arthur, et al., 2012; Sarantakos, 2005; Henning, 2004; de Vos, et al., 2002; Mason,2002).

1.7.4 Personal communication

Personal communication can be divided into seven different types. These are face-to-face communication, letters, telephone conversations, cell phone conversations, email correspondence, text messages and social media communications (https://www.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-090311-151245/unrestricted/Personal_Communication_IQP.pdf). In this study, face-to-face communication, also called "one-to-one interviews" (de Vos, et al., 2002,297), was used and recorded using a digital recorder. In this type of research, open-ended questions are prepared, worded and arranged according to the purpose to be achieved.

1.7.5 Observation methods

Arthur, et al., (2012, 165) describe the observation-based research method as “the use of our five senses to orient us to the social environment”. Both quantitative and qualitative researchers collect information through their five senses, although the emphasis is on things that can be seen and heard. In qualitative research, the researcher may go to a place where people worship to observe what happens naturally. This type of research is known as naturalistic observation. There are three types of naturalistic observation. These are:

- (1) *Unobtrusive or non-reactive observation* – in this mode researchers avoid intervening in the action they are observing;
- (2) *Reactive observation* – in this mode, researchers do identify themselves and explain their intentions to those they wish to observe;
- (3) *Participant observation* – in this mode researchers are active members of the group they are observing.

In this study the reactive observation method was used to collect data during a worship service at MyT.

1.8 CHAPTERS OUTLINE

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is an introductory orientation and introduces the research question, rationale and motivation, aims and objectives, research framework and design, research methodology and concludes with an outline of the proposed study.

Chapter Two discusses the current mission outreach praxis of MyT. The discussion includes the name, location, origin, demographics, historical background, ministry context, ministers, current mission praxis, and current outreach activities.

Chapter Three discusses mission according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. This includes a brief history of the origin of the Belhar Confession; the church's missional call in line with Article 4 and concludes by giving the interpretation of Article 4.

Chapter Four discusses the research methods used, ethical considerations, data collection, analysis and findings.

Chapter Five gives the proposed mission/outreach praxis for MyT in line with the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The Chapter includes with the guiding principles on being missional, the missional guidelines of the church as an institution and the church as a living organism. It concludes by explaining how the church's corporate service can embrace missional consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CURRENT MISSION OUTREACH PRAXIS OF THE MYT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter reiterates the objective and the methodology to be applied to achieve the objective. It also discusses the origin of the MyT congregation in terms of its name, location, demographic make-up, historical background, past and current ministry context, past and current ministers and its current mission outreach activities. The Chapter outline is structured as follows: 2.1 Introduction, 2.2 Origin of MyT, 2.3 Current mission praxis, and 2.4 Current outreach activities.

The objective of this chapter is stated as follows:

- To study and outline the current mission praxis of the MyT and its missionary activities.

The following methodologies will be applied in order to achieve the above objective:

- Literature review, personal communication and observation methods.

2.2 THE NAME “MELODI YA TSWANE”

2.2.1 The name “Melodi ya Tshwane”

The original name of the church was the Dutch Reformed Church. It was a white Afrikaner congregation. It was also known as the “Bosmanstraat Kerk” or the “Groote Kerk” (see

[http://able.wiki.up.ac.za/index.php/Bosmanstraat_Kerk_\(Groote_Kerk\),_C/o_Bosman_and_Madiba_Streets,_Pretoria_City_Centre,_Tshwane](http://able.wiki.up.ac.za/index.php/Bosmanstraat_Kerk_(Groote_Kerk),_C/o_Bosman_and_Madiba_Streets,_Pretoria_City_Centre,_Tshwane)).

When the congregation was constituted in 1992, it had no name. A few names were suggested, but Evangelist Piet Mabusa insisted that the name should be “Melodi ya Tshwane” (Saayman, 2010:8).

Many discussions were held about the proposed name before it was finalised. All who participated in the discussion had no problem with the name “Tshwane” since it was the name given to “The Fountains” by the African inhabitants of the area before the Voortrekkers arrived (<http://www.mytchurch.com>). What had to be added to make the name distinctive posed a challenge. Evangelist Mabusa, called to work in the new congregation, told a story he heard from his father. According to him, his father was one of the labourers employed to build the Union Buildings in Pretoria at the beginning of the twentieth century. There were no Black townships during those days. Black labourers were not provided accommodation near the city centre, so they camped next to the Apies River which flows through the central city. It was here that the labourers were regaled with beautiful birdsong early in the morning and again when they returned exhausted to their campsite at night. The workers found the birdsong relaxing and restful. Based on Piet Mabusa’s story, it was agreed that the congregation be called “Melodi ya Tshwane” in recognition of those early years and as a symbolic way of expressing the hope that the congregation would become a place of rest and recuperation for the city community (Saayman, 2010: 8).

2.2.2 The location

Melodi ya Tshwane is located in the central business district (CBD) of old “White” Pretoria. It is close to the statue of President Paul Kruger on Church Square and has been declared a national monument. This church is located at the corner of Bosman and Madiba Streets in the City of Tshwane (<http://www.mytchurch.com/>).

The building is one of the finest Dutch Reformed church buildings in the country. It is the first church in Pretoria built in the style of the state. Figures 2.1 are photographs of the exterior and interior of the MyT church building.



Figure 2.1 Melodi ya Tshwane church building.

(Source: http://able.wiki.up.ac.za/index.php?title=File:NG_groote_kerk_01.jpg&filetimestamp=20100816101959).



Figure 2.2 Melodi ya Tshwane church interior.

(Source: http://able.wiki.up.ac.za/index.php?title=File:NG_groote_kerk_01.jpg&filetimestamp=20100816101959).

2.2.3 Demographics

According to Saayman (2010: 9), “what was started as a few irregular joint worship services between the three black Dutch Reformed Congregations had grown into a wonderful celebration of interracial Christian unity in the heart of Pretoria”. The demographics at MyT reflect Saayman’s statement. The congregation has about six hundred members. Member demographics consist of 96 % Blacks, and this culturally diverse majority includes Sothos, Zulus, Pedis, Vhavendas, Shangaans, Tswanas and Xhozas. Coloureds form 2%, Whites 1% and Indians 1%.

The composition of the congregation includes inner-city dwellers, professionals and their families who came to work in Gauteng Province for the government and for

private companies. The composition also includes a great number of students from other provinces who have come to study in institutions of higher learning in the City of Tshwane. Children form part of the congregation and participate actively in Sunday school ministry (Kritzinger, 2011).

2.2.4 Historical background

According to Saayman (2010:10), MyT was constituted in response to a specific desire for greater unity among Christ's disciples in a specific place. More specifically, it was constituted in response to the need of neglected black Christians for a proper ecclesiastical home of their own as "a place to feel at home". A brief historical background follows:

According to Kritzinger (2011), three dreams led to the establishment of MyT in the City of Tshwane. The first dream is: Black domestic workers working in the kitchens of their white employers and living in small backyard accommodations known as "servant's quarters". Since they were not allowed to worship with Whites due to the application of the Group Areas Act by the apartheid government, they gathered for worship on Sunday afternoons in the garages of their white employers. Later, they were allowed to use the church halls of white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) buildings. They were members of the Mamelodi Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). They were transported by buses to Mamelodi once a month on a Sunday afternoon for a joint service (Saayman, 2010). The black domestic workers were dissatisfied with this arrangement. They had a dream of a DRCA congregation in the city centre close to where they lived and worked. Their dream came true on 19 January 1992 when MyT was born.

The second dream was that of Professor Nico Smith. Since the 1980s, he dreamt of establishing a non-racial reformed congregation in the City of Tshwane, where members of racially separated churches in the DRC family could worship together and learn to become a new humanity for whom Christ died. In his dream, the new inclusive reformed congregation would show the way into the future for Pretoria (Tshwane) and South Africa. The dream became a reality on 19 January 1992.

The third dream comes from a small group of former members of the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), who formed the Reformed Confessing Community (RCC) in 1987 after leaving the RCA in Laudium, west of Pretoria. They left the church because it had become an exclusive church for Indians. They invited Whites, Blacks, Indians, Coloureds, and any others to join them. The RCC participated actively in joint worship services of the Committee for the DRC Unity in Pretoria (CODRUP). They worked for visible unity in the DRC family as described in the Belhar Confession. After the 1987 DRCA General Synod in Umtata, Professor Nico Smith made a proposal for the establishment of a non-racial DRCA congregation in Pretoria. He was supported by the RCC in his effort. The dream of the RCC to become part of an inclusive reformed church in Pretoria came true on 19 January 1992.

The three above-mentioned dreams interacted to give MyT its unique character as we find it today. It should be noted that the initiative for establishing the MyT congregation came from black domestic workers who were marginalised by the White DRC family at the time. The prophetic and catalytic role played by Professor Nico Smith, Professor Kritzinger, Rev FF Mnisi and Evangelist Piet Mabusa with the support of the RCC made it possible for the establishment of MyT in the City of

Tshwane. It became the first Black Dutch Reformed congregation constituted in “White” Pretoria.

Before the congregation moved to Bosman Street, it struggled to find a church building for worship. The church buildings in the following places were used before moving to Bosman Street: Kilnerton, Meintjieskop, and Bloed Street. According to Kritzinger (2011), the new congregation started its services in the Methodist church building in Kilnerton which was not in use at that time. After two years, the Methodist church informed the congregation that the Methodist church wanted to use their church building again. The new congregation had to find another church building. During that time, the congregation got the information that the church building of the DRC congregation in Meintjieskop, near the Union Buildings in Arcadia, was for sale. The price of the building was R500 000. Dr Smith obtained funding to the amount of R400 000 from churches in Germany and America. An agreement was reached that the outstanding balance of R100 000 would be paid in instalments. Before the deal could be finalised, Melodi ya Tshwane was informed that the church had already been sold to the White Baptist congregation. Thereafter, the Methodist church offered MyT a small church building in Bloed Street. The church was not accessible. By God’s grace, the DRC congregation on the corner of Bosman and Vermeulen Streets, made an offer to MyT to buy half of the church building for R400 000. After some legal challenges, the Church Council of MyT accepted the offer and signed a legal deed of sale. On 7 February, 1995, MyT became the legal co-owners of the church building on the corner of Bosman and Vermeulen Streets. Appendix 6 shows the history of MyT.

2.2.5 Melodi ya Tshwane and its ministry context

2.2.5.1 Past ministry context

When Stephan de Beer joined MyT in 1996 as a part-time minister, the church was small, vibrant, multicultural, and the majority of the Church Council members were women domestic workers. That was missional and prophetic in the context of South Africa because it demonstrated inclusivity in itself. Black women, the most marginalized group during the time, were leading the church. The church was striving for two specific goals:

- To become a self-reliant church not dependent on the Dutch Reformed Church or on external funding.
- To become rooted in the inner city once 50% of the church property in Bosman Street was bought by MyT.

According to Stephan de Beer (2015), MyT was actively involved in the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) since it was established in 2003. The TLF works with churches and communities for urban transformation. It strengthened the unfolding inner city movement of churches, communities and programmes with capacity, resource development, advocacy and policy work, communication and marketing, and spiritual nurture. It is committed to help build healthy urban communities in places of struggle and of transition, and wants to demonstrate that it is possible to strengthen urban areas in ways that are radically inclusive socially and economically (<http://www.tlf.org.za/>).

MyT was actively involved with the outreach activities of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) which include Feast of the Clowns, Christmas in the Park, and the City Centre Churches Forum. It also participated in the ecumenical Ascension Day Services.

Church members who were actively involved in the ministry include Stephan and Wilna de Beer, Prof Kritzinger, Rev Maruping, Mr W Mohapi, Mr D Pillay, and the support from MyT youth, mothers and some families in the church.

Socio-economic and political environment

In the past Myt shared the church building with the white Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch Reformed Church had the morning worship service until 10am. MyT started their worship service from 10:00 to 12:00. Separate church services were politically and theologically motivated. Financially, MyT was sustained by overseas funding. Ward ministries were not established.

2.2.5.2 Current ministry context

At present, Melodi ya Tshwane's link with the TLF is weak. Reverend Maruping is still a member of the TLF, but active participation by members of the church is no longer visible. MyT is doing its own outreach activities by means of voluntary wards and church ministries. The outreach activities are not well planned. This impression is supported by Prof Kritzinger. In my personal communication with him, he said, "I believe we are not doing our outreach well. I don't want us to do charity". Section 2.4 below discusses current outreach activities at MyT in detail.

Socio-economic and political environment

At present, MyT consists of members from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. There are students from other South African provinces who come to study in institutions of higher learning in Pretoria. Middle and high income earners such as professionals are members of this church. Members of the church come from different South African political parties. Financially, the church is sustainable since it can pay all its ministers and administration staff. Democratic principles are observed and members are free to share their ideas with the congregation. Health and academic committees are established to address health and education issues of church members.

2.2.6 Ministers of Melodi ya Tshwane

Nine ministers and one evangelist have served the MyT congregation since it was established on 19 January 1992. Professor JNJ Kritzinger is both a past and current minister. He was part of the team that worked so hard to constitute the congregation. Past and current ministers are given in the sections below.

2.2.6.1 Past ministers

Past ministers and evangelists of Melodi ya Tshwane include the founders in the persons of Prof NJ Smith (1992-1995), Reverend FF Mnisi (1992-1996), Evangelist VP Mabusa (1992-1997) who proposed the name of Melodi ya Tshwane. Reverend

PL Thobela (1993-1998) and Prof JNJ Kritzinger (1993-2015). Professor Kritzinger is still part of the current group of ministers. Although he retired in February 2015, he was requested by the local Church Council to continue to serve the MyT congregation. Dr DF de Beer also served the congregation from 1997 to 2006. Reverend LJ Raboshaga served from 1999-2005.

2.2.6.2 Current ministers

Current ministers of MyT include Reverend and Dr TJ Nthakhe, the full-time minister, who was called in 2005, Rev PM Maruping, who joined MyT in 2010 as tent-maker minister, Prof JNJ Kritzinger who is part of the founders of the MyT congregation and who became a tent-maker minister from 1993 to 2015 when he retired. He continues to serve MyT at the request of the MyT Church Council. Rev S Rieke-Kochsiek served the congregation from 2009 to 2011 together with Revs Nthakhe, Maruping and Kritzinger (Kritzinger,2011).

The congregation is divided into 11 prayer wards in order to provide its service to its members in the City of Tshwane. The wards are led by ward leaders nominated by the Church Council. Wards were established to provide pastoral care and support to members in their daily struggles and difficulties. Special attention is given to visiting the sick, lonely, bereaved, imprisoned and traumatised members.

2.3 CURRENT MISSION PRAXIS

2.3.1 Historical perspective

According to Banda (2010), the concept “mission praxis” or “cycle of mission praxis” conceived at the University of South Africa in the Department of Missiology is described in Figure 2.3 below. This is what is known as the seven-point praxis matrix.

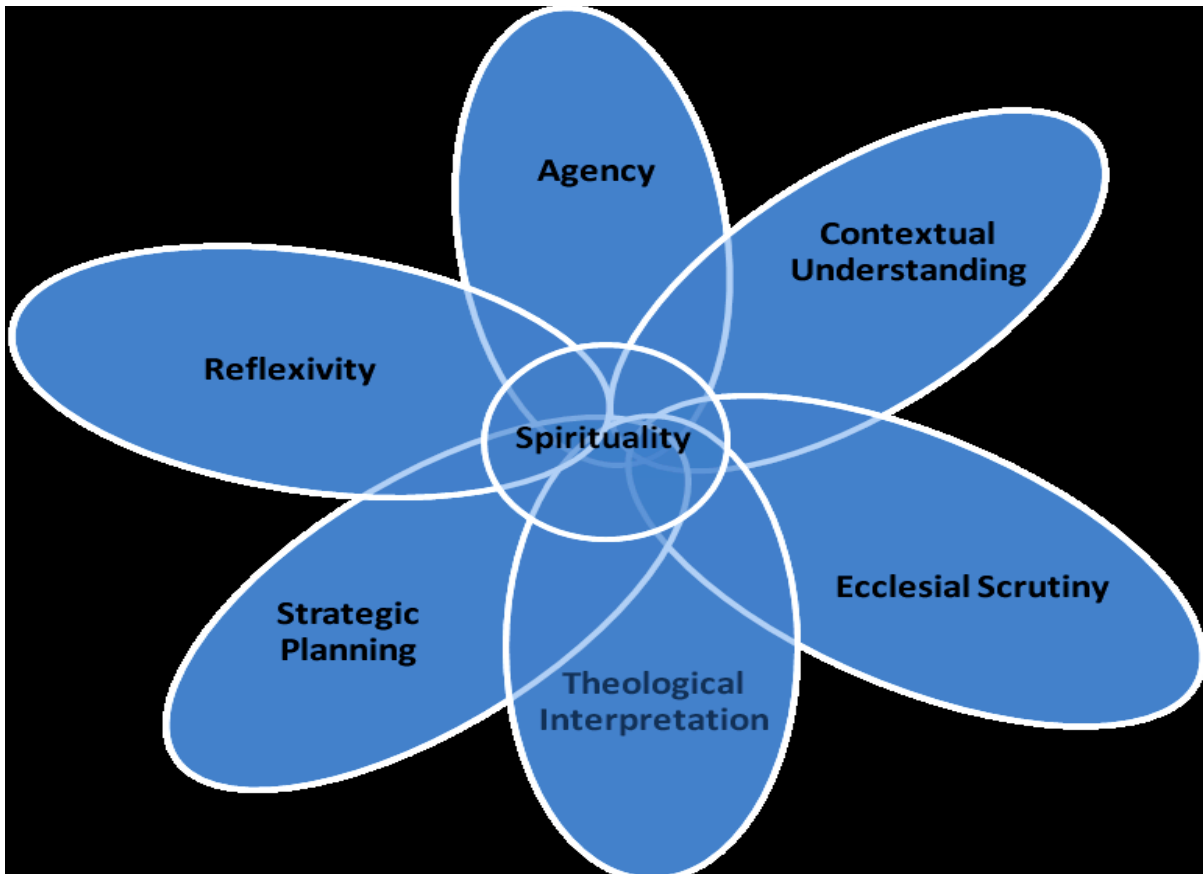


Figure 2.3 Missiological Praxis. (Source: Kritzing (2010)).

The missiological praxis consists of the seven-point praxis as shown above. The seven-points are: (1) spirituality (at the centre), (2) agency, (3) contextual understanding, (4) ecclesial scrutiny, (5) theological interpretation, (6) strategic planning and (7) reflexivity. The matrix facilitates an in-depth description of mission praxis of one person or group. MyT is striving to work toward this praxis in order to

address God's call in its mission. Current outreach activities are therefore explained below in section 2.4 below.

2.4 CURRENT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

2.4.1 MyT outreach activities

Current missionary outreach activities at MyT are driven by the MyT Outreach Committee. The outreach workshop which took place on 15 July 2015 was a success. The workshop drafted the purpose, basis for outreach, roles and responsibility of the Outreach Committee, and possible outreach ministries. The workshop also drafted two forms: "Notification of planned outreach activity form" (see Appendix 4) and "Outreach Ministry feedback form" (see Appendix 5). The MyT Church Council minutes give the purpose of outreach, roles and responsibilities of the Committee, basis of outreach and development and implementation guide. A brief explanation of these aspects follows:

Purpose

The purpose of the outreach is based on Mark 16:15: "And He said to them 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'". The purpose of MyT outreach is therefore to reach out and touch those within our church and the community who are in need of love, hope, and encouragement: while at the same time addressing their spiritual and physical needs. The aim is to bring MyT closer to the community within which it exists, thereby bringing it closer to God by spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Three duties of every Christian at MyT are giving, praying and fasting.

The three roles are based on Matthew 6: “ So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets”; “when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen, then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you”; “when you fast, put oil on your beard and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting...”.

Furthermore, Jesus encouraged this way of life as noted in Matthew 25: 35-36:

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Based on the scripture given above, all committees and ministries at MyT are allowed to embark on their own outreach programmes that must be signed off by the Outreach Committee.

The love of God

All that MyT does is based on love for God and love for neighbour (1 John 4:19): “We love because God first loved us”; Romans 13:13: “Don’t be in debt to anyone, except for the obligation to love each other”.

The role of the Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee has been tasked with guiding the wards and ministries on the agreed way of work when embarking on outreach ministries. The Committee has been appointed as custodians of all MyT outreach ministries, with the purpose of

driving the Church Council's strategy and focus pertaining to the outreach ministry.

The Committee's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Level 1 approval of all outreach activities prior to presentation to the Church Council for level 2/final approval;
- Consolidate all outreach projects within MyT into a structured report for presentation to the Church Council especially in relation to all planned activities for the year ahead;
- Encourage and guide the church as a whole to embark on outreach activities; and
- Provide consolidated feedback on all outreach activities that were embarked upon.

Possible outreach ministries that MyT can embark upon

The Church Council decided on three types of outreach ministries that the congregation can embark on. These are: spiritual ministries, youth development and giving ministries. A brief description of the three ministries follows:

The spiritual ministries

The spiritual ministries include:

- (a) direct evangelism: where church members should be involved in telling others about Jesus Christ – 1 Peter 5: 15;
- (b) world mission: where the church is called out to reach out beyond its local community to make disciples of all nations – Matthew 28: 18-20; and

(c) prison ministry: outreach to the incarcerated and their families.

Youth development ministries

This ministry includes:

(a) outreach to children – Luke 18:16-17 – where Jesus taught: “Let the children come to me, and not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God”;

(b) youth and young adult ministries: where teenagers, college and university students represent a strategic ministry opportunity and in turn can serve as ministers and missionaries to others.

Giving ministries

This includes:

(a) outreach ministries to the poor – Matthew 25:37-40: “Truly I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me”;

(b) disability ministry – in this regard, all churches are called to minister to those in physical need, serving those affected by disability helps to provide life-changing help to those commonly neglected by others;

(c) senior adult ministries: all churches are called to care for their older members. This can happen through home-visitation, hospital visitation, holiday outreach activities and much more;

(d) Arts-related ministries: ministries in art, music, painting, dance, etc., can help grow spirituality and provide opportunity for arts to flourish within the church.

The formation of the Outreach Committee and guidelines were essential because previous mission outreach activities were conducted on a voluntary basis by some members of MyT wards and church ministries. They include: identifying the needy and marginalised people within and around the City of Tshwane. They organise or collect food, clothes and toiletries and distribute them to the identified needy communities around the City of Tshwane. The call to engage in mission at MyT is also mapped out in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. According to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, “God is in a special sense the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged” and “the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands” (Naude, 2010:210), to meet the needs of the poor.

2.4.2 Worship services

MyT is a vibrant church in the inner city of Tshwane whose services are mainly conducted by one full-time minister and two tent-making ministers. The worship service, especially the Sunday service is guided by the Belhar Confession, the confession of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. According to Kritzinger (2014:2), the use of the Belhar Confession implies that it “directs and informs every dimension of a congregation’s life: its worship, instruction, care, witness and service”. The Belhar Confession calls for unity, reconciliation and justice. For the justice ethos to take place in the congregation, the ministers and all members make sure they create “a caring, and celebratory environment in which the

radical demands of the Belhar Confession become part of the ‘air we breathe’ from Sunday to Sunday in worship” (Kritzinger, 2014:2). Through the liturgy, the worship service at MyT attempts to nurture a concrete spirituality in which beauty and justice is embraced. It is during the worship service that the confessional identity and integrity of members are formed during the worship service at MyT. MyT worship services are therefore characterised by many factors which include liturgy and preaching. Brief discussion on the liturgy during the worship service follows:

Liturgy based on Psalm 121:1

Liturgy is defined as a form or formulary according to which public religious worship, especially Christian worship, is conducted (<https://www.google.co.za/#q=liturgy+definition>). The worship service at MyT starts with liturgy. Psalm 121:1 is used at MyT to create a worship space: “Where does our help come from?” Professor Kritzinger (n.d.) prepared a responsive and contextualized liturgy for the worship of MyT in Pretoria derived from Psalm 121:1(see Appendix 7). During the worship service on Sunday, the congregation usually starts its liturgy with the liturgist reading Psalm 121:1. The liturgist (L) reads and the congregation (C) responds. By mentioning the “principalities and powers” in which people wrongfully trust, the liturgical opening of the worship service becomes a contextual confession of faith to help believers to position themselves in the city, with all its opportunities, challenges and contending forces. The liturgy, therefore, puts the Christians in their place in God’s world. It also puts the principalities and powers in their place under God. Since city dwellers are obliged to deal with city challenges on a daily basis, the liturgy helps them to respond appropriately as they

work for the coming of God's reign of justice, peace and joy. Starting the worship service in this manner helps to create, in the midst of the hard realities of city life, a concrete spirituality of trust (Kritzinger,n.d.).

Belhar Confession in the Liturgy

Kritzinger (2014) also developed liturgical innovations in which he involved MyT to embody the Belhar Confession and to integrate it into the life of the congregation. From the Belhar Confession, a brief summary of the Belhar Confession articles that would be suitable for liturgical use was formulated.

The section that deals with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is recited in a responsorial way by the liturgist (L) and the congregation (C) as follows:

L: We believe that God wants to bring about
true justice and lasting peace on earth.
We believe that God is, in a special sense,
The God of the suffering, the poor and the downtrodden.

C: God gives justice to the oppressed
and bread to the hungry;
God sets captives free
and makes the blind to see;
God protects strangers, orphans and widows
and obstructs the plans of the wicked.

L: We believe that the church, belonging to God,
should stand where God stands:
against injustice and with those who are wronged.

C: We oppose every policy that causes injustice:
We witness against the powerful
who seek their own interest and harm others.
We stand with those who suffer –
to share our lives with them.¹ (Kritzinger, 2014: 12).

The liturgical version of the Belhar Confession has a poetic and dramatic effect when recited by the congregation. According to Kritzinger (2014:6), this kind of liturgy has a conscientising impact on the congregation. Liturgical articulations of this nature can also be experienced as beautiful when recited together.

Except for the reading of the Psalm, the Belhar Confession liturgy, the liturgy also includes praise and worship songs and choruses, confession of sins, the reciting of the Apostles Creed and birthday celebrations. Thereafter follows the preaching of God's word, the intercessory prayers and benediction.

2.4.3 Missionary dimension

Melodi ya Tshwane is at present not actively involved in missionary or outreach activities as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The congregation is involved in charity-kind of outreach activities. At MyT some wards seem more organized in their outreach activities than church ministries. These wards include wards 2 and 4 (Pretoria West and Daspoort), Ward 3 (Phillip Nel Park) and Ward 9 (Silverton). These wards were observed handing over food parcels and clothes to pensioners and needy people during the church service in 2014. The Christian Youth

Ministry (CYM) is involved in outreach activities in a minimal way. They hand over food parcels in an open park and visit a local orphanage to cook for and play with the children. The Christian Men Ministry do not have a planned outreach programme, but they have started handing over food parcels to the needy people in the church in 2015. Christian Women Ministry were observed collecting supplies of sanitary towels for needy female schoolchildren in 2015. They raised funds and collected supplies of sanitary towels at the end of the Sunday worship service.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the origin of Melodi ya Tshwane, and its current mission praxis and current outreach activities were discussed. Discussion of the origin of MyT included the name, the location, demographics, historical background, past and current ministry contexts, and past and current ministers. The discussion on current mission praxis included the historical perspective and current mission praxis. Discussion on current outreach activities included MyT's Outreach Committee, worship services and missionary dimensions in different ministries. Since MyT is not actively involved in missionary activities, the discussion mainly focused on outreach activities. The following chapter discusses mission according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

CHAPTER THREE

MISSION ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 4 OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reiterates the research question, the objective of this chapter, and the methodology to be applied in order to achieve the objective. It also gives a brief history of the origin of the Belhar Confession in terms of the name, origin, historical context, key issues, local and global reception of the Belhar Confession, and the church's missional calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The chapter outline is structured as follows: 3.1 Introduction, 3.2 A brief history of the origin of the Belhar Confession, 3.3. The church's missional calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession and 3.4 Conclusion.

The research question and objective for this chapter are as follows:

Research question:

- **What is the church's missionary calling according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?**

Research objective:

- To study and outline the church's missionary calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

The following methodology will be applied in order to achieve the objective:
Literature study consisting of books and articles.

3.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

3.2.1 The name “Belhar”

Belhar is the name of a Coloured suburb near Cape Town in South Africa. Under apartheid rule, political power was represented by Cape Town, the seat of legislative power. South African society was segregated in every respect on racial grounds. “Belhar, as physical space, was in itself a result of the infamous Group Areas Act that dispossessed ‘non-whites’ of land and grouped them in segregated black, coloured, and Indian residential areas and townships (informal settlements)” (Naude, 2004:39). “Belhar” as an ecclesial space represented “separation”, because the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, which was formed in 1881 was an effort to establish separate churches for different race groups within the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church gathered in its general synod at Belhar on 22 September – 6 October, 1982, to draft the Belhar Confession. The general synod’s decision to draft the Belhar Confession was a response against the spirit of separate churches within the Dutch Reformed Church family.

3.2.2 Origin of the Belhar Confession

The Belhar Confession can be described as a product of a communal society and was composed during the resistance against apartheid in South Africa. The confession is “first and foremost specifically South African in origin and is aimed at

the country's historical context" (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2014:320). A confessional interpretation of the situation in South Africa after 1948 laid the foundation for discussions that led to the Belhar Confession. Naude (2003:158-159) studied documents representing Catholic, Lutheran, Ecumenical and Reformed views to explain the origin of the Belhar Confession. The documents are as follows:

- * Dutch Reformed Mission Church: Circuit of Wynberg decision on Apartheid (1948);
- * SA Catholic Bishops Conference: Statement on Apartheid (1957);
- * Cottesloe Consultation Statement (1961);
- * SACC's Message to the People of South Africa (authorised summary, 1968);
- * Lutheran World Federation's statement Southern Africa: Confessional Integrity (Dar-es-Salaam, 1977);
- * Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in Southern Africa (ABRECSA): Charter and Declaration (October 1981);
- * Open Letter by 123 Dutch Reformed Church pastors and theologians (March 1982);
- * World Alliance of Reformed Churches: Racism and South Africa (August 1982).

From the documents, a strong theological disapproval of apartheid was stated which led to the confessional interpretation of the situation (Naude, 2003). The principle of

apartheid was declared to be intrinsically evil, anti-Christian, and the many offenses against charity and justice flowing from it were noted.

After the Sharpeville massacre, the Rivonia trial, and the banning of the Communist Party and the African National Congress (ANC), the question about the formation of a confessional church arose. Reverend Beyers Naude wrote articles and spelt out his view on why it was necessary for a confessing church to be established.

In 1968, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) sent a "Message to the People of South Africa". The main issue in the message was: "For the first time we hear of an official S.A. church meeting depict(ing) the political policy of racial separation in terms of doctrine, making it an issue of faith" (Naude, 2003:161). In conclusion, the message demanded "a clear choice between a commitment to an ethnic group or to Christ". The Netherlands and Germany entered the debate and supported the SACC. The Lutheran World Alliance meeting in Dar-es-Salaam in 1977 was informed of the situation in South Africa by Bishop Manas Buthelezi. In response, they appealed to the White member churches in Southern Africa "to recognise that the situation in Southern Africa constitutes a status confession" (Naude, 2003; 161).

The explanation above created a good environment from where South African churches could act. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church, a product of church separation took the baton further. Dr Alan Boesak, who was elected president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Ottawa (WARC), started the process towards a confessing church. The Alliance of Black Reformed Churches in Southern Africa (ABRECSA) supported the process in 1981. The General Synod of the DRMC met and formulated "A statement on Apartheid and a Confession of Faith". A small

commission was tasked to draft a confession that was accepted and adopted as the Belhar Confession (Naude, 2003:163).

3.2.3 Historical context

According to Smit (2008:322), the story of Christians in South Africa, especially the Reformed faith is connected to the struggle against apartheid. Apartheid sanctioned racial segregation, and political and economic discrimination against all people legally classified as “non-white”. After 1948, the National Party took office and official apartheid was legitimised both by an ideology, and a theology, of apartheid. Before 1948, the principle of apartheid was practised by the DRC which led to the establishment of the DRMC of the Coloured people in 1881. Local Afrikaner theologians provided scriptural proofs to legitimate the ideology of apartheid.

Many churches including the Reformed faith took part in the struggle against apartheid. Beyers Naude and Archbishop Desmond Tutu played leading roles. In 1978, the DRMC rejected the ideology of apartheid since it was in conflict with the Gospel’s message of reconciliation. In 1982 the DRMC “drafted the Belhar Confession, confessing God as the God calling the church to living in unity, real reconciliation and compassionate justice” (Smit, 2008:324).

According to Scarborough (2011), the Belhar Confession takes its name from Belhar, a suburb of Cape Town where it was composed in 1982. It was formally included as a confession in the church orders in October 1986 (Naude, 2012). The confession describes itself as “a cry from the heart” of the non-White Dutch Reformed Church congregations. It is described by Damon (2013, 3) as an “outcry of faith” and a “call

for faithfulness and repentance”. “The Synod appointed a committee, consisting of two ministers delegated to the Synod, Reverend Dr Alan Boesak and Reverend Isak Mentor, as well as three lecturers from the UWC, Professors Dirkie Smit, Jaap Durand and Gustav Bam, to draft a concept confession of faith, known today as the Belhar Confession” (Plaatjies Van Huffel, 2013:3).

The Belhar Confession challenged the Dutch Reformed Church on its moral and theological justification of apartheid (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2013). The Belhar Confession is regarded as a precursor of the “Kairos Document” of 1985 which was published at the height of the liberation struggle and called for the overthrow of the South African government. It is now one of the “standards of unity” of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) and several other denominations. It confronts the sin of racism and made possible reconciliation within the nation of South Africa and elsewhere.

3.2.4 Key issues

The content of the Belhar Confession addresses three key issues of concern to all churches. These are: unity, reconciliation and justice (Naude 2012; Koopman, 2008; Koopman, 2007; Botman, 2006; Naude, 2003). A brief discussion of the key issues follows below:

(1) *The unity of the church and unity among all people*: Unity is seen as a gift and an obligation for the church. Koopman (2008:162) describes this unity as follows: God makes us one amidst all our diversity; As one family, we are equal in worth and dignity; the Belhar Confession describes this unity as communion, as sharing in each

other's life, as living in solidarity and cohesion in a clear and challenging way. Two levels of unity are described by John de Gruchy in Koopman (2007: 101). These are: structural unity (in confession, ministry, ordination, local structures, practices, etc.), and unity born of moral and not merely pragmatic convictions in the struggle against the various legacies of apartheid.

Globally, the Belhar Confession call for unity is embraced and enforced by the World Council of Churches (WCC) which states that churches are called to "the goal of visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life with Christ" (Naude 2003:411). For example, the ecumenical movement was able to bring together Faith and Order (1927) and Life and Work (1925) to form the WCC (1948) that was later joined by the International Missionary Council (founded in 1910) and the World Council of Christian Education (Naude, 2003).

(2) *Reconciliation within church and society*: God entrusts to the church a message of reconciliation; the reconciliation confessed in the Belhar Confession has to do with the expiation of wrongs and stumbling blocks to the atonement, it also refers to harmony in the relationship with others (Koopman, 2008:163).

Globally, the task of reconciliation in and outside the church is an enduring one. For example, Naude (2003:413) made reference to two recent ecumenical initiatives, the common declaration on justification between Lutherans and Catholics which was signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church on 31 October 1999, and the 'Ecumenical Decade to overcome Violence 2001-2010' (December 1999). In this regard, the church entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation is called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

(3) *God's justice*: Justice and true peace are revealed as the nature of God (Reformed Church in America (RCA), 2015; Damon, 2013). Justice in the Belhar Confession is described as compassionate justice, justified people through Christ are made righteous by the triune God, and they seek human rights in a broken world (Koopman, 2008:164). The main purpose of the Confession is to advance structural unity between the Dutch Reformed Church and its three multilingual daughter churches namely: African, Coloured and Indian churches (Scarborough, 2011:1). The confession pledges to resist anything which threatens such unity. These include all sinful separation of people or the establishment of a separate church formation; refusal to earnestly pursue this visible unity is sin; descent or any other human or social factor should not be a consideration in determining membership of the church. The church must witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. The traditional Dutch Reformed doctrine is declared false and an ideology. The Confession declares that God is, in a special way, the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that he calls his church to follow him in this; it declared that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need and by those who are discriminated against (Cloete and Smit, 1984:48); the church must strive against any form of injustice. It must stand where God stands, namely, with the wronged and against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. The Confession promotes equality on all levels (Scarborough, 2011; Cyre, 2010; Naude, 2010; Cloete & Smit, 1984).

According to Cloete and Smith (1984:48), Article 4 of the Belhar Confession gives the church a calling "to participate in the battle against every form of human evil and need". The message of the Kingdom makes the church aware of the forces and

powers responsible for evil and wickedness. Church members should therefore be inspired by the Spirit to fight against all forms of evils.

Globally, the WCC has been successful in launching campaigns on the “Program to Combat Racism” from 1969 to the early 1990. Other ecumenical initiatives noted by Naude (2003:415) are the “Charta Oecumenica” signed at the Conference of European Churches (CEC) on 22 April 2001. The structure of the Charter resembles the Belhar Confession. The second initiative is “The conciliar process of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)” which was initiated at the Vancouver Assembly of the WCC in 1983. Its aim was to engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment to justice, peace, and integrity of creation. In March 1990, JPIC members committed themselves to four practical issues related to justice. These are a just economic order, true security of all nations, and a culture of non-violence; a nurturing of creation, and finally the eradication of all forms of discrimination on all levels, including racism (Naude, 2003:417).

3.2.5 Reception of the Belhar Confession

According to Naude (2003:407-410), the acceptance of a confession is a process which involves explication, where the text is taken seriously, circulated and studied before acceptance. Full acceptance will normally “include a juridical act whereby receptor church includes such confession as part of its orders, accompanied by wider use in catechetical and liturgical settings exactly to make confession ‘part of faith and life’”. Confession may also reach the level of “recognition” where the confession may lack the ecclesial authority and confessional status of a full

reception. The discussion below explains both the local and global reception of the Belhar Confession.

3.2.5.1 Local reception of the Belhar Confession

The full reception of the Belhar Confession is at present limited to churches of reformed convictions that make up a small, but significant, percentage of Christianity in the world. Locally, full reception has been achieved in the following four different settings:

- (i) After the draft was accepted at the synod in October 1982, it was distributed to every congregation for discussion and feedback. It was formally adopted at the Synod of 1986.
- (ii) Dialogue within the DRC family continued and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) accepted the Belhar Confession at its general synod in July 1991.
- (iii) When the DRMC and the DRCA reunited to form the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA) in April 1994, the Belhar Confession was accepted as part of the confessional base of the new church.

3.2.5.2 Global / ecumenical reception of the Belhar Confession

The fourth and full reception of the Belhar Confession was concluded in Belgium in 1998. It happened through the process of explication and recognition which involved the Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in Belgium, The Belydende Kring and the URCSA. The Belhar Confession was described as “a gift from heaven” and was translated into Dutch and French (Naude, 2003:408-409).

Churches around the globe have recognised the power and theological insight of the Belhar Confession as an expression of the scriptural truth for their own context (Bradak, 2014). For example, in 2014, the 221st General Assembly sent a proposal to the Presbyteries to add the Belhar Confession to the Presbyterian Church Book of Confession. After studying the Belhar Confession, the Reformed Church in America, officially accepted the Belhar Confession at its June 2010 General Synod (Plaatjes-van Huffel, 2013). The Reformed Church of America (RCA) Commission on Christian Action has publicly indicated that they use the Belhar Confession to address issues that include: the Farm Bill, Sudanese refugees, the Iraq War, immigration, minimum wage increases and America's embargo of Cuba. Some reformed churches in Europe (Germany and Belgium), Africa, and the Caribbean (the Dominican Republic) have granted the Belhar Confession confessional status (Parsons, 2010). The Evangelical Reformed Church in Africa of Namibia was the first outside South Africa to accept the Belhar Confession. It adopted the Belhar Confession in 1993 after conversation with its mother church, the DRC. "The church needs to be transformed by Belhar", are words of Rev John Austin, of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City (Cyre, 2010:2).

The Presbyterian Church in the USA studied the Belhar Confession and its accompanying letter. In 2010, its 219th General Assembly approved the inclusion of the Belhar Confession in "The Book of Confessions".

The Christian Reformed Church of America (CRCNA) in its Synod of 2009, recommended that the 2012 Synod adopt the Belhar Confession as the fourth Standard of Unity, equal in doctrinal authority to the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the canons of Dort. The CRCNA in its General Synod of

2012 adopted the Belhar Confession as an Ecumenical Faith Declaration rather than a full confession (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2013).

3.3 CHURCH'S MISSIONAL CALLING IN LINE WITH ARTICLE 4 OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

3.3.1 "Missional" defined

The meaning of the concept "missional" has changed over time. Carlson (2007:1) defined a missional church as "an authentic community of faith that primarily directs its ministry focus outward toward the context in which it is located and to the broader world beyond". The missional church is an authentic community in the sense that its relationship with people, both within and outside the church is not superficial. The church's life is honest, but not perfect. Missional church seeks to create a safe environment of acceptance, forgiveness and hope to all, inside and outside the church.

A missional church is an authentic community of faith in the sense that it responds to the living God revealed in Christ. Faith in missional church is practised as a response to God's invitation to follow Christ into God's mission. It is a must that people responding to faith are connected with the communal triune God and with each other. Missional people gather community, invite and partner with others to participate in missional activities (Carlson, 2007:1).

The missional church directs its ministry focus outward in the sense that it sees the church existing for the Kingdom of God, for the well-being of others, and creation and not for self-serving purposes.

In the online *Dictionary of Christianese*, Tim (2013) describes seven meanings for the concept of “missional”. Four of these meanings are described below:

First, missional has to do with the church’s world-wide evangelistic and missionary efforts in parts of the world where the people have never heard the Gospel.

Second, it has to do with programmes, ministries, policies, or aims of a particular church; having to do generally with what the church is doing. In this sense the missional task of the church is to serve humanity and honour God.

Third, missional has to do with the church’s activities in serving the poor or addressing social injustice; it has to do with an understanding of the church’s God-given responsibilities in these areas.

Fourth, missional has to do with Christians engaging with the people of their surrounding community in order to invite them to church and share the Gospel with them; it has to do with the way a church is active in its community. In this regard, the local congregation focuses on both individual and institutional hurts and hopes (<http://www.dictionaryofchristianese.com/missional/>).

According to Knight (2012), missional means participating with God in what God is doing in the world (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/missionalshift/2012/05/what-does-missional-mean/>).

From the explanation given above, it is clear that MyT does not meet some of the given characteristics of a missional church. For the church to be missional, it has to address and develop the above-mentioned characteristics, hence the importance of the study. In the context of MyT, the church missions or outreach activities should be

conducted as guided by Article 4 of the Belhar Confession described below: All outreach activities should consider “justice” as described below.

3.3.2 Missional calling according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

It has been mentioned above that the Belhar Confession deals with three key issues, namely: the unity of the church, reconciliation in Christ, and the justice of God. According to Cloete and Smith (1984: 53), the first two issues have been widely discussed for many years by the churches and theologians of South Africa. However, in the discussion within the Dutch Reformed Church family, there was hardly any talk of an appeal to the justice of God and its implications for the church in the South African context. This makes this study very essential in times such as this in South Africa and Melodi ya Tshwane as a congregation in the City of Tshwane. The appeal for the justice of God cannot be ignored any more. Because there is a tight connection between unity, reconciliation and justice, true unity and reconciliation is not possible without justice. The spirit of unity and reconciliation does not simply mean we ignore, overlook, or shut our eyes to justice and guilt.

According to Damon (2013), the Belhar Confession speaks of God as a God of Justice. God is present to those who suffer as a result of poverty and injustice. In summary, Christians in the reformed tradition should believe that God wants to bring about true justice and lasting peace on earth; that God is, in a special sense, the God of the suffering, the poor and the downtrodden; that God gives justice to the oppressed and bread to the hungry; God sets captives free and makes the blind to see; God protects strangers, orphans and widows and obstructs the plans of the wicked; that the Church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands: against

injustice and with those who are wronged; and that Christians should oppose every policy that causes injustice; Christians should witness against the powerful who seek their own interest and harm others; Christians should stand with those who suffer and share their lives with them (Kritzinger, 2014). According to Naude (2010: 210), churches that follow the Belhar Confession by trying to “witness against and strive against any form of injustice (art. 4.2), will have to call for sacrifices that make restorative justice possible”. Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is given under item 1.6.6.

3.3.2.1 Interpretation of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

Article 4 of the Belhar Confession discusses the justice of God. This section will therefore discuss the interpretation of justice from the Christian perspective. The discussion will also include the interpretation of the statements: “God, in a special way, is God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged”, and what it means to “stand where God stands”. A brief discussion of the three statements follows:

The quest for justice

According to Kirk (1999:103), “from a Christian perspective the reality, causes, and resolution of poverty are inseparable from the call for relationships of justice between individuals, communities and nations”. Morris Ginsberg in Kirk (1999) argues that justice is based on the supreme value of human personality. In this regard, he states that other people should not be used as objects or means to our ends. All people are created in God’s image and are born with reciprocal rights and obligations. From the

social contract idea, to practice justice is possible if each person is prepared to treat others as they would expect to be treated by them. In this regard some people's needs should not take priority over the needs of others.

For Christians, the Old and New Testaments provide the basis and meaning for justice. "Justice is what God does, for justice is what God is" (Kirk, 1999:104). Justice is known by God's acts of deliverance, through his laws, and through the kind of relationships he requires between human beings:

He has told you what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
(Mic 6:8).

To do justice is to demonstrate that the corporate body of people belong to one another. It is an activity in which a disordered state of affairs is put right. Doing justice enables the disadvantaged to escape permanently from the trap of deprivation in order that they become full, responsible members of the community. In this regard, resources and opportunities in life are made available to all. "Justice therefore includes; injustice excludes" (Kirk, 1999, 105).

The Biblical view of justice is that it should bring harmony to the community through the establishment of right relationship. In the Old Testament, it is summed up in the legislation concerning the year of jubilee (Lev25:8). The word "jubilee" means "release". It is another word for "liberation", the removal of barriers which prevent people from participating fully in the benefits and responsibilities of the community. In Luke 4: 16-19, it is believed that Jesus was making a declaration for the fulfilment of the jubilee laws. Jesus was therefore calling for the existence of a jubilee community,

not once every 49 years, but in its daily practice. The World Council of Churches (2012:72) describes the event as the discerning of mission in an alternative way. In this regard Jesus' mission agitated for those whom faith and power had marginalised. Jesus "sought to create a community of justice, peace, and compassion" (Luke 4: 16). "This was demonstrated by the attitude of Zacchaeus" (Luke 19:8), and in the concrete signs of salvation, and concern for the poor by the apostles (Acts 2: 44-45; Acts 11:29-30).

Kirk (1999:107) redefined justice as "giving to each his or her due according to the circumstances in which they are placed, even when that may mean others will have to forgo legitimate rights". Workers, for example, deserve just wages for the work they do (James 5:1-6). Unjust wages are unacceptable.

"God in a special way is God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged"

According to Cloete and Smith (1984:59), the discussion at the Belhar synod centred primarily on the statement "God, in a special way is God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged".

The interpretation of the above-mentioned statement by those who drafted the confession includes the fact that God is the help of the helpless (Cloete and Smith (1984, 58). This interpretation was obvious to the Christian church, but was always ignored in practice or spiritualised for the sake of convenience. According to Boesak (2008:17), the claim that "God is in a special way, God of the poor, the weak, the destitute and the wronged" is a claim of the Exodus, of the Commandments, of the prophets, and the songwriters of the Hebrew Bible". It is also the song of Hannah and Mary and the message of the life of Jesus Christ. It helps Christians to understand that "the poor are not poor because of some historical accident, genetic

traits, or because it is the will of God. They are poor because of injustice; they are victims, not of an act of God, but of deliberate historical, political, and economic decisions through which injustice was done to them, in a systematised fashion". Unjust decisions are made by leaders in the position of power. In this context, the Belhar Confession shows us and reminds us how the poor are deprived of their rights.

According to Kritzinger (2008:8), the statement echoes the prophetic message in the Hebrew Bible that God cares about widows, orphans and strangers. The call in Isaiah 1:17 clearly states: "Learn to do right! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow". In this regard, God therefore prefers a fast that can be demonstrated by the breaking of yokes, the removal of chains and sharing of bread with the hungry, rather than a spiritual lifestyle characterised by oppressive attitudes and actions (Isaiah 58). In the New Testament, Jesus demonstrated this kind of life by living in solidarity with the people despised and stigmatised by the oppressive purity system of second temple Judaism. In his ministry, Jesus identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, strangers, the naked, the sick and prisoners (Mt.25:31-46).

When Article 4 of the Belhar Confession speaks of God as the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged, it does not suggest that oppressed and marginalised people own God. It does, however, suggest that God is offended by those who practice human injustice. These are people who oppress the poor and insult their Maker. Those who are kind and merciful to the needy honour him (Proverbs 14:31). "The Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and God, the holy one, shows Himself holy in righteousness and through righteous judgements" (Isaiah 5:16). The prophet Jeremiah, for instance, rebuked king Shallum of Judah for building his house by

unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice and for making his neighbours work for nothing. This was the opposite of what his father Josiah did. He ate, drank and did justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 22:13-17). To establish social justice is to know God (Kritzinger, 2008.9). Unfortunately people do not realise that when we abuse the weak or oppress others we are humiliating God. The sense I make from this message is that the negative actions we do to the weak, the vulnerable, the poor, the fatherless, the widows, the homeless, the unemployed and strangers or refugees, we do to him.

The question that we may ask here is: Does God hate the rich and love the poor? I support Kritzinger's (2008) interpretation that the poor do not have a moral privilege and are not given automatic saintly status; however, they have an epistemological priority in a Christian interpretation of society. At the same time, God does not hate the rich or the poor. Like Jesus, Christians need to engage both to transform society. Political rulers, directors and managers of industry, ministers of the Good News, kings and chiefs, should be engaged to evaluate their exercise of power by what they do for the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, the raped and the hijacked. God does not ignore those who abuse or exploit others, he rebukes them (Luke 13:32); he calls them to repentance or conversion, for example, "cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16).

"To stand where God stands"

Article 4 of the Belhar Confession also calls on the congregation to imitate God.

It states:

We believe: that the Church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the Church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others (Damon, 2013).

Generally, the Bible seldom uses the metaphor of God as *standing* with those who are wronged – in solidarity with the poor and suffering. The scripture that shows this explicitly is Psalm 109:30f. It reads as follows:

“With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save them from those who would condemn them to death”.

The image of “standing with” suffering people is rare in the Bible. To mention “standing with the wronged” and “standing against unjust oppressors” in one breath (as it occurs both in Psalm 109:31 and in the Belhar Confession) suggests the language of a court of law. In the life of ancient Israel, the one who stands at the right hand of the poor – to save them from those who wish to “condemn them to death” – is a “family member or a community leader who argues as an advocate before the elders seated in the gate (where the local court had its sessions) on behalf of someone who is being falsely accused and unfairly treated. In the prophetic witness of Scripture, this is where God ‘stands’ in human society: ‘against injustice and with the wronged’” (Kritzinger, 2014:11).

Kritzinger warns that “standing where God stands” should however not become an arrogant claim to know exactly what God’s will is, rejecting every other view. It is with fear and trembling that Christians go to stand there, outside the gate, to share the shame of Christ (Hebrews 13:13), where he stands amongst abused children and women, underpaid workers, people struggling with illness, those burying their relatives, widows, orphans and strangers, fearful elderly people and frustrated, unemployed people (Kritzinger, 2014:6). I believe this is where obedient and committed Christians should stand. Through the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit, all born-again Christians should be able to perform such functions. When individual members of the church, church committees or ministries, perform such functions, they will be responding positively to the missional call as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. During personal communication with Prof Kritzinger, he said: “In a situation of power between the rich and the poor, God is not neutral; he does not hate the rich, but He stands on the side of the destitute, the poor and marginalized” (Kritzinger, 2015).

According to Alan Boesak (2008:18), to stand with the poor means “to stand up and be counted. To stand not just where, but as God stands: not just in front of the poor, in protection of them: but alongside in solidarity with their struggle”. Christians should stand in empathetic identification with the poor. As illustrated in Matthew 25, Jesus becomes the poor, the prisoner, the naked and hungry. Therefore what Christians do for the poor and with the poor is done for Jesus and with him. Furthermore, Boesak (2008:18) interprets “to stand where God stands” as meaning to “stand with God in the hour of God’s grieving”. In this regard Christians are called to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of the wicked world. Christians are therefore called to share the rage of God against injustice and all forms of inhumanity.

3.3.2.2 Missional ecclesiology

According to Paul Hooker (2009:1), missional ecclesiology is defined as “a way of understanding the church. It begins with the *missio Dei* – God’s own ‘self-sending’ in Christ by the Spirit to redeem and transform creation. In a missional ecclesiology, the Church is not a building or an institution but a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ’s work”. Furthermore, Hooker (2009:2) describes the word “ecclesiology” as the discussion of what the church is called to be and to do, that is its nature, purpose, hopes, structure, and practices. His view is that the Church serves God’s call to mission in three ways. These are:

- the proclamation of the Word of God,
- the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and
- the nurture of the covenant community of disciples.

The following commitments are made by a missional polity:

- The starting point for a missional polity is God’s self-sending into the world.
- The Church’s calling is to be a community of witness that participates in Christ’s work in the world.

- The congregation is the basic form of the church, and individual believers have their ministries nurtured and guided within the congregation.
- The ministry of the councils of the church is shaped around the calling of the Church.
- The polity provides flexibility for mission in a changing and variable context.
- The polity encourages accountability on the part of its covenanted partners to one another (Hooker, 2009:1; Niemandt, 2012:1).

3.3.2.3 Missional calling

Scholars have different views of missional calling. Goheen (2011:5) reviewed Leslie Newbigin's contribution on the missional calling of believers in the world and noted the following: There are three forms of mission by the church. The "first is the community of the church that bears witness to Christ by modelling in its own corporate life as an alternative community the life of the kingdom". Second is "the corporate witness in which the local congregation together reaches out in service and evangelism to its community and to the ends of the earth"; and third, is "the witness of the various members in their daily lives at home, work, neighbourhood, and so forth". The third type is important to Newbigin because that is where the primary witness to the sovereignty of Christ must be given and have greater influence. According to Newbigin, effective church witness is "the witness of the thousands of its members who work in field, home, office, mill or law court" (Goheen, 2011:5). The entire membership of the church in their different occupations are called to be signs of the lordship in every area of public life. In this regard the missional calling is for all individual Christians. In missional calling, the church and its

individual Christians are used as an “instrument, sign, agent, and witness sent into the world” (Guder, 2011:10). The practice of the Belhar Confession therefore demands a deeper understanding of missional calling.

3.3.2.4 Missional praxis

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines praxis as “practice” as distinguished from theory. A proper understanding of the term “missional practice” begins with recovering a missionary understanding of God. By his very nature God is a “sent one” who takes the initiative to redeem his creation. The doctrine, known as “*Missio Dei*”, the sending of God, is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church. Missional praxis to me is therefore authentic church or Christian practices in responding to God’s call to save his creation. According to Stan Chu Ilo (2012:256), the church in Africa has a prophetic role to “equip Christians, to bear authentic and credible witness to the faith through loving services, reconciliation, justice, and peace.” This is what the Belhar Confession calls for.

A missional theology is not content with mission being a church-based work. Rather, it applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple is to be an agent of the kingdom of God, and every disciple is to carry the mission of God into every sphere of life (Hirsch, 2008). According to Stetzer and Putman (2006:48-49), to be missional “means to move beyond our church preferences and make missional decisions locally as well as globally”. It demands several positive shifts in thinking, for example:

- “From programmes to processes
- From demographics to discernment
- From models to missions
- From attractional to incarnational

- From uniformity to diversity
- From professional to passionate
- From seating to sending
- From decisions to disciples
- From additional to exponential and from
- Monuments to movements” (Stetzer and Putman (2006:48)).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This Chapter discusses a brief history of the origin of the Belhar Confession in terms of the name, historical context, key issues (unity, reconciliation and justice), the local and global reception of the Confession, the church’s missional calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, which includes explanation of missional ecclesiology, missional calling and missional praxis, which helps one to understand the basis for the Belhar Confession. The next Chapter will discuss the research methods, ethical considerations, data collection, analysis and finding

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter gives a brief explanation of ethical considerations, research methods used, data collection, analysis and research findings. The main research methods used include observation, personal communication, the interview schedule, focus group interviews, and the literature study. Attitudes towards, and understanding of, Article 4 of the Belhar Confession are evaluated. The Chapter concludes by giving the research findings.

4.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A consent letter was signed by all participants. Before they signed, participants were informed by the researcher of the objectives of the research; the researcher supplied his name, address and contact details; participants were also informed about why they were selected as informants for the research project. They gave their consent willingly, without coercion or inducement. They agreed that interviews could be recorded by an electronic device, and they understood the information and its implications. The Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa approved the ethical application made by the researcher.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS, DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.3.1 Introduction

The research methods used in the present study included the literature study, the interview schedule, focus group interviews, personal communication and observation. The section below explains how the data was collected using these research methods in order to address the following objectives:

- To study and outline the current mission praxis of the MyT and its missionary activities;
- To study and outline the church's missionary calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession;
- To study and evaluate the extent to which Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is understood and has been applied by the MyT church in its mission activities;
- To propose missionary praxis for the MyT, one that seeks to integrate Article 4 of the Belhar Confession in the church's outreach activities.

4.3.2 Literature study

A literature study was conducted in order to address the objectives mentioned above. It was used to collect data on the origin and development of the MyT, the history of the origin of the Belhar Confession, the Church's missional calling in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, and the interpretation of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The origin and development of MyT is discussed in Chapter Two. The history of the origin of the Belhar Confession, the contents of Article 4 and its interpretation are discussed in Chapter Three. Google Scholar, the search engine, was used to find appropriate online articles for this study.

4.3.3 Focus group interviews

Sarantakos (2005. 194) describes focus group research as “a loosely constructed discussion with a group of people brought together for the purpose of the study, guided by the researcher and addressed as a group”. Arthur, et al. (2012), on the other hand, describe focus group interviews as “an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain collective views about a research topic. The methods can be used for various purposes which include: co-constructing new knowledge, gauging opinion, learning from experiences, reshaping people’s views, empowerment of marginalised groups and many more”. The reason why the method was selected for this study is its strength. It has the benefits of discovering the collective perspective, the synthesis and validation of ideas and concepts, the involvement of diverse groups of people, and access to potentially a larger number of participants (Arthur, et al., 2012.187).

The interview schedule was designed for the focus group interviews. Groups that were interviewed included church ministries and MyT Wards. The church ministries interviewed included MyT Youth (a pilot project), MyT Christian Youth Ministries (CYM), and Christian Men Ministries (CMM). MyT wards interviewed included Wards 2 and 4 (Pretoria West and Daspoort), and Ward 9 (Silverton in Pretoria East). Participants in this research were selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, are within the specified age range, have almost similar socio-characteristics and would be comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other (Rabiee, 2004). A number of between six and ten participants is manageable and was suggested for this research (Rabiee, 2004, 656).

Pilot study

A pilot study was used to test the Focus Group interview schedule. Ten participants from the Youth Ministry at MyT were used. The participants included eight males and two females. The interview took 1½ hours. The following observations were made during the interviews:

- Cell phones rang during the interviews.
- Some participants spoke for more than four minutes and some dominated the discussion.
- There was a need to add a question after question 3.2. The additional question was: 3.3 What do you understand by the statement “the church, as the possession of God, should stand where the Lord stands”?
- Question 3.3 was changed into question 3.4 and was modified as follows:
3.4. Are the issues raised in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession relevant to MyT today? Why do you say so?
- There was a need to add a second question after question 4.1. The question added went as follows: 4.2 Give reasons why?
- To avoid cell phones ringing, participant domination, and to allay the fear of active participation, it was necessary to set ground rules. The set ground rules were as follows:
 1. Each participant should contribute.
 2. Each participant should not speak more than 2 minutes.
 3. Place cell phones on silent or switch them off entirely.

4.3.4 Personal communication

Personal communication was conducted with the three ministers of MyT and two members of the MyT Outreach Committee. The church ministers are Reverend Jacob Nthakhe (full-time minister), Professor Johannes Kritzinger and Reverend Maruping (part-time or tent-maker ministers). Personal communications were conducted with the following members of the Outreach Committee at MyT, namely, Mrs Lebang Nkosi and Mrs Mercia Makgati. The Outreach Committee has two members only.

Personal communication with Prof Kritzinger

Prof Kritzinger indicated that he preached several times about the Belhar Confession at MyT. For example, he preached about Acts 6. The message was about the treatment of Hebrew and Greek widows. In this scripture, the challenge was about reconciliation and justice, issues covered by Articles 3 and 4 of the Belhar Confession. Greek women, who were in the minority, were not being treated equally with Hebrew women. This created division between the Hebrews and Greeks. To solve the problem, the Apostles brought unity and reconciliation, and Greek and Hebrew widows were equally treated. The message was relevant for MyT since the church is diverse in terms of members from different population groups and at different economic levels ranging from female domestic workers working in White suburbs to professionals in business and institutions of higher learning, such as professors and doctors. They needed equal treatment, recognition, appreciation and

love from all. No one should be discriminated against as happened during the apartheid era.

Prof Kritzinger also wrote an article titled “Concrete Spirituality” .The article reflects on a number of liturgical innovations in the worship of Melodi ya Tshwane, an inner-city congregation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). The focus of the innovations was to implement the understanding of justice in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, a confessional standard of the URCSA. The basic contention of the article is that well-designed liturgies that facilitate experiences of beauty can nurture a concrete spirituality to mobilise urban church members for a justice-seeking lifestyle. An example in this regard is:

“Confessing the Belhar Confession in the liturgy”

The liturgy is included in Chapter 2 of this study. A brief summary of the Belhar Confession that would be suitable for liturgical use was formulated before the liturgy was drafted. The liturgy has a poetic ring to it and when it is recited in union by a congregation, it has a dramatic effect (Kritzinger, 2014:6).

“Standing tall and dignified”

“Standing tall and dignified” is another liturgical statement developed to embody the principles of the Belhar Confession. The statement is recited by the congregation before the reading of the law as follows:

“I stand tall and dignified before God

And among my sisters and brothers,

I accept myself as a precious and unique person,

because I am created in the image of the living God.

Together we discover who we are, as a family:

Motho ke motho ka batho" (Kritzinger, 2014: 6).

By reciting this statement, members of the congregation remind themselves that the most important thing in their lives is that they are created in the image of the beautiful God. The statement also enables the congregation to hear Article 4 of the Belhar Confession not as a moral imperative, "Go and stand where God stands", but as a gracious indicative, "God stands where you stand, by your side; God gives you dignity and humility".

"Justice for women and children"

Kritzinger was also one of the men of the URCSA who pointed out the marginalisation of women and children in Christian worship. This was seen as a justice issue that needed correction. At the 2005 General Synod, they drafted an open letter to URCSA women. In the letter, the Belhar Confession was interpreted as a call to gender justice in the church. The drafted letter was written as follows:

"So today as URCSA men, we stand judged by the Belhar Confession:

- For having discriminated against women in church and society;
 - For having worked against reconciliation by alienating women from significant participation in leadership positions and ministerial formation;
 - For having practiced injustice against women in church and society"
- (Kritzinger, 2014:12).

In the light of the above, the URCSA men apologized for all the actions, attitudes and unacceptable structures for which they have been responsible. The men also commit themselves to make restitution for the wrongs they had committed and to build a new church with them.

“Multilingual worship”

In South Africa, multilingual expression is seen as a justice issue. During the apartheid era the only languages given official language status were the languages of the colonisers: Afrikaans and English. The African indigenous languages were marginalised. At MyT different languages are used during worship. These include Sesotho, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Preaching is mainly in English and interpreted in Sesotho. The purpose of worshipping in these languages is to do justice to members who speak them.

Kritzinger, et al., (n.d.) also wrote a document called “Living Belhar”. It was prepared to assist MyT Wards to understand and apply the Belhar Confession. The following process and time frame is recommended for the application of each article of the Belhar Confession:

1. Welcoming: 5 minutes, group leader/s welcome members of the group/s; a group member prays while everyone holds hands.
2. Embracing: 20 minutes, the 1x1 partners report briefly on the service they attended together, and share their experiences.

3. Discovering: 35 minutes, members read scripture verses related to an article in the Belhar Confession and enter into dialogue with the selected passages.
4. Committing: 4 minutes, members commit to one another and again commit to live the Belhar Confession.
5. Sending out: 5 minutes, the group members stand in a circle, facing away from each other, affirming that they are sent out to work in the society.

The following section shows how Article 4 of the Belhar Confession can be applied in living the Belhar Confession:

Do justice (Get your hands dirty)

Suggested venue: A public place. This might be a park or a restaurant, but can also be a place in your community of historic importance. It is a reminder that our faith also relates to our public lives. Be sensitive to how this public space may impact on the conversations today.

1. WELCOMING (5 minutes)

The group leaders welcome the group members to the public space. A group member prays, while all hold hands.

2. EMBRACING (20 minutes)

- The 1x1 partners report briefly on the service they attended together.
- Members talk about the broken relationships that they worked on (or thought about).
- Each member briefly shares:
an experience of suffering or witnessing injustice,
OR

an experience of benefitting from injustice,

OR

an experience of injustice being overcome and justice emerging.

3. DISCOVERING (45 minutes)

- ❖ Explore Isaiah 58:1-10 and Matthew 25:31-40 together with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession:

Isaiah 58:1-10

“1 Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 3 "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. 4 Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. 5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? 6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, 10 if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”

Matthew 25:31-40

“31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me'.”

Belhar Confession, Article 4

We believe:

- that God has revealed Godself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that in a world full of injustice and enmity God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged and that God calls the church to follow in this; that God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoners and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the strangers, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the people of God to do what is good and to seek the right;
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;
- that the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ, the Church must

witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

- ❖ Enter into dialogue with these passages. Consider questions like the following:
 - Why does God reject the worship of people who practise injustice or are indifferent to people who suffer?
 - Do the two biblical passages support the statement of the Belhar Confession that God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged?
 - Is it possible to mobilise Christians to fast for justice in South Africa?
 - Explore the meaning of the expression: “the church, belonging to God, should stand where God stands”. What does it mean practically to “stand” there?

4 COMMITTING (10 minutes)

4.1 Committing to one another

- This week the group does not divide into new 1x1 groups. The whole group spends 5-10 minutes to plan a visit to a community (or diaconal) project among suffering and destitute people run by a church agency or NGO (preferably of the DRC family).
- The group also discusses the possibility of celebrating the Lord’s Supper together at their final session (next week).
- One 1x1 group is formed to take responsibility for leading the next week’s session and choosing the venue (if so agreed by the group).

4.2 Committing to live the Belhar Confession

The group members then make the following commitments for the coming week:

- To accompany the group on the planned visit to a community project.
- To examine their personal and family lifestyle in the light of today’s discussion, and to discuss that lifestyle with their family members.

- If agreement was reached on the Lord's Supper, someone is mandated to obtain the necessary permission from the Church Council, find one of the ministers to serve Communion, and make the practical arrangements.
- To study Article 5 of the Belhar Confession in preparation for next week's session.

5. SENDING OUT (5 minutes)

The group members stand in a circle, facing away from each other, affirming that they are sent out to work for justice in society. The group members then take turns at reading the following prayer (slowly):

- God of compassion, we worship you as the One who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- God of mission, we thank you for sending us into the community to participate in your work of healing this broken world. We are willing to stand where you stand: by the side of those who are suffering and wrongly treated;
- Lord Jesus, Helper of the helpless, Saviour of the lost,
 - * open our eyes to see you in the people who are hungry, thirsty, lonely, cold, ill and in prison;
 - * give us the courage to stand with you – by their side;
- Empowering Spirit, overcome our greed and self-centredness; teach us to fast for justice; turn our lives and congregations inside out to become part of your plan.

Personal Communication with Rev Nthakhe

Rev Nthakhe agreed he preached about the Belhar Confession and emphasised the three key issues: unity, reconciliation and justice. According to him, "Members of the church should be united as members of one body, since the triune God is one, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We need to be one in the way we do things in the church, in our families and also in our communities. We need to promote the spirit of unity so that people can see that we belong to this one Father, Son and the

Holy Spirit". About reconciliation he said, "South Africa has a history of separation, and enmity between races; we need to reconcile one with another and be brothers and sisters" (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2013; Naude, 2003; Smit, 2008; Naude, 2012; Damon, 2013; Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2014). "In Jesus there is no White, Coloured, Indian or Black. We need to live as reconciled people." With regard to justice, he said, "we need to live, love, speak, act and do justice with all, even with those who are not members of MyT". Living the Belhar Confession is demonstrated, for example, on family day at MyT when church members come together to play different games and have meals together. "At MyT we are not just preaching or listening to Belhar, but also *do* Belhar by showing unity among us. In our ward meetings, we promote unity and encourage our members to know, visit and support one another in prayer and in deeds". This action is supported by Gal 6:10: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers". "Every Friday, before baptism, which takes place during the Sunday worship service, we invite members to be baptised into the church. We do this to give them an opportunity to know one another and promote the spirit of unity among them. Also in my personal life, I live Belhar by seeking justice, unity, and reconciliation with people I come across in my daily life." Rev Nthakhe also mentioned Lerato House in the City of Tshwane: "Lerato House is a holistic empowerment programme for young girls at risk (11-18 years old), including abused children, children affected by prostitution, and victims of trafficking. Young women from 15-25 years old are served through the outreach programme, and are advised, counselled and referred to relevant services." (<http://www.tlf.org.za/lerato-house/>). The MyT Women Ministry supports Lerato House by buying groceries for the needy women and children.

Personal communication with Rev Maruping

Rev Maruping preached the Belhar Confession during combined services with domestic workers, the marginalised, and gardeners around Brooklyn (De Beer, 2015; Saayman, 2010). He sees himself as a reconciler and bridge builder between the Dutch Reformed Church (White church) and the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (Black, Indian, and Coloureds). “I participate in discussions that focus in reconciling the two churches”. The ministry of reconciliation is based on 2 Corinthians 5:18: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

He demonstrated living the Belhar Confession by participating in the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) as a member of the Board Committee. “The Tshwane Leadership Foundation is working with churches and communities for urban transformation. Growing from the work of Pretoria Community Ministries, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation was created in 2003 to strengthen the unfolding inner city movement of churches, communities and programmes with capacity, resource development, advocacy and policy work, communication and marketing, and spiritual nurture. It also wants to play an intermediary and / or supportive role to initiatives in other parts of the City of Tshwane” (<http://www.tlf.org.za/>). MyT is co-founder of the TLF.

Rev Maruping has also acted as a mediator and reconciler between two congregations at the presbytery of Hlabane in Rustenburg. He said: “I was involved because there were crises between the two congregations, they invited me to mediate and the problem was resolved.” His participation was a true response to the

call from the Belhar Confession. Through Jesus Christ, humans are reconciled with God and with each other.

Personal communications with Mrs Lebang Nkosi and Mrs Mercia Makgati

Data collected from Lebang Nkosi and Mercia Makgati was noted in section 1.2 above. In brief, the outreach activities at MyT are not centrally coordinated. They lack purpose and some activities are simple charity, and so mission is confused with charity. There is no direction on how the outreach activities should be conducted. The Outreach Committee was established to guide and formalise the way outreach activities should be done. The congregation's participation with TLF was also weakened. It seems the departure of Rev De Beer weakened the congregation's participation in outreach activities, especially with the TLF. According to my communication with Rev De Beer, this relationship should be revived.

4.3.5 Observation-based research method

In this qualitative research, the researcher observed what was happening naturally during a church service at MyT. The researcher also took pictures of the activities using a digital camera. Figures 4.1 to 4.4 are photographs taken during the worship service at MyT in 2014. In this study, the reactive observation method was used to collect data during a worship service at MyT. The Christian Men Ministry, the Christian Women Ministry and Wards 3 and 9 were observed during their presentations.

4.3.5.1 Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

The Christian Men Ministry became active at MyT in 2014. The ministry raised its own funds through membership contributions. It used some of its funds to buy groceries for needy church workers. Their action was focusing within the church; to be missional, they had to focus outward as well (Stetzer & Putman, 2006). Figure 4.1 shows some members of the Christian Men ministries handing over groceries to the needy church workers at Melodi ya Tshwane.

4.3.5.2 Christian Women Ministry (CWM)

Members of the Christian Women Ministry at MyT were touched by the situation at Black schools in Gauteng Province where some young girls were unable to afford sanitary towels for themselves and their plight would have affected school attendance. The MyT Church Council allowed the CWM to fundraise and collect supplies of sanitary towels for the needy schoolgirls. They also sell bottled water in order to raise funds for their ongoing project. Figure 4.2 shows members of CWM collecting supplies of sanitary towels during the worship service at MyT in 2015. The action was missional since the ministry was focusing outward into the community.

One of the characteristics of missional church is community transformation. In this project, young girls' lives would be transformed (Stetzer & Putman, 2006:49).

4.3.5.3 MyT Ward 9 (Silverton, Pretoria-East)

MyT Ward 9 operates in Silverton, Pretoria-East. Members of the Ward are active in outreach activities. They collaborate with police in the area to help homeless people. They do fundraising at church by selling scones as shown in Figure 4.5. They were observed handing over groceries to pensioners and the disabled at MyT as shown in Figure 4.3 and 4.4. Their actions are transforming the lives of the poor and the aged, especially the homeless. In this regard, they are responding to the call by the Belhar Confession to challenge the church to follow God's liberating action for the poor and the oppressed (Botman, 2006:245).

4.3.5.4 MyT Ward 3 (Phillip Nel Park, Pretoria-West)

MyT Ward 3 operates in Phillip Nel Park, Pretoria-West. In 2014, they identified poor and needy children at Olievenhoutbosch, a low income residential area in Centurion. Members of the Ward collaborated with the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called Kings Hope Development Trust to address the challenge of poverty in the community. Two members of the Ward visited the NGO and the community to do a needs analysis. Members of the Ward raised funds amongst themselves. In 2014, they gave a presentation showing the food, clothing and bath soaps they handed over to needy children at Olievenhoutbosch.

The MyT congregation was observed reciting the Belhar Confession during the church worship service. The details on how the Belhar Confession is recited by the congregation is explained above in section 4.3.4, “Personal communication with Prof Kritzinger”.



Figure 4.1 Christian Men Ministry hand over groceries to needy church workers.



Figure 4.2 Collection of supplies of sanitary towels by Christian Women Ministry.



Figure 4.3 Ward 9 hands over groceries to pensioners.



Figure 4.4 The disabled receive groceries from Ward 9.



Figure 4.5 Ward 9 fundraising by selling scones at MyT.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

This section gives a summary of data collected from the focus group interviews. The information is collected from Church ministries and MyT wards.

4.4.1 Data collection from Focus Group Interviews

Summary of focus group discussion: MyT ministries

The ministries interviewed were: MyT Youth Ministry, Christian Youth Ministry (CYM) and Christian Men Ministry (CMM). The MyT wards interviewed were: Wards 2, 4 and 9.

Question 1. Participation in outreach activities

Melodi ya Tshwane Youth Ministry

The group agreed they do outreach activities at a minimal level. The outreach activities they do include going to an open park in the City of Tshwane to hand out food parcels; they sometimes distribute cakes to the needy at Church Square in Pretoria. They also go to an orphanage to cook for and play with the children.

Individual responses included: "We go to an orphanage, depending on our budget on that day, and run everything starting from cooking and playing with the kids"; "Sometimes we just pick an open park and start distributing foods".

Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

CMM does not have outreach activities. They have started planning for an outreach with the Northern Theological Seminary.

Individual responses included: “We have identified a school shoes project for needy children. Each one of us is expected to buy a pair of shoes”.

Christian Youth Ministry (CYM)

CYM does not have outreach activities. One individual respondent said: “We do revival meetings only in Olievenhoutbosch.”

Melodi ya Tshwane Wards

MyT Wards 2 and 4 (Pretoria West and Daspoort)

The Wards have outreach activities which include adopting an orphanage or home for abandoned children in Atteridgeville; and the distribution of food parcels and clothes to the children. They have painted the orphanage. Individual responses include: “We also take part in the outreach activities for Tshwane Leadership Foundation” (TLF) (De Beer, 2015);

MyT Ward 9 (Silverton, Pretoria-East)

Ward 9’s outreach activities take the form of raising funds by selling scones and they use the funds for a number of projects: to buy groceries for the hospice in town; to buy groceries for pensioners belonging to MyT; to buy blankets and food parcels for the poor and destitute. The groups identified are the poor who sleep under the bridges and those who sleep overnight in the churchyard of MyT. They are involving the police to assist them in their outreach activities.

Individual responses include the following: “As part of outreach we sell scones in order to buy blankets”; “we identified people who sleep in the MyT churchyard and those who sleep under bridges”.

Question 2. Knowledge of the Belhar Confession

Melodi ya Tshwane Youth Ministry

No one among the MyT Youth Ministry has read the Belhar Confession. The document was distributed in the church, but was not read. One of the participants said: “We recite it in the church. What stands out for me in the document is justice and unity.” Some members could not differentiate between the Belhar Confession and the Apostles’ Creed. They can remember what was said about it. According to the group, the Confession speaks about the church taking care of the oppressed and the needy. It is a response to racial segregation during apartheid time in South Africa (Naude, 2003). Other individual responses are:

- “The Belhar Confession is the Apostolic Creed”. This statement was false;
- “The document that was handed out in church”;
- “It says something like: we believe in Jesus, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit”;
- “It talks about taking care of the oppressed and the needy people”;
- “What I can remember is that it was rewritten in response to apartheid issues”.

The researcher had to inform the group that it focuses on three key issues: unity, reconciliation and justice.

Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

No one among the members of the CMM had read the Belhar Confession document. Some could remember what was said about it in church. This includes standing against injustice. Some individual responses include: “I haven’t read it”; “We have

read and discussed it in our Ward meetings not as CMM”; “It teaches us to stand against injustice and to stand where God stands for God stands against injustice.”

Christian Youth Ministry (CYM)

No one has read the document, but sometimes they recite it during the worship service. One participant said: “I have not read the Belhar Confession, but I think what stands out for me is justice and unity”; another participant added “reconciliation”.

Melodi ya Tshwane Wards

MyT Wards 2 and 4 (Pretoria West and Daspoort)

No one has read the Belhar Confession document. One member could recall what was said about the Confession in the church. “It was written in Belhar, Cape Town. It was written during apartheid time in South Africa. It addresses unity, apartheid and reconciliation”. Another participant said: “We understand Belhar Confession as the confession of our church written twenty years ago; it talks about unity of the church”.

MyT Ward 9 (Silverton in Pretoria-East)

One member from Ward 9 who is a Northern Theological Seminary Student (NTS) had read the Belhar Confession. According to him, “God stands where the poor stand”. “God does not discriminate; I see this as the gist of the matter in the Belhar Confession.” Another participant said: “We recite it sometimes in the church.

According to the confession, we are one nation and we should not discriminate against races”.

Question 3. Understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

MyT Youth Ministry

Question 3.1 After reading Article 4 of the Belhar Confession and supporting scriptures, the group agreed they were hearing it for the first time. They noted the following: Main issues discussed in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession are: giving food to the poor, and the fact that Jesus demonstrated a selfless life. Individual responses included: “For me personally, as relating towards what Jesus Christ stood for, and how he lived a selfless life for those who were oppressed, and stood for them”; “As messengers of God we do not have to keep the message for ourselves”. A question raised by one of the participants was: “If God is God of the poor and the destitute, what about the privileged?” In response to the question, the explanation was: The privileged are made so by God to take care of the poor and the destitute.

Question 3.2The Belhar Confession is biblical because from the Old Testament (OT) to the New Testament (NT), the Bible speaks of liberating the oppressed. Individual responses included the following: “From the OT to the NT, the Bible talks of justice for the poor and the widows; you take the Exodus in itself, it is an act of justice, and God said to Moses, I shall send you to Pharaoh for I want to free my people”.

Question 3.3The group agreed the Article is relevant to MyT. Members of MyT should go out and conduct outreach activities. Individual responses included: “The

issues are relevant to MyT, but the church is not addressing them”; “My church in Sebediala is burying the destitute, those who are not even coming to church”; “I feel sorry for MyT, it collects a lot of money during fundraising, but nothing is budgeted for the poor”.

Question 3.4 Main issues raised are relevant to MyT, but there is a huge gap between what MyT is doing and what is expected by the Belhar Confession. Individual responses included: “We can show compassion to the needy and extend our hands to the depressed who need counselling”.

Christian Youth Ministry (CYM)

Question 3.1 Main issues raised are: Justice, and outreach to the poor people. The church should visit those who are in prison or marginalised. One participant said: “Outreach to the poor people and also orphans and widows. I think we should show support by visiting these people”.

Question 3.2 It is Biblical because this is what Jesus portrayed when he was on earth. One of the participants said: “The Belhar Confession is Biblical for me when we read from the Bible, especially the New Testament, when Jesus was on earth, I think that is what he was portraying, when he changed water into wine, and the multiplication of bread, he made sure everyone gets something to eat, the Belhar Confession therefore teaches us to take care of other people”.

Question 3.3 The church should show love and support the poor. One participant said: “Because Jesus is now in heaven, the church should do what Jesus would do if

he was still on earth”; “Our church should reflect what God is all about, our church should be welcoming and be united with everyone else”.

Question 3.4 Issues raised are relevant to MyT but members of the ministry are not doing as expected by the Belhar Confession. One of the respondents said: “This ministry has not yet started doing this as expected from the Belhar Confession, but from now we know what is expected from us”.

Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

Question 3.1 The group noted the following: Christians should stand with the poor by design. The church should take its rightful place. The church must protect the weak. Individual responses included: “For me it means we have to go back to the real essence of the scriptures and make sure we stand with the oppressed by design and other methods”; “According to my understanding, the church must take its rightful place in protecting the people, because the church should not be looking into enriching itself, and siding with the people who are empowered. My understanding at the moment is that what the churches are doing is: we have given the job to the government and we are standing aside and blaming the government while we as the church are doing nothing about the challenge.”

Question 3.2 The article is Biblical because when you read it, you hear the message of the Old Testament prophets. In Jesus’ ministry all are included, the poor and the marginalised. If we dress the poor, we dress Jesus. For He said, I was naked and you did not dress me. Individual responses included: “When the scriptures are read

you can hear the OT message of the prophets, and the NT that is aligned with the Belhar Confession.”

Question 3.3 Since we no longer have prophets, as it was during the OT, the church through the guidance of the Holy Spirit should stand on the side of God, protect the poor and make sure justice must flow. The church should be regarded as the banquet where everyone is invited, the poor, weak, and the unemployed. Individual responses included: “The church is the machinery of God, we no longer have prophets as during the OT, and therefore we take it that the Holy Spirit gives guidance to the church”; “Everyone should be welcomed by the church.”

Question 3.4 Issues raised are relevant to MyT in the sense that it is members of the church who should be helping the poor. The church should be seen to be performing the call from the Belhar Confession. Individual responses included: “Through us, as the church, God should be seen working; we should be helping the poor and not be part of the silent majority”.

MyT Wards 2 and 4

Question 3.1 Main issues raised are: God is a God of justice. The articles are against injustice. The church should fight injustice, and support the needy and those who are wronged. Individual responses included: “All church members should fight against injustice and restore broken relationships”; “The church should support the needy and widows and those that are wronged”.

Question 3.2 The article is linked to Bible verses. It emphasises love. The church must love the poor and the marginalised as Jesus had done during his life on earth

(Luke 4:18). Jesus came to rescue those who were marginalized. Individual responses are: "The article is Biblical in the sense that when Jesus Christ came into the world, he came as the face of God to save his people. In that sense Jesus left us to practice what he started."

Question3.3 It means Christians should practice the life demonstrated by Jesus while on earth. Individual responses included: "We should abide by the rules and do what God expects us to do; to avoid oppressing others; to live by the commandments, like 'love one another'"; "We need to continue the work that Jesus started".

Question 3.4 Issues are relevant to MyT because Christians must represent God's Kingdom on earth. Individual responses included: "There is still injustice, the poor and orphans, and MyT is there to respond"; "The poor and the weak are still marginalised in our church".

MyT Ward 9

Question3.1 Main issues raised are: Need for justice to the oppressed, and the destitute. Individual responses include the following: "It talks of justice and injustice"; "God looks after those who are poor".

Question3.2 It is Biblical in the sense that Christians should support the poor. Individual responses included: "Jesus' ministry was based on justice"; "The article makes reference to God".

Question3.3 Some responses included: "I can answer this question by means of a question and a statement: Where does God stand? And the answer is God always

stands where there is justice and peace and that is where Christians should stand”. Christians should not only support their own families, but the poor and the destitute too. “God sent Jesus Christ his Son, and Christ sent the Holy Spirit. The triune God sends the church to proclaim the greatness of God, in that way the church stands where God stands”.

Question 3.4 Issues raised are relevant to MyT. The Belhar Confession’s call is for the entire URCSA church family. Individual statements included: “Issues are relevant in the sense that Christians at MyT should show compassion and contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in the city community”.

Question 4. Knowledge on Biblical support of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

MyT Youth Ministry

According to the MyT Youth Ministry, the scriptures support Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. One participant wanted to know the meaning of the word ‘extol’ in the context of the scripture: Psalm 109:30 New International Version (NIV).

“30 With my mouth I will greatly *extol* the Lord; in the great throng of worshipers I will praise him”. The answer was derived from a Google search. It means “to proclaim, to exalt, praise, and to glorify the Lord”. (<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/extol>).

Christian Youth Ministry (CYM)

The scriptures describe God as we see Him in the Belhar Confession. One respondent said: "As indicated in the book of Luke 4:18, God sent me to proclaim good news to the poor and to set the prisoners free, this is what the Belhar Confession is all about." The group agreed the scriptures support the Belhar Confession.

Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

The group agreed the scriptures support the Belhar Confession because they prove God is siding with the poor.

The scriptures talk about supporting the hungry and proclaiming good news. Individual responses included: "The scriptures support the poor as indicated in the prophets"; "All the scripture we have read talks about the poor, and the main message in the Belhar Confession is to support the poor."

MyT Wards 2 and 4

Scriptures talk about God standing at the right hand of the poor, and giving food to the hungry. The scriptures support the Belhar Confession. Individual responses included: "Psalm 140:12 says 'I know that the Lord secures justice and for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy'".

MyT Ward 9

To this group, Article 4 of the Belhar Confession seems to be an extract from the read scriptures. Individual responses included: “As I was listening to the scriptures, it was like the Belhar Confession was extracted from these scriptures”; “Belhar Confession found its origin from the read scriptures.”

Question 5. Practice of the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

MyT Youth Ministry

Question 5.1 The MyT youth ministry did not know about the Belhar Confession, so they were not practicing it. They have outreach activities at a minimal level and need to do more now that they are aware of the call from the Belhar Confession. Individual responses included: “Some of us are hearing the Belhar Confession for the first time; we were doing some of these activities without knowing the contents of the confession”. One participant said: “No, we are not doing it as explained in the Belhar Confession. In terms of reaching out to share the word we still haven’t achieved it”; “I think we have achieved 25% of the Belhar Confession’s call”. Another participant said: “For the Belhar Confession to be part of our lives, we need to collaborate with other church ministries”. Every member of the church should be involved with outreach since we are all sent to all nations (Stetzer & Putman, 2006:34).

Question5.2 “We need one mission and one vision” one respondent said. “We need to organise youth conferences and workshops specifically on the Belhar Confession; need to reach out to the depressed and show compassion; giving money to charity institutions; and establish a budget for outreach”.

Individual responses included: “I think for us to practice the Belhar Confession we must have one vision and one mind”; “I think we need to read, discuss and have a full understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession”; “In a conference, we can organise a sitting of all young people and discuss Article 4 and get a common understanding”; “For me, personally, after reading Article 4, I started questioning myself what I read from the Bible. Somewhere in the New Testament, Jesus Christ said, people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:35). “I think for us to be able to live the Belhar Confession we need to grasp the concept of ‘loving one another’ or ‘loving the neighbour as I love myself’. If I love my neighbour as I love myself I won’t do any injustice to him”. “If I cannot love an orphan as I love myself, I cannot perform what is expected from the Belhar Confession”.

Question5.3 The Outreach Committee should be made visible; one participant was worried that the Outreach Committee has only two members. Outreach presentations should be made; feedback reports on outreach should be given; the policy or programme on outreach should be made available; the Church Council should budget funds for outreach. Other individual responses in this regard included: “We should use the church website to communicate issues related to outreach”; “MyT should support the people who suffer from injustice inside or outside the church”; “The church should invest in telling the people about the church’s stand in terms of justice or injustice”; “Outreach workshops should be organised by the Church Council and should be characterized by discussions and not lectures.”

Christian Youth Ministry (CYM)

Question5.1 The ministry is not practising the call from the Belhar Confession for the reason that it was unknown. One participant said: “But in terms of sharing or preaching the Gospel to the poor, yes, we are doing it to a certain extent during our revival meetings in communities. In terms of going out to meet the needs of the poor, we are not doing it”.

Question5.2 The group said they see a need to understand the Belhar Confession and not just to recite parts of it without understanding; they need access to the Belhar Confession document; the whole church and not just groups of people need to workshop on the confession; there is a need to plan clear outreach programmes; “this research has taught me as an individual, that I was ignorant to issues raised in the Belhar Confession, and that God has put us here so that we can stand for him”.

Question5.3 Ministers of the word to preach on the Belhar Confession; the Outreach Committee to be visible and share the programme with the church; workshop on the Belhar Confession to be organised for all members of the church, Sunday School included; adopt old age homes and not just for a one day visit; build relations with the needy, homeless and destitute. One of the participants said: “[The] outreach

programme should be discussed in the church so that all can be involved not [just a] certain group of people.”

Christian Men Ministry (CMM)

Question 5.1 CMM is not practicing the call from the Belhar Confession. The ministry was not even aware of the call. Individual responses included: “We do not have a formalised CMM outreach programme”; “We are not practicing it, but we have plans”; “Due to capacity and resources, we are not doing what the Belhar Confession calls for, but the intention is there”.

Question 5.2 Need to plan a formalised programme for the outreach. Some members are given the task to start the process. “We have already taken steps as the executive to coordinate the CMM outreach programme”.

Question 5.3 The Church Council or Outreach Committee should make the document available to all members of the church; “We need to organise ourselves accordingly”; “Starting from Sunday School, all members of the church should be taught about the call from the Belhar Confession”; “If we do not understand the document every action is going to fail”; discussion services should be organised and all members of the church should participate; the Church Council should allocate a budget for the outreach activities (Reese & Shields, 1999); “Make a bigger amount of the budget into outreach activities in order to help the poor”; conferences or workshops should be planned; all members should be helped to understand the

confession. Structures to manage and control the outreach activities should be clarified.

MyT Wards 2 and 4

Question5.1 The Wards are participating in outreach activities in a minimal way, not as described in the Belhar Confession, Article 4. The Wards are therefore not doing enough. Individual responses included: “We still need to build ongoing relationships with old age homes not just to do a hit and run kind of exercise”; “Maybe we should start adopting another old age home?”

Question5.2 The Wards need to build relations with the needy and among themselves. “We need to meet more in our Wards for the more we meet the more we bond”; “Active participation by members of Wards is essential.”

Question5.3 Members should be encouraged to attend Ward meetings where discussion can be initiated. “The Church Council or Outreach Committee should organise workshops on the Belhar Confession.” “Sunday School children should not be excluded in the training, they should be introduced to the Belhar Confession when they are still young”. The outreach programme should include the proclamation of the word, not only the giving of gifts. Individual responses included: “Some preaching should include teachings on the Belhar Confession”; “We need guidelines on how outreach activities should be done, at present there are no guidelines”; “There should be a slot in the liturgy that focuses on the Belhar Confesion” (Kritzinger, 2014:6). “The church can re-join TLF and participate in their outreach activities” (De Beer, 2015).

MyT Ward 9

Question5.1 Ward 9 is doing outreach activities at a minimal level. It includes taking care of the homeless, those sleeping under bridges and those sleeping overnight in the MyT churchyard. Individual responses included: “The mere fact that we, as the Ward, have taken this conscious decision of taking care of the homeless, we are standing with God”.

Question5.2 More can be done if all ministries and Wards can be involved in outreach activities. Individual responses included: “We are not doing enough, there are different challenges that we need to respond to, but with the limited resources and time, we are doing fine”; “More can be done if all ministries and Wards are involved”.

Question5.3 The group’s responses included the following: There is a need for more organised leadership in the outreach programme; raise awareness of all church members about outreach activities. Teach and explain the Belhar Confession at Sunday School, Catechism, and in all church ministries; guidelines should be drafted on outreach activities.

Individual responses included the following: “We need more sermons and talks on outreach activities and commitment; I heard only two sermons last year on outreach”; “We need to find practical application of the Belhar Confession, not just the formalities that we do in the church”. One participant, who joined MyT from one of the URCSA congregations, said: “What is the Belhar Confession? Truly speaking, where I come from I have never heard of the Belhar Confession, I am hearing this for the first time”; from this statement, we can conclude that not all URCSA

congregations are teaching the Belhar Confession. So, new members who join the MyT congregation may experience the same challenge.

Data was collected from the focus group interviews as follows: Themes were developed from the interview schedule and from the interviews. The following themes derived from the collected data and relevant to the study will be analysed:

- Conducting outreach activities,
- Knowledge of the Belhar Confession,
- Understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession,
- Biblical support of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession,
- Practising the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession; and
- what the MyT should do to practice the call from Article 4 of the Confession as the Belhar Confession is unknown to some church members from other provinces outside Gauteng.

4.4.2 Conducting outreach activities at MyT

Some of the MyT church ministries and wards conduct outreach activities and some do not. The outreach activities include the following: giving food parcels, clothing, blankets, and toiletries to those in need and supplies of sanitary towels to needy girls in Pretoria. The needy, poor and destitute include the homeless, pensioners and orphans. The MyT Youth also go to an orphanage to cook for and play with the children. Some wards are adopting orphanages or homes for abandoned children in Atteridgeville, for example, Wards 2 and 4; Ward 3 collaborates with a NGO to

support needy children in Olievenhoutbosch, near Centurion. They provide needy children with groceries and other donations.

Some ministries and wards are not involved at all in outreach activities. The reasons given why some church ministries and wards are not doing outreach activities are:

- The outreach activities are not well planned and coordinated at MyT.
- Outreach activities at MyT are not centrally coordinated.
- They lack purpose and some activities are simple charity.
- The duties of the Outreach Committee are not outlined.
- There is no direction on how the outreach activities should be conducted.
- Church members are conducting outreach activities in the way they understand them and without official guidelines.

4.4.3 Knowledge of the Belhar Confession

Only one participant from Ward 9, who is a Northern Theological Seminary student, has read the Belhar Confession document. Other participants from wards and ministries did not read the document. Some members confessed that they were hearing about the document for the first time, especially those who relocated to the city from rural areas. Some members knew about the Belhar Confession because they sometimes recite it during liturgy at MyT.

4.4.4 Understanding Article 4 of Belhar Confession

All participants believe the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is Biblical. This is what Jesus portrayed when He was on earth. The main message is explained

as follows: Since Christ lived a selfless life, Christians should demonstrate a selfless life in their daily life. These include giving food to the poor, liberating the oppressed, justice, and outreach to the poor; the church should visit those who are in prison or marginalised. As Jesus is now in heaven, the church should do what Jesus would do if he was still on earth; if we dress the poor, we dress Jesus. For he said, “I was naked and you did not dress me”; the church, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, should stand on the side of God, protect the poor and make sure justice must flow. The church should be regarded as the banquet where everyone is invited, the poor, weak, and the unemployed. God always stands where there is justice and peace and that is where Christians should stand. Participants agreed that the main issues raised are relevant to MyT, but there is a huge gap between what MyT is doing and what is expected by the Belhar Confession.

4.4.5 Practising the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

Church ministries and Wards agreed they were not practicing the call as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. This is because they were not even aware of the call. Some Wards are participating in outreach activities in a minimal way, not as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The Wards are therefore not doing enough. They need to do more now that they are aware of the call from the Belhar Confession.

4.4.6 What MyT should do to practice the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession

Participants proposed the following: MyT Wards and church ministries need a deeper understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The knowledge can be gained by doing the following:

- Organise conferences and workshops specifically on the Belhar Confession; starting from Sunday School, all members of the church should be taught about the call from the confession;
- Church members should have access to the Belhar Confession document;
- Reach out to the depressed and show compassion; give money to charitable institutions;
- The Outreach Committee should be made visible; outreach presentations should be made; feedback reports on outreach should be given;
- A clear, formal policy or programme on outreach to be made available;
- To plan clear outreach programmes aligned with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession;
- The Church Council should budget funds for the outreach programme;
- Need more organised leadership in the outreach programme; create awareness in all church members on outreach activities;
- Teach and explain the Belhar Confession at Sunday School, Catechism, and in all church ministries;
- Guidelines should be drafted for outreach activities;
- More can be done if all ministries and wards can be involved in outreach activities;
- Ministers of the word to preach on the Belhar Confession; sermons and talks on outreach activities and commitment;

- Adopt old age homes or orphanages, where possible, over the longer-term and not just for one day visits;
- Build relationships with the needy, the homeless, and the destitute.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.5.1 Introduction

In this section, the data collected and research findings by different methods given above are analysed.

4.5.2 Data analysis and research findings

4.5.2.1 Analysis of the focus group interviews

The analysis process included summarising the discussions immediately after the group discussion. Audio recordings of groups and field notes were used to identify key words or themes in the discussions. Key words in this regard were based on the research questions. New key words redeveloped during the discussions. These include:

- Tshwane Leadership Foundation and Lerato House;
- Workshops/conferences on Belhar Confession

- MyT Budget for outreach activities,

Data saturation was reached when similar ideas were repeated over and over again, which gave confidence that the categories were saturated (Barnett, 2002:3).

Data triangulation with focus group interviews (wards and church ministries), and personal communications (with Outreach Committee members), was conducted. Feedback from these groups was compared to determine areas of agreement and divergence on the questions posed. The summarised research findings below revealed the same results.

The following are the research findings from the research study;

- In general, participants have a very narrow understanding of missions and outreach. To them outreach and missions simply mean collecting and distributing foods and blankets to the needy. The focus is local instead of 'glocal', that is, the convergence of the global reality with the local reality as proposed by Stetzer & Putman (2006:5).
- Some ministries and wards are conducting minimal outreach activities at MyT while others are not doing so at all.
- The outreach activities are not well planned or coordinated since they lack purpose and these outreach activities are being confused with simple charity.
- At present, the duties of the MyT Outreach Committee are not clearly outlined.
- Only one participant from Ward 9, who is a Northern Theological Seminary student, had read the Belhar Confession document. Other participants

from wards and ministries have never read the document. In this regard, the content of the Belhar Confession is generally unknown and not formally associated with the Belhar Confession.

- Some participants have a superficial knowledge of the content of the Belhar Confession as they sometimes recite it during the liturgy at MyT, but without a complete understanding.
- Participants' understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession can be described as follows: the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is Biblical. Like Christ, Christians should live a selfless life in their daily lives. This includes giving food to the poor, liberating the oppressed and taking a stand for justice.
- Church ministries and wards are not practicing the call as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. This is because they were not even aware of the call.
- MyT Wards and church ministries need a deeper understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The knowledge can be gained by organising conferences and workshops specifically on the confession; starting from Sunday School, all members of the church should be taught about the call from the Belhar Confession.

4.5.2.2 Data analysis for personal communication with ministers

Personal communications with the three ministers of MyT revealed that they preached about the Belhar Confession in different contexts. Prof Kritzinger preached on Article 3 and 4 of the Belhar Confession. He used Acts 6 to address the issue of reconciliation and justice. There was unequal treatment

between Greek and Hebrew women, an issue of justice. He also wrote the article “Concrete spirituality” to show an understanding of justice as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. He further wrote a document called “Living Belhar” for MyT. He also encouraged the use of multilingual worship at MyT, which is an issue of justice. Reverend Nthakhe’s preaching focused on the three keys issues: unity, reconciliation and justice. He mentioned Family Day at MyT as a way of to express living the Belhar Confession. He also mentioned that MyT women support the TLF and Lerato House projects in its outreach activities. Rev. Maruping mainly preached about the Belhar Confession during combined services with domestic workers in the City of Tshwane. He also participated in the activities of the TLF as a board member.

4.5.3 Interpretation of the Belhar Confession Article 4 missed by the participants

- Contextually, “standing where God stands” should mean “standing among abused children and women, unpaid workers, people struggling with illness, those burying their relatives, widows, orphans and strangers, fearful elderly people and frustrated unemployed youth” (Kritzinger,2014:11).
- The church belongs to God. The Belhar Confession stresses that the church should stand where God stands because it belongs to God. In this regard, Christian discipleship is about imitation and participation (Yoder, 1994 in Kritzinger (2014:7)). Since the church is called into fellowship with the living God, it should commit itself to a life of obedience to Christ as Lord. For the church to stand on justice issues (Belhar Confession Article

4), it cannot therefore be motivated by party politics or opportunism. Christians are therefore moved by an inner compulsion flowing from a life of discipleship, to follow God and stand side by side with him and with wronged people against injustice.

- The spirituality of “striving against injustice”. The spirituality of the church (URCSA) should be renewed from narrow missionary pietism into a spirituality that is concrete, reformational, ecumenical and justice-seeking (Kritzinger, 2014, 12). This is part of the problem as to why MyT is not doing as much as it could owing to its current approach to missions.

4.5.4 Gaps identified

The following gaps can be identified from the research findings: lack of missional understanding in line with Article 4 the Belhar Confession; lack of understanding of God as the missionary God; interpretation of justice, understanding of missional ecclesiology and missional praxis. A brief discussion of these gaps follows:

4.5.4.1 Missional theology

- **Lack of missional understanding in line with Article 4 of the Belhar Confession**

The participants’ missional understanding of the Belhar Confession seems narrow. Their understanding of mission is to distribute food parcels and clothes to the poor or to adopt old age homes. These actions can be

characterised as simple charity. According to Naude (2003:418), “as prophetic sign the church should participate in God’s action to raise up the meek and lowly and is thus called to advocate a fair distribution of power, and the responsible exercise of power, within the life of the human community”. This is the missional understanding of Belhar Confession.

- **Lack of understanding of God as the missionary God**

Missional understanding of Article 4 of the Belhar Confession should be understood as follows: “It begins with the *missio Dei* – God’s own ‘self-sending’ in Christ by the Spirit to redeem and transform creation. The Church is not seen as a building or an institution but a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify and participate in Christ’s work”. The church serves God’s call to mission through its work in three broadly defined categories, namely:

- the proclamation of the Word of God,
- the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and
 - the nurture of the covenant community of disciples (Hooker, 2009:1).

The description of the structure and governance by which a church lives out its calling to be a community of witness is known as “polity”. In other words, polity is the architecture of mission.

Paul Hooker (2009:1) lists the following commitments to mission:

- The starting point is God’s self-sending into the world (*Missio Dei*).

- God calls the church to be a community of witness that participates in Christ's work (kerygma).
- The congregation is the basic form of the church.
- The ministry of governing bodies is shaped around the calling of the church.
- The polity provides flexibility for mission within particular contexts.
- The polity provides accountability between covenant partners.

The above-mentioned commitments help the church to understand God as a missionary God. It also helps the church know what it should do in its process to plan and execute its mission.

- **Interpretation of justice**

The call in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession is clearly explained in the confession. According to Damon (2013), the Belhar Confession speaks of God as a God of justice. It explains God who is especially present to those who suffer as a result of poverty and injustice.

- *Melodi ya Tshwane's narrow interpretation of justice*

MyT generally focuses on the distribution of food and clothing to the poor in its outreach activities. This takes the form of charity. According to Damon (2013:34; Naude, 2012), there are many types of justice that should be considered. These include: racial, economic, social, interpersonal, educational, employment, gender, political, medical, housing, ecclesiastical, and others. "God wills that each person is to provide for the needy according to the extent of his means so that no one has too much and no one has too little." These are the words of John Calvin (Damon, 2013:38).

- *Compassionate and restorative justice*

Koopman (2007:98) speaks of compassionate and restorative justice. Justice confessed in the Belhar Confession is described as compassionate justice. “Through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, God declares us just. People who are justified by the grace of God are participating in the quest for justice in the world. Justified people, people who are made right by the Triune God, i.e. right humans, seek human rights in our broken world.” In this regard, the human rights dimension seems not to be clearly understood at MyT.

Justice may not be reached within our communities or in the world without the willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others. Justice does not seek revenge, because it is merciful, “It seeks the healing and restoration of both perpetrators and victims”. “It seeks the healing of broken relationships”. That is why it is called restorative justice (Koopman, 2007:98). To progress towards a life where the diversity of South Africans can embrace one another, the church (MyT or URCSA) should remove all obstacles in order to embrace compassionate justice.

- *Witness against the powerful and privileged for economic justice*

According to Botman (2006:245), “in following Christ, the church must witness against all the powerful, and privileged who seek selfishly their own interests and thus control and harm others”. In this context, the

church, or members of the church, should speak out against economic injustice and corruption. This interpretation of justice was missing during the group interviews. This is called for by the Belhar Confession.

- **Working for justice and peace through grassroots participatory mission**

The interpretation of justice and working for justice and peace are two different things. Ilo (2012:255) suggested “grassroots participatory mission” as a model that can be used to work for justice and peace. “This model does the following:

- (a) It begins where the people are;
- (b) It identifies with the people’s conditions through immersion in their socio-cultural situation;
- (c) It builds the poor through a mutually embraced plan mid-wifed through the people’s initiatives for empowerment and animated by Christian vision;
- (d) It develops participatory practices where the people articulate their vision, set goals, and implement the day to day vision through solidarity. This way the success of the vision is placed on the shoulders of the people, where development is within the parameters of the participants”.

Since the Belhar Confession does not prescribe the approach to justice, I support this model as an approach to achieve true justice in our communities.

4.5.4.2 Missional ecclesiology

- **Marks of mission**

According to Walls and Ross (2008), there are five “marks” of missions. These include:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom,
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers,
- Respond to human needs by loving services,
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, and
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew all life on the earth.

MyT seem to be responding to only one item: “Respond to human needs by loving services” at a minimal level. This characterises MyT’s outreach activities as mere charity, or what Lupton (2011) calls “toxic charity”. It is toxic charity because it is not sustainable; furthermore it creates dependent communities or people who cannot provide for themselves. Other marks of mission which are essential are neglected. This is the one of the gaps that needs to be closed if MyT would like to respond appropriately to the call in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession.

4.5.4.3 Missional praxis

The concept of mission praxis was defined in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2.4. I see missional praxis as authentic church or Christian practices in response to God’s call to save his creation. According to Stan Chu Ilo (2012:256), the church in Africa has a prophetic role to “equip Christians, to bear authentic and credible witness to the faith

through loving services, reconciliation, justice, and peace.” This is the call of the Belhar Confession. From the research findings, MyT’s mission praxis seems to be one dimensional and, from an institutional perspective it is project-oriented. The main focus of the social ministry begins and ends with providing services to the poor through handouts, clothing, etc. This is not enough. We need to embark on transformative praxis that can liberate the poor, the destitute and the marginalised so that they can apply themselves to their world; fight their own fight and have a voice and a role in the evolution of their societies (Ilo, 2012:257). From current missional understanding, the church or individual members of the church should stand where God stands in His mission and bear authentic and credible witness to the faith through loving services, reconciliation, justice, and peace. The Belhar Confession calls for this. It applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple is to be an agent of the kingdom of God, and every disciple is to carry the mission of God into every sphere of life (Hirsch, 2008). To be missional, therefore, “means to move beyond our church preferences and make missional decisions locally as well as globally” (Stetzer & Putman, 2006:48-49). In this regard, church members take responsibility to stand where God stands in politics, business, education, etc., to facilitate human transformation while being guided and led by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FIVE

MISSION PRAXIS IN LINE WITH ARTICLE 4 OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION PROPOSED FOR MyT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter gives the proposed mission praxis/ outreach activities for MyT that would be aligned with the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The proposed mission praxis is based on findings from the research activities using the literature reviews, focus group interviews, personal communications and observation. All participants, ministers included, agreed that MyT is not practising the call as described in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession. The proposed mission praxis gives the guiding principles on being missional according to Article 4 of the Belhar Confession; the roles of the Church Council, the Outreach Committee, the various church wards and ministries.

5.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ON BEING MISSIONAL ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 4 OF THE BELHAR CONFESSION

Carlson (2007:1) defines a missional church as “an authentic community of faith that primarily directs its ministry focus outward toward the context in which it is located and to the broader world beyond”. In his simplified description of the concept of missional, Rick Meigs says:

“Missional is a helpful term used to describe what happens when you and I replace the ‘come to us’ invitations with a ‘go to them’ life”. A life where ‘the way of Jesus’ informs and radically transforms our existence to one wholly focused on sacrificial living for him and others and where we adopt a missionary stance in relation to our culture. It speaks to the very nature of the Jesus follower.”
(<http://www.friendofmissional.org/>)

The following guiding principles from the First Baptist Church (2015) can shape how the church, ministries, wards and individual church members choose to live their missional call within their context:

- **Christ-centered**

Who we are and what we do must be Christ-centred, emerging from the love on display in Jesus Christ’s life and ministry and reflecting Christ’s redemptive mission. We should seek to be Christ’s hands, feet, and voice in the midst of our community, throughout our region, and across the globe. (Phil 2:1-11, John 20:31, Col 2:6-7).

- **Relational**

We should understand that we are called not only to be resources for others but also to join them and be actively engaged in their lives. We should be committed to a mission born in relationship, in which we seek to know and invest in those we serve through our various mission expressions (John 4:1-42, Mark 2:13, Luke 5:1-11).

- **Collaborative**

We should understand that we are just one expression of the Body of Christ, each bringing unique gifts and skills to the table. We should live out our call

with a commitment to collaborate with other organisations and congregations so that together we might have the strongest possible impact for the Kingdom. This commitment invites us to work with a diversity of indigenous leaders, missionary personnel, mission organizations, and community partners that share our heart, our faith and locational priorities (Eph 4:1-6, I Cor 12:12-20, II 8:1-15).

- **Transformational**

We should be committed to live out our missional expressions in ways that help transform people's lives. While we may provide resources to help meet short-term needs, our desire should be to avoid fostering dependent relationships, but instead to help people move toward a sustaining and fulfilling future with God (II Cor 5:16-21, Luke 4:14-21, Acts 3:1-10).

- **Lived out in word and deed**

Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus meeting people at their place of need and bringing God's word meaningfully into their lives. This model of word and deed compels us to do likewise. We are called to step into people's lives in the midst of their hunger or homelessness, in the midst of their struggle to find community or employment—but to do so in a fashion where compassion born in Christ's love and the Gospel story's truth are displayed. (Matt 10:5-8, Mark 6:30-44, Col 3:12-17) (First Baptist Knoxville, 2015; Carlson, 2007; Stetzer & Putman, 2006).

5.3 PROPOSED MISSION/OUTREACH PRAXIS FOR MyT

The proposed mission/outreach activities for MyT should consider the challenges of the City of Tshwane as discussed in section 1.6.2 above. These include: unemployment, education, environmental pollution, homelessness, poverty, marginalization, economic inequality, domestic violence, xenophobic violence, rape and sexual violation. The following three approaches can be used to address these and other challenges identified in the research:

- (1) The church as an institution, and
- (2) The church as a living organism, and
- (3) The church's corporate service and missional consciousness.

Brief discussions of the three approaches follow:

5.3.1 The church as an institution

From the studies conducted, the outreach activities of MyT can be organised as follows to embrace the call as outlined in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession:

- The MyT Outreach Committee should be well organised and constituted of representatives from either church ministries or church wards;
- An outreach programme for MyT should be designed by the Outreach Committee and approved by the MyT Church Council; this will be possible because wards and ministry leaders are represented in the Church Council;

- Each church ministry or ward should plan its own fundraising for the outreach; the fund raising application, if needed, should be submitted to the Outreach Committee and approved by the Church Council;
- The Church Council should have a budget for outreach activities; church ministries and wards should have access to funding from the Church Council;
- Before the church ministries and wards commence with outreach activities, they should design their own programmes which are aligned with the outreach programme for MyT;
- The outreach programme of MyT should be aligned with the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession;
- To avoid the charitable types of outreach activities, all outreach programmes designed by church ministries or wards should consider the challenges of the City of Tshwane and be guided by the following marks of missions:
 - To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom,
 - To teach, and nurture the target group of people,
 - Respond to human needs by loving services,
 - To seek to transform unjust structures of society,
 - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and to sustain and renew the life of the earth (Wall and Ross, 2008),
 - After the mission/outreach activities, church ministries and wards should write a report and submit it to the Outreach Committee, and
 - Before the end of the year, all church ministries and wards should be given an opportunity to report on their mission/outreach activities during the Sunday church service.

Van Dillewijn (2015) outlined some best practices for Discipleship Training School (DTS) outreach. Some of these guidelines can be adapted for MyT where applicable. The outline includes: the outreach characteristics, location, leadership and preparation. A brief description of Van Dillewijn's outline follows:

The outreach characteristics

The mission outreach should be spirit-led, evangelistic, share the Gospel, be challenging, faith-stretching and full of passion.

The outreach location

The outreach location should be identified through a process of hearing God's voice; there should be a leader with vision and faith to lead the team; if an outreach location is identified as "high risk", a lower risk option should be made available where possible.

The outreach leadership

The outreach leadership should have a passion for God; have vision and expectation for God to work in and through them;

Have passion for the lost, the poor, the marginalised, and be able to share their faith and resources with others and lead people to Jesus;

Have no major character flaw that is likely to damage people/and or the church; be a good financial steward (e.g. trustworthy, demonstrate financial transparency, handles money appropriately and with wisdom, etc.);

Be able to start and continue the discipleship process; and demonstrate servant leadership.

Team preparation

The outreach team should engage in ongoing prayer to gain God's heart for, and perspective on, the target community or a group of people;

The team should research and familiarise themselves with the basic needs and characters of the target group they want to serve.

Table 5.3.1 Template for outreach activities

1	Name of the congregation	
2	Minister/s	
3	Name of ministry/ward	
4	Outreach Team	
4.1	Outreach Team leader/s	
4.2	Outreach Team members	
5	Target group/community (destitute, the poor, the wronged, the oppressed, prisoners, strangers, orphans, widows, among others)	
6	Needs identified	
6.1	Examples of felt needs: Felt needs to be met (food,	

	clothing, shelter, home repair, drug/alcohol recovery, caregiving for the handicapped, divorce recovery, grief recovery, adoption, orphanages, senior day care, child care, juvenile detention, jail, prison, etc.)	
7	Planning and strategy	
7.1	Period of outreach (dates)	
7.2	Financing the outreach/budget	
7.3	Transport/travel	
7.4	Needed knowledge and skills	
7.5	Equipment required	
8	Gospel material needed/to be used/ for witnessing Christ	

5.3.2 The church as a living organism

In this approach to mission and outreach, the church should be viewed as a living organism. According to Washington (2014), the church as a living organism “gives to the world life, light, love, mercy, peace, joy, righteousness, grace and truth in Christ Jesus who is the life within the ‘building’ of organization. The church as an organism can give life only through Christ Jesus but as an organization alone is impotent in completing the commission given to the church by Christ” (Hafley & Tennessee, 1992; Oke, 2006).

In this regard, every member of the church should seek to be Christ’s hands, feet, and voice in the midst of the City of Tshwane community, throughout our region, and across the globe.

5.3.3 The church’s corporate service and missional consciousness

According to Goheen (2010:32), missional identity can be nourished during the corporate worship service. Professor Kritzingler has already started with the process as indicated above. The following missional consciousness can improve the work already started. Worship and service are related in the following three ways:

- **The more traditional approach called ‘inside and outside’.**

In this approach, worship and mission are understood as two different activities. Worship takes place on the inside and mission on the outside. In this regard, worship is the means by which the church is nurtured for its mission in the word.

- **The contemporary approach called ‘outside in’.**

In this approach, mission is brought directly into worship as an opportunity for evangelism, or as a rallying point for social and political action. In this regard worship is collapsed into missional activities.

- **‘Thoroughly contemporary’ and ‘radically traditional’ approach.**

This approach takes up the correct insights of the first two approaches and places them in the context of the *missio Dei*. It sees mission as what God is doing for the renewal of the world rather than specific activities undertaken by the church. The church’s worship is directed outward toward the world not by transforming worship into evangelism or social action, but by celebrating the power of God revealed in Christ as a witness to what God is doing for the sake of creation.

The following are guidelines on how the missional corporate service can be executed:

- Worship needs to tell the true story of the world inviting God’s people to come and live in the real world it narrates;
- Worship should be a celebrative response to what God has done, is doing and will do;
- Worship should be structured in such a way that the hymns that are chosen, the way various elements are introduced and related to each other focus attention on the story of God’s mighty deeds;
- Liturgy during worship must witness to the real world, the true story, the living God has revealed in Jesus Christ and prepare people to be ready for missionary encounter in their various callings;

- Elements of liturgy can direct attention either inward on worshippers or outward, orienting Christians to the communities (nations) and their calling.
- The preaching (word) and sacraments should be used to point the church to their calling in the world rather than focusing on believers alone; preaching, sacraments and liturgy should be eschatological and missional;
- Church prayers should move beyond the needs of the congregation towards the needs of the world or communities; and
- The church music or singing should be directed inward and outward (Goheen, 2010).

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Personal communications

1. Rev Maruping: Minister at MyT (Tent-maker)
2. Rev Nthakhe J: Minister at MyT (Full-time minister)
3. Rev Kritzinger: Minister at MyT (Tent-maker)
4. Ms Makgati M: MyT, Member of Outreach Committee
5. Mrs Nkosi L: MyT, Member of Outreach Committee

Personal Communication: E-mail

Dr. De Beer. S. University of Pretoria. 1 December 2015

Appendix 1

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I, the undersigned, hereby give consent that Azwindini Ernest Tshibalo, a Master of Theology student at the University of South Africa, may use the information that I supplied to him in an interview for his Masters dissertation. I declare the following:

Statement	Agree	Do not agree
1. I have been informed by the researcher of the objectives of the intended research		
2. The researcher supplied to me his name, address, and contact details as well as the details of his research supervisor		
3. I was informed why I was selected as an informant for the research project		
4. I give this consent willingly, under no coercion and without inducement		
5. I received satisfactory answers to any question that I had about the research		
6. I was informed of the estimated time that the interview would take		
7. I retain the right to refrain from answering any questions posed by the researcher		
8. I agree that the interview maybe recorded by means of an electronic device		
9. I agree that the researcher may quote my views in his thesis and in any subsequent publications that may follow from it		
10. I require that he should send to me (for my approval) the record that he made of the interview(s), before including it in his thesis		
11. I agree that he may refer to me by name when quoting my views in his thesis and possible subsequent publications		
12. I accept that he will store the record of my interviews safely and that he will destroy it no later than two years after his thesis has been accepted		

13.I understand this information and its implications		
14. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time in writing, without needing to give reasons		

Full names:.....

Place:.....Date:.....

Signature:.....

Appendix 2

Focus Group Interview Questions

“To stand where God stands”: The mission praxis of the Melodi ya Tshwane congregation

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS 2015

Name of the group:

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: Explanation and Signing

Ground rules:

1. Each participant should contribute.
2. Each participant should not speak for more than 2 minutes.
3. Put cell phones on silent or switch them off.

Interview schedule

Question 1

1.1. Does your ministry/committee have outreach activities? Do we have outreach activities at MyT?

1.2 If yes, explain what they are.

Question 2

2.1 Has anyone of you read the Belhar Confession?

2.2. If yes, what are the main issues highlighted by the Belhar Confession?

Question3

3. Can we read together Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?

3.1. What are the main issues emphasized in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?

3.2 Do you think the content of this article of the Belhar Confession is biblical? Why?

3.3 What do you understand by the statement: “the church as the possession of God should stand where the Lord stands”?

3.4. Are the issues raised in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession relevant to MyT today? Why do you say so?

Question 4

Read these scriptures: Psalm 109:30-31; Psalm 146:1-10; and Luke 4: 16-19.

After reading these scriptures, answer the following question:

4.1 Do these passages give biblical support for Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?

4.2. Give reasons why?

Question 5

5.1 Is your ministry/committee practicing the call from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?

5.2 What do you think your ministry/committee needs to do to practice the call in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession?

5.3. For MyT as a congregation to practice the call in Article 4 of the Belhar Confession, what must be done?

Question 4 scripture readings

Read the following scriptures before answering Question 4:

Psalm 109:30-31 New International Version (NIV)

“30 With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord; in the great throng of worshippers I will praise him.

31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save their lives from those who would condemn them.”

Psalm 146:1-10 New International Version (NIV)

“1 Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, my soul. 2 I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. 3 Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. 5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them — he remains faithful forever. 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, 8 the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. 10 The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.”

Luke 4:16-19 New International Version (NIV)

“16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’”

Appendix 3

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS WITH MINISTERS

1. Have you ever preached about the Belhar Confession?
2. Can you remember what you preached about?
3. In which other way, apart from preaching, did you apply the Belhar Confession?
4. If yes, explain how you did that (concrete spirituality).

Appendix 4

MyT Notification of planned outreach activity form



Uniting Reformed Church – Melodi ya Tshwane

1. Notification of planned outreach activity

COMMITTEE / MINISTRY / WARD DETAILS		
COMMITTEE / MINISTRY / WARD - NAME		
LEADER / CHAIRPERSON - NAME		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:
SECRETARY - NAME		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:

2. About the beneficiary

NAME		
LOCATION – PHYSICAL ADDRESS		
CONTACT PERSON (<i>include role and/or designation</i>)		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:
WHAT WAS YOUR SELECTION CRITERIA		
WHAT ARE THEIR EXPECTATIONS		

--	--

3. About the outreach activity

OUTREACH CATEGORY <i>(tick below)</i>		
SPIRITUAL MINISTRY	YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY	GIVING MINISTRY
ACTIVITY DATE		
PURPOSE / INTENDED OUTCOME <i>(comment below)</i>		

4. Funding requirement

COMMITTEE / MINISTRY / WARD DETAILS		
IS FUNDING REQUIRED	YES	NO
IF YES – TOTAL AMOUNT REQUIRED		
WHAT WILL THE FUNDS BE UTILISED FOR <i>(provide a brief budget below)</i>		

5. Fundraising activity

WAS FUNDING RAISING EMBARKED ON	
YES <i>(if yes – provide details below)</i>	NO
RAISED AMOUNT	R

Name and Signature

Date

Appendix 5

MyT Outreach Ministry feedback report form



Uniting Reformed Church – Melodi ya Tshwane

Outreach ministry feedback report

COMMITTEE / MINISTRY / WARD DETAILS		
COMMITTEE / MINISTRY / WARD - NAME		
LEADER / CHAIRPERSON - NAME		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:
SECRETARY - NAME		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:

6. About the beneficiary

NAME		
LOCATION – PHYSICAL ADDRESS		
CONTACT PERSON (<i>include role and/or designation</i>)		
CONTACT DETAILS	TEL:	EMAIL:
ACTIVITY DATE		

7. Overall feedback about the ministry/activity

8. Budget / Funds utilisation

TOTAL AMOUNT UTILISED	R
PROVIDE DETAILS ON HOW THE FUNDS WERE UTILISED (<i>provide a brief budget below</i>)	

9. Feedback from the beneficiary

Name and Signature

Date

Appendix 6

OVERVIEW OF MELODI YA TSHWANE HISTORY

Year		Building	Ministers/Evangelists										
			Full-time				Tent-making						
			NJS	FF M	VP M	TJN	PLT	JNJ K	LJ R	Sd B	PM M	SR K	
1992	1	Kilnerton											
1993	2	Meintjeskop											
1994	3	Bloed Street											
1995	4	Bosman Street											
1996	5												
1997	6												
1998	7												
1999	8												
2000	9												
2001	10												
2002	11												
2003	12												
2004	13												
2005	14												
2006	15												
2007	16												
2008	17												
2009	18												
2010	19												
2011	20												

Source: Kritzinger: 2015 (Unpublished manuscript)

Appendix 7

Creative Space: Where does our help come from?

Psalm 121 in Tshwane

JNJ (Klippias) Kritzinger:

L: We lift up our eyes to the hills, to the high places in and around Pretoria; Where does our help come from? Does our help come from Meintjieskop, from the Union Buildings, centre of political power?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth

L: Does our help come from Thaba Tshwane, from the National Defence Force, centre of military power?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth

L: Does our help come from Monumentkoppie, from the Voortrekker Monument, the power of the past?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth

L: Does our help come from the high building of the Reserve Bank, Centre of economic power?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth

L: Does our help come from the high buildings of the University of

South Africa, The University of Pretoria or the Tshwane University of Technology, Centres of intellectual power?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth

L: We lift up our eyes to the hills, to the high places in and around Pretoria; Where does our help come from?

C: Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth;

who is the same, yesterday, today and forever; who remains faithful to his promises, who never forsakes the work of his hands.

Amen.