

**THE CHURCH SHOULD BE AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND
UNITY WITHIN THE DISINTEGRATED SOCIETY: UNITING REFORMED CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (URCSA) PERSPECTIVE**

BY

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements

For the degree of

Masters of Theology in the subject systematic Theology

At the University of South Africa

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

JANUARY 2020

DECLARATION

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

Signature.....

Date: 15 September 2019

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SUMMARY

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

Reconciliation, justice and unity have been explicitly explained. They are essential in the sense that they form the bottom line for living together in a democratic South Africa. These concepts are the gospel imperative and therefore unavoidable. Qualitative research was explicitly stated, described and discussed.

Both the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA) and the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA) play a role in the process of reconciling the people in Mokopane. The reason for choosing DRCSA and URCSA is that the former has played a significant role in supporting and dividing the church and society, while URCSA is the pioneer of church unity that will lead to societal integration. All cases studied serve as a true reflection of people's knowledge on the experience of both past and present history.

Our concepts of truth, justice, reconciliation, unity and peace must serve as a designed model to contribute to theology that will be liberating South Africans in general and Mokopane people in particular. The role of the church is to establish a sense of unity in the spirit of community (*Koinonia*). This establishment will enhance the African spirit of living together as a community bound by the Holy Spirit, and unity in the local church should be witnessed. After that, the church is called to the ministry of reconciliation and unity.

KEYWORDS:

Reconciliation; Church; Justice; Unity; Disintegrated; Society; Agent

ABBREVIATIONS

URCSA Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

DRMC Dutch Reformed Mission Church.

DRC Dutch Reformed Church

NGK Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk

NGKA Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, the researcher is grateful to God almighty for his undeterred grace as I worked on this research study. I wish to give great thanks to my supervisor Prof L J Modise for all the inspiration, guidance and innovative mind regarding academic and ecclesiastical matters. Most of all, for his contribution in the writing of this research study.

I want to thank my colleague Prof BB Senokoane for moral, spiritual and financial support throughout this research study.

Further, gratitude goes to UNISA for allowing me to pursue this Master of Theology.

I am also indebted to my employer the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (Hlanganani) for allowing me to work and study at the same time.

I would also want to thank my dearest wife, Matloboko Raboshakga, for the uncalculated support she provided me during this time of the study. My beautiful kids, Moloko, Reabetswe, Reitumetse, Setshaba, and my grandchild Masego.

Finally, I would give thanks to my Grade 1 educator, the late Mrs Phokanoka.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study was born out of my involvement in church and society as a minister of the Word and Sacrament of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. During the researcher's ministry in a democratic South Africa, he has come to the realisation that the country is free from legalistic divisions of people according to their colour, gender, class and religion. But in reality there are still divisions in many parts of the country, hence the researcher engaged in this research study in Mokopane area.

In this research study, the focus is on the disintegration of the South African people in general and Mokopane in particular as the investigative centre. The role played by the church during apartheid and in democracy will be examined. In this research, when referring to the church, the researcher means the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Liberation theology, confessional theology and African theology will be the point of departure to propose a solution to the disintegrated society. The researcher will use a qualitative research method to conduct this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE AREA AND RACIAL TENDENCIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The study takes place in the area of Mokopane, which includes the former town and the township. According to apartheid laws, this area is divided into town and township. The town is known as Mokopane, while the township is known as Mahwelereng. The area under study is historically known as Potgietersrus. Due to the political changes of 1994, it was given a new name called Mokopane. The area is situated in the central-western part of Limpopo Province. This province covers the northern part of South Africa and experiences many cases relating to racism and divisions. Hence, this study on reconciliation, justice and unity is necessary as an attempt to restore unity within the disintegrating society of Mokopane.

Mokopane area is a semi-urban and fully-fledged urban area situated in the central-western part of Limpopo Province. It is 55km south of Polokwane, the capital city of the province. It was named Mokopane in 2002 by the national geographical name change committee. It is located in Mogalakwena Municipality in Waterberg District. The lifestyle of the people in this area is entirely urban-orientated.

The more significant part of the black middle-class residents of the black suburb is moving to the white suburb. As stated, the apartheid system has left a severe legacy of division in South Africa. It is not racial division alone, but also class division between these communities. There is no access to worship service for black middle-class people in town churches. Moreover, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) belongs to the same family with the URCSA. The setting of Mokapane area does not stand alone from the entire South African legacy of apartheid. The area is divided into communities which are living in one town but still disintegrated as mentioned. For example, the black

middle class will have to attend church services in the township instead of where they are living.

Communities form the world's population and interact daily. The fundamental point is that society is formed by communities, which interact and influence each other. These communities, in one way or another, grow, develop, and undergo certain stages, and ultimately the entire society also grows and develops towards a particular point of transition (Bandura, 1997:23). Until 1994, apartheid was legalised in South Africa. This authorised system provided an extreme example of structural racism. This brand of racism involved behaviours, practices and attitudes that overflow and define blacks as inferior and less powerful to whites. These behaviours and practices have caused a severe division of the society and have left the entire South African society disintegrated.

According to Batts (1989:18), there is always after-effects of power in most communities that have experienced oppression and dominance during their freedom. Once they experience loss of power, wealth, privilege and familiar ways of doing things, the oppressors react with resistance. This resistance is said to be a modern form of racism (Batts, 1989:18). Distinguishing between old fashioned racism and modern racism is helpful since it helps to recognise and acknowledge how racism has changed. This form of racism has created a sophisticated division amongst the people of God. Modern racism involves the giving of non-race related reasons for behaviours that continue to exclude and discriminate against each other. It is vital to think of modern racism as internalised dominance; attitudes that are so deeply entrenched that they exist at a subconscious level. While modern racism is often not consciously malicious by intent, it is still based on the assumption that blacks are inferior to whites. As a result, subtler forms of racism continue to deny access to blacks. The negative

feelings that are attached to this belief do not change or disappear just because of changes in laws and practices. Instead, the opinions have to be submerged and hidden because of the changes in what is viewed as legal and political correctness in contemporary society.

There are many forms of innovations, namely; religious, cultural, social and otherwise. While these innovations form part of the positive change, it is noteworthy that there are also severe stages which affect change negatively, i.e. a state of '*anomie*', which is a stage wherein there are a lot of challenges such as conflict, power struggle and fighting for limited resources in the society. All these form part of life and are practically unavoidable even though something could be done to curb or reduce their escalation towards extremely detrimental effects of growth. Hence reconciliation, justice and unity are crucial in the light of communities such as the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) through its Confession of Belhar, which emphasises three pillars: reconciliation, justice and unity, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. Hence this research study intends to investigate how the church contributes to division in South African society in general and Mokopane in particular as the research site. This contribution is seen through racism in the church and society, which is evil. This research also explore how the church that started discrimination in South Africa can assist in creating a safe space to reconcile South Africans into a community (*koinonia*), and to find how reconciliation, justice and unity can be achieved throughout the country.

1.3 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is influenced by the unity talks of the DRC and the URCSA that have taken more than forty years, where the focus was on policy agreement in synods. In 2016 the general synod of the URCSA and the decision of both executive committees of the General synods of the DRC and the URCSA on practical unity amongst the local congregations has inspired the researcher to engage in this study, and to take this initiative further to the society.

The study is occasioned by the religious call about the lack of social cohesion that could be influenced by faith communities. Two decades ago, the late former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu. There was hope that the commission will bring out truths that will lead to reconciliation. Unfortunately, results were not as expected since the commission concentrated on political atrocities, leaving the occurrences of a divided society to overlap into the new millennium. Therefore, the study is suitable to observe continuity on a broader scale than now. Many scholars who researched the subject of reconciliation cited various common primary causes of unsuccessful efforts to create a true reconciled society. They talked about individualism over communalism, civil society versus cultural society, believers against unbelievers, and so on. Given the situation in Limpopo Province with its unique history, one is to consider this research more relevant than before. Considering that there are different tribes with different languages and races, and the majority being miserable in terms of shortage of opportunities, the benefits that might be brought by the study are important. The research also comes at the right time when crucial issues are debated in parliament and in different commissions. These are problems that might further divide the society and entire South Africa.

1. 4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main problem statement is that the church in general has played a role in dividing the South African society according to the colour of their skin long before the establishment of the National Party with its apartheid policy. This has left the church and society disintegrated in the democratic era. The main research question is: What role can the church play in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity of South Africans while the church is disintegrated? The main problem statement is divided into three sub-problem statements, and the main research question will be divided into three sub-research questions.

1.4.1 Disintegrated church as a problem of reconciliation in Society

The reasons for the church divisions have been a mixture of sociological, political, cultural, personality, as well as theological factors (De Gruchy, 1991:33). The DRC synod's decision of 1857 about separate services for coloured members "because of the weakness of some" has become notorious. The next logical step was the formation of a separate church. In 1881 representatives of five mission congregations assembled in Wellington near Cape Town for the first meeting of the DRMC. The DRC reserved the right to veto all decisions by this newly formed church. Also, all its buildings had to be transferred to the DRC's name. The DRC decided to divide its mission into a "home" and "foreign" mission. The first covered the Cape region, and the second all other provinces of that time in South Africa, including Namibia. In each province, separate churches for blacks and coloureds were formed. The Free State had its mission church in 1910. It is clear that long before the establishment of the National Party and its policy of apartheid, the church had already divided people according to the colour of their

skin (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2017:5). Most of the denominations in South Africa which were established by the European and American missions are still divided into colour lines. This division weakens the prophetic voice of the church in terms of reconciliation, justice and unity in society. Moreover, the DRC consists of the majority of Whites in South Africa. Reconciliation as the gospel imperative needs one to be emptied like all the pioneers of reconciliation across the global.

Worsnip (1997:18) observes that Michael Lapsley has become a symbol of truth and reconciliation. In such a revelation, one can see the role of injustices of the past and its history, which can ultimately be discovered in biblical terms. Reconciliation is the term used to refer to the process by which alienated people are brought together in concord. In this sense, reconciliation is associated with the liberation of humanity from conflicting political and social forces that determine human life (Vorster, 1986:1). Reconciliation cannot mean to cover up differences and structural injustice. The issue of reconciliation is fundamental in contemporary time, given how people moved from the past twenty-five years of democracy, listening to politicians and clergy activists over this matter. It seems worth noting and essential to study the effects of divisions in the name of history in South Africa, particularly in the Mokopane area. De Gruchy (1991:33) indicates that reconciliation is essential and very expensive; it is based on truth and justice, and can never be cheap (De Gruchy, 1991:33). In this sense, De Gruchy challenges the church to be genuine. Whenever dealing with the process of reconciliation, actions should marry the words. Hence, he points to the situation of contradictions within Christian faith where words do not correlate with actions. De Gruchy derives his argument from the notion that while Christians confess to be united in Christ, they are divided in actions in terms of colour, race, class, gender and religion. The disintegrated church stands as a compromise entity when coming to dialogue on

reconciliation, justice and unity. Hence in most cases, the church becomes silent or passive. This includes the DRC in South Africa in general and Mokopane in particular.

1.4.2 The passiveness of the Church in the process of reconciliation

The problem is that the DRC has played a role in instituting and continually justifying the separation of blacks and whites in South Africa theologically. This problem lives within the DRC since it is still divided along racial lines. Hence the DRC is passive in initiating and defending the importance of reconciliation, justice and unity amongst members of society in the democratic era. Saayman (2007:27) indicated that as far as the National Party then and the DRC are concerned, the origins of apartheid remain a bit of a chicken and egg situation. It is challenging to come up with a clear-cut conclusion as to who should be regarded as the pioneer of apartheid. According to records as Saayman puts it, the term apartheid was printed for the first time in church documents (paper read by Ds JC du Plessis). The paper was read in the mission congress of the Free State the DRC held in 1929 at Kroonstad (Saayman, 2007:27). The term apartheid was viewed as the fundamental idea of the DRC mission work, emphasising the independent political future of all blacks. The very same church needs to be a vehicle of reconciliation, justice and unity with the extended hand of family church members such as the URCSA. The painful history of the DRC and the current legacy of that painful history, which is seen in all its congregations, which are white-only denominations, prevent the DRC to be an agent of reconciliation, justice and unity to the majority of whites who are members of this church.

The DRC has lost its credibility because it has sold itself to the apartheid regime; now it cannot speak out or participate in reconciliation. Parsitau (2015:55) indicates that even though Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) and Faith-Inspired Organisations

(FIOs) endeavoured to play a part in search of political reconciliation, religious groups were not seen as neutral arbiters, and their mediation efforts were mostly unsuccessful. Many faith leaders were perceived to have taken by-partisan sides during the crisis (Parsitau, 2015:55). Observers admitted that the Christian church had lost any credibility it had before the 1994 genocide in Rwanda because of its complicity in that evil event. The church has failed in its mission and lost its credibility, specifically during the genocide; therefore the church needs to repent before God and Rwandan society and to seek healing from God (Bataringaya, 2017:96). The loss of credibility in Rwanda and Kenya during a political crisis is similar to the South African context before 1994. Churches were participating in the South African genocide (riots or unrest), directly or indirectly (producing ministers that serve members of the South African Defence Force). The church needs to repent before it can become an active agent in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity. During the process of repenting, the church needs to deconstruct the theology of apartheid to reconstruct the new theology that will liberate both black church and white church to become a community of faith that is underpinned by the same doctrines and practices.

1.4.3 Lack of theology of reconciliation and liberation for humanity

The other sub-problem statement is internalised dominance, which existed at a subconscious level within blacks and whites of South Africa, which makes it very difficult to start the process of reconciliation from the local level, especially at Mokopane area. The question is, what happens when whites still hold negative emotional feelings towards blacks? This is because the old fashioned racist behaviours are no longer acceptable. It is like negative emotional responses to black people will be expressed in subtler and covert ways. However, the impact is that these feelings

still act as an obstacle to fundamental pillars of peace, i.e. reconciliation, justice and unity in the society.

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

When one evaluates South African liberation in terms of Guitierrez's threefold analysis, the researcher concludes that South Africans have achieved political liberation as a first step to freedom, and need to work hard to move towards the second step of liberation, which addresses human beings' wellness and welfare, and economically as well. The achievement of total liberation will correspond with the commitment of the late Nelson Mandela's philosophy of government that he made during his inaugural speech on 24 May 1994. The late former president committed the democratic government to a 'people-centred society'. This society was defined as the government's commitment to creating a people-centred society of liberty that binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear (Mandela, 1994).

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

Gutierrez's threefold analysis (Modise, 2015). The following questions circulate around the problem statement of this research study:

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

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

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS

Aim 1: To demonstrate how the DRC has contributed towards divisions in South African societies in general and Mokopane in particular.

Aim 2: To illustrate, how the DRC can contribute towards the process of reconciliation, justice and unity in South African societies after being silent in the democratic era.

Aim 3: To demonstrate how the Belhar confession can become instrumental in bringing reconciliation, justice and unity in church and society.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.6.1 Research design

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

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

The most important strategy is that of a qualitative approach, whose procedures are not strictly formalised (Mouton & Marais, 1990:17).

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

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

1.6.2 Data collection

The use of an interviewing method is for purposes of collecting primary information. People from Mokopane area will be interviewed randomly according to the sample selected for this study. Specific case studies will also be studied. An audio machine, such as technologically advanced recorders, will be used to store primary information.

1.7 ETHICAL COMMITMENT

Whenever human beings are focus of research, the researcher must take into consideration the ethical implications of what the researcher is to investigate. Most ethical matters in research fall into one of the four categories, namely: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The purpose of ethical consideration is to protect the researcher and participants in the research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Permission and ethical clearance to conduct the study will done in three stages. Firstly, permission to do the study will be sought from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) of UNISA to ensure that the research abides by the ethical standards and scientific criteria of the university.

1.7.1 Informed consent and permission

The researcher will make sure that informed consent is obtained from the participants in this research study. The participants will be informed right at the beginning of the study in the consent letter that this research study is conducted for the sole purpose of academic study, and that no remuneration will be obtained from the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2013). This informed consent will encourage free choice to participants of the study. The researcher will give prospective participants a description of all the features of the research study that might reasonably influence their willingness to participate in the study beforehand.

1.7.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

In this research study, the researcher will respect the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The researcher should not report in such a way that readers could detect how participants have responded or behaved. The researcher will keep the nature and quality of the participants' performance strictly confidential. If any particular person's behaviour is described in depth in the report, the researcher provides a pseudonym to assure anonymity. The emphasis on the need for confidentiality of participants' identities and the essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants will, in no way, be revealed to the public (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The researcher will make sure that no information will disclose anonymity and confidentiality, and will provide participants full assurance of this. Other than identifying factors such as gender, race and general location of the participants, personally identifiable information will not be divulged.

1.7.3 Voluntary participation

All participating individuals will be fully informed of the purpose of the study in advance and given an option to discontinue their participation at any time during the process. This researcher is aware that this study might trigger stress and painful memories due to questions related to racial and class divisions.

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the subject matter was engaged in such a way that the introduction and orientation to the matter reflect the knowledge and involvement of the researcher right from the beginning. The background of the research site and of the church is discussed. In the chapter, there is a clear formulation of a problem statement, which is divided into three sub-statements with references to justify the argument for or against the problem.

In this research study, the focus is on the disintegration of the South African people in general and in Mokopane in particular as the investigative centre. The role played by the church during apartheid and in a democracy are proposed for further discussion in the following chapter, particularly chapter two. In this research, reference is made to the DRC and the URCSA. Liberation theology and confessional theology were proposed in the problem statement as theologies to assist in achieving reconciliation, justice and unity in the disintegrated society. The researcher will use the qualitative research method to conduct the study. The following chapter will focus on literature review.

CHAPTER 2

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

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the problem statement in light of what other researchers have seen the problem at hand, and highlight information provided by these authors. The researcher will first define, clarify and outline terms used in this research study. Concepts like justice and reconciliation will be defined and clarified. These concepts are explained from different fields of study with particular reference to liberation theology as a doing theology.

The role played by the church in dividing the South African society will be discussed. The role that the church ought to play in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity will also be a point of discussion. The role played by the church is to disintegrate the society with particular reference to Mokopane. In this regard, the focus will be on the Dutch Reformed Church family and its role of supporting and encouraging apartheid, which has left its legacy in South Africa, and how the church can play a role to reconcile the people of Mokopane. The researcher discussed the role of the Belhar confession in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity of the South African society.

2.2 THE CONCEPT JUSTICE FROM DIFFERENT THEORIES

When the researcher engages other authors to define justice, he does not take for granted that he is an African and reformed by nature from South Africa. Therefore, he

should look into justice from different perspectives towards the African perspective, but rather from different worldviews influenced by the culture of divisions and exclusion by different cultures from different worldviews. This research study is approached from a socio-ecclesiological perspective with particular reference to justice, reconciliation and unity of human beings in the Mokopane area.

2.2.1 Clarification and definition of justice

The researcher will approach the concept of justice in this section from a theological praxis in Western Christianity. In Western theology, the idea of God is more important than the notion of God-human beings-and-nature. In Greek and Hebrew, the concept of justice denotes the following:

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

In Western Theology and Christian practice, the inter-human justice has its origin in ancient Israel, especially the prophets and psalms, instead of upon “*sedeq*” and “*Mishpat*” (Hebrew terms for justice) as a claim and command of God. The function of these terms is parallel to denote the imperative of inter-human, distributive justice (*sedeq*) and the divine intervention to establish justice through the explanation of wrongly accused or the violated and vulnerable (*mishpat*). The criticisms of the absence of justice take the form of condemnation of the unrestrained desire and

arrogance of the powerful (La Sor, Hubbard and Bush, 1982:384). In most cases, there is a smooth shift from inter-human justice to the individual. The change from inter-human justice to the just individual, while the social and public character of the Hebrew Bible is concerned with justice is relatively non-controversial. La Sor, Hubbard and Bush (1982:384) indicate that in Isaiah chapters 56-66, salvation is contingent on doing justice and righteousness, and is parallel to deliverance. Since Isaiah's idea of salvation is connected with the concepts of reconciliation, deliverance, righteousness and justice, it is necessary to take up these ideas to a complete picture of what the prophet meant by the word salvation, which has the connotation of liberation.

Goldingay (1990:41-42) postulates that the Hebrew Bible, in general, can be a basis for an understanding of the kind of values or principles that should be embodied in human ways of life. When one becomes aware of the hazards involved indirectly applying Hebrew Bible commands, or in rightly interpreting Hebrew Bible narratives, it may be attractive to consider underlying principles, which often point to more fundamental requirements than do overt controls. In particular, the Hebrew Bible and New Testament emphasise the need to be brought into the relationship. The Hebrew Bible is often reckoned to emphasise justice, while in the New Testament, both sides of this contrast have been exaggerated. According to prophets, love and justice are interrelated; they are two sides of the same coin. Both are embodiments of holiness; justice complements love. Hence the researcher emphasises that the basis of justice is love. In light of this research study, the foundation here is the love of God, oneself, other human beings and the physical organic environment. This holistic love leads to justice from God to human beings and from human beings to other human beings and the environment. Furthermore, the current emphasis on the ethical importance of principles like justice or personhood, which the researcher is more concerned about in this research study, is

more of total understanding of life and of formation of character that ought not to be allowed to obscure the prominence in Biblical ethics (Goldingay, 1990:41-42).

In the New Testament, reference made to “*dikaiosyne*” (translated by both for justice and righteousness), has less often been associated with social relationships and more often with the individual’s relationship to God. Bosch (1993:70) indicates that connected with God’s reign, is mysteriously the concept *dikaiosyne*, which is perhaps the most characteristically Matthean notion of all. A careful analysis shows that it is unlikely that Matthew has found this term in his sources; it is introduced by himself at each point, usually in such a way that it contrasts clearly with what he had encountered in his sources. The translation of *dikaiosyne* poses problems, at least in English. It can refer to justification, as God’s merciful act of declaring human being, thus changing social status and pronouncing humanly acceptability; a pre-eminently religious or spiritual concept: an attribute of God or a spiritual quality that we receive from God, or to justice (people’s right conduct about their fellow human beings, seeking for them that which they have a right).

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

According to ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, justice is presented as the ideal characteristic of the good society or constitution as well as the designation of the

perfect character of the human being. Thus *dike* is the theme of Plato 'The Republic' in which the ideal society and appropriate aspect of the human person correlated; while the relation of the person and the state could be understood together in the period of the city-state. The emergence of this period of empire relegated the hope for a just social order to the messianist characteristics of new Judaisms and Christianity, while the just person (apart from the social order) was the theme of stoicism and related movements (Bosch, 1993:70-71).

The just individual Alexandrian Christianity inherited the emphasis on justice as the attribute of the reasonable person, but this ran afoul of the narrowing sense of human incapacity for justice, especially in Augustine and his heirs. Thus while God was just, humans could not. The theme of redistributive justice (God's just punishment of sinful humanity) became the background for an attempt to reconcile divine justice with mercy. The Nominal justice is the idea of forensic justice responding to the problem of the apparent contraction between justice and compassion through the notion that the judge may pronounce the verdict that a guilty person is innocent or at least will be regarded as harmless. This verdict appears as a counter-factual claim that rests upon the judge's sovereign power to declare the guilty innocent. This verdict is accompanied by the claim that the righteous Jesus Christ suffers and dies in the place of the criminal so that the criminal can be pronounced honest or just, and in that sense justified. This apparent double violation of simple justice does not go unnoticed in the theological traditions. The declaration that those who are guilty are nevertheless innocent may also cut the net of the claims of inter-human justice, and indeed, promote injustice as has seemed to happen in Lutheran Germany in the Holocaust or Catholic Latin American during the reign of the death of squads (Vasillopulos, 2012:68-69).

In light of this research study, justice will be understood as inter-human justice as found

in social gospel and modern papal encyclical as a critical concept in liberation theology. Furthermore, it will be essential to look at the concept of reconciliation as one of the significant parts of justice.

2.3 CLARIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is hard work and must be genuine. We cannot walk away from the table of reconciliation too soon while it took centuries to be internalised in the hearts of people. People need to avoid being supernatural or naive about implementing the delicate healing of broken hearts, especially as eluded to earlier by Mokopane residents. Most scholars such as Susin, when talking about reconciliation to what he calls the world of conflicts says: “in the biblical sense and so making greater solidarity possible. But, as biblical etymology warns us, closeness and harm have a common root, so that loving your neighbour and loving your enemy is, in effect, two ways of expressing the same commandment” (Susin, 2003:7). He correctly assumes that “Love” in a biblical sense can bring two worlds apart together. He was responding to the notion that the current process of globalisation is making the world smaller and is enabling more people to be neighbours. Reconciliation seems to aim at that goal of bringing people together again (Susin, 2003:7). Many forums duly observed the ministry of reconciliation and healing on world platforms on a mission such as WCC. In its report on mission and evangelism, it stated as follows: God’s mission (*Missio Dei*) is to reconcile human community, establishing a situation in which differences are promoted and celebrated, and where human beings live in harmony with nature, with each other and with God.

A broader and holistic understanding of reconciliation is achieved when the harm done by injuries to positive relations between individuals or groups are repaired or

compensated in such a way that more hinders the establishment of a positive relationship. Although this definition sounds narrow, one has to consider different aspects that are deepening, such as the role of forgiveness, reparation, compensation, justice and healing. The question is, what can we observe regarding this kind of definition? We are first to establish two perspectives as seen by Juhant and Zalec, who emphasises that the only reestablishment of a positive relationship which is based on forgetting without reparation of wrong is not reconciliation. Only the possibility of establishing a positive relationship is based on adequate compensation of the harm caused by injustice, that is, reconciliation.

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

2.3.1 The understanding of Reconciliation in the Hebrew Bible

The researcher intends to find out the intention of the semantic language specialist when using this concept in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible concept of reconciliation can only be understood against the background of the Hebrew Bible doctrine of sin (Brown, 1971:150). An offence against Yahweh's covenant laws gives

rise to objective guilt (1 Sam 14:2), which sets in motion a destructive force whose disastrous effects fall on punishment on the miscreant and his affairs. Brown (1970:384) stated that in the Septuagint, Isaiah 9:5, which does not appear the same in the Hebrew version reads that every garment/ measurement that is obtained by treacherous means must be repossessed/ Restored (Greek: *Katallasso*)” (Isaiah 9:5 LXX). Reconciliation in this verse means rotation or restoration. This must be in the context of alienation. Many other Hebrew Bible accounts denote a position of hostility after reconciliation has taken place. One of these is the story of Isaac and Ishmael, and the other is that of Jacob and Esau. A critical analysis of these issues will prove that the enmity between brothers in these passages was caused by antecedent acts of injustice, and is eventually resolved by mutual recognition of the unjust, the willingness to leave the past behind, and the desire to live in mutual respect. The biblical story of Joseph reconciling with his brothers stands as a model of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

2.3.2 The understanding of Reconciliation in the New Testament

In as much as it is an undeniable fact that reconciliation is a theme in the New Testament, very little is said of it in the New Testament. Brown (1971:46) wrote that in the New Testament, *Katallasso* occurs only in the sense of reconciliation or to be reconciled (Matt 5:1ff.). To reconcile is to put to a sour relationship and to substitute it with one of peace and goodwill. The substance of reconciliation lies in the ending of enmity between God and humanity. Hastings (1926:301) said when Paul used the term reconciliation in the second epistle to the Corinthians, he used it with the implication that the previous hostility of mind or heart that used to exist between two

people is now part away (Hastings, 1926:301). This process of reconciliation must not be equated with the exercise of conflict resolution. This is so because when making conflict resolution, issues of conversion and forgiveness are dealt with in-depth.

Breytenbach (2010:171) states that Paul utilises the phrase “to be reconciled to someone” in 1 Corinthians 7:1, reprimanding the alienated wife not to remarry or to be reconciled to her husband. The use of this verb was to denote the alternation from enmity to friendship in an interpersonal relationship. This, however, is not the same case when the verb is used to indicate a change of relationship between human beings and God. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, the word in Greek is mediated by the ambassador; it is part of the process of peace-making, denoting a change from enmity to peace, and from hostility to friendship. Reconciliation can also be seen as the outcome of peace negotiations, and part of the cease-fire that is agreed upon. Those in wars came forward to be proclaimers of reconciliation and peace treaties. The proclaimers are called ambassadors, and they intercede on behalf of their compatriots; they are to propose the reconciliation. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Paul was entrusted with the message of reconciliation. He has to act as an ambassador representing Christ. As if God is inviting through Paul, he begs the Corinthians on Christ’s behalf to be reconciled with God (Breytenbach, 2010:173-173).

According to Koopman (2007:97), the reconciliation that is confessed in Belhar reflects the two dimensions of reconciliation in Pauline’s thought. Reconciliation as *hilasmos* has to do with the expiation of wrongs and stumbling blocks to atonement (at-one-ment). Reconciliation as *katalassoo* refers to harmony in the relationship with the

other. The reconciliation of Belhar has in mind the embrace that Miroslav Volf refers to the embrace of different races, tribes, nationalities, socio-economic groups, genders, sexual orientations, age groups, “normal” and disabled people. The reconciliation of Belhar pleads for the removal of stumbling blocks in the way of peaceful living, and of the embrace. Reconciliation, therefore, implies opposition to injustices like racism, tribalism, xenophobia, classism, misogyny, homophobia, ageism and handicaps. The way Koopman (2007) defines reconciliation from Belhar confession and Breytenbach (2010) sets it from Pauline’s letter and moves closer to what is needed in the Mokopane context. In the context of this study, the message of reconciliation was entrusted to denominational leaders which ought to act on behalf of Christ in Mokopane to proclaim the message of reconciliation just like Paul was invited to proclaim the message of reconciliation to the Corinthians to reconcile with God. Reconciliation with God has a bearing on reconciliation with one another. As human beings are the image of God, reconciling with one another implies reconciling with God. Based on what is mentioned above in biblical theology, there are aspects that the researcher has picked as the most critical aspects of this research study.

2.3.3 Important aspects that comprise reconciliation

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

to contextualise the research study. The following aspects will be discussed in the next section, namely healing, forgiveness, foundation and reparation.

2.3.3.1. Healing as the means of Reconciliation in Mokopane context

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

time-bomb that will explode sooner or later. The researcher will focus on the process of healing as a means of reconciliation.

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

Reconciliation means the restoration of relationships and forgiveness. Reconciliation and healing are a pillar to sustainable peace for all people of Mokopane. The process should be genuine and frank in respect of individuals and all groups involved. Reconciliation and healing as pillars to sustainable peace and justice need the church's intervention. Reconciliation can only materialise when selfishness and superiority complex has ceased because it operates with humility and embracement (Moyo, 2015:14). The process of healing memories is sometimes described as a

project aimed at creating an opportunity for the wounded to tell their stories and to be listened to and to externalise the memories. The project also concerns the role of pastoral and community care and church leadership in trying to attend to the severe trauma of these individual members of the community and faith community.

According to Bloomfield, Barnes and Huyse (2003:77), healing is a strategy, process or activity that improves the psychological health of individuals following extensive spiritual, psychological, political, social and economic violation of humanity through violent conflict. The World Health Organization understands mental health as encapsulating, among other factors, subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualisation of one's intellectual and emotional potential. Psychological, emotional, physical and social health is not only interlinked but interdependent. It is with such an understanding that it then becomes vital to seek for strategies, processes or activities aimed at rehabilitating and reconstructing local and national communities more broadly as these are also integrally linked to this process. Healing is not just about helping persons to deal with their mental health needs separately but is based on and fundamentally linked to the mending and reconstruction of communities and the social context. This implies restoring a normalised, everyday life that can rebuild and confirm people's sense of being and belonging.

Van der Kolk (1987:987) indicates that trauma can be understood as the destruction of individual and collective structures of society. It is the loss of faith, trust, confidence and belief in oneself, other human beings, physical-organic material and God. It is the

loss of faith, trust, confidence and hope, that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe space to retreat within or outside oneself to deal with frightening emotions or experience. In this sense, it is not only vital to assist people in dealing with the effects of the conflict on them, to help them through, for example, a grieving process in a constructive way. It is also of paramount importance to deal with the roots of distress and symptoms. What needs to be “healed” is, therefore, the multitude of individual, political, social and cultural responses to a traumatic situation and its aftermath. National healing then refers to the concept that the whole nation has been wounded in one way or the other, and therefore, needs to be healed from the wounds that have been inflicted in multi-dimensional ways in one’s wellbeing.

The researcher thinks that healing trauma is, in many ways, a life-long experience. It is not an event but a life-long process. The decision to heal does not come naturally and needs to become a work of intent for years and generations to come (Simoni, 2012). This emphasised the highest possibility of reaching it in a matter of time. Achieving this depends on the correct intention to recognise that God’s mission (*Missio Dei*) is to reconcile humanity, and if reconciliation is made, then the Holy Spirit renews humanity not to go back to their old wicked ways, but to aim for consummation as the hope to reach a complete born again humankind in the new earth and new heaven. Therefore, a meaningful, holistic and reliable approach towards human beings is only construed through our direct involvement and engagement in the processual continuation of the grand acts of God in our experience. In reflecting on this involvement and participation, we become aware of God’s creation through our creatureliness, aware of our reconciliation on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus, aware of our renewal in the ongoing renewal work of the Spirit, and aware of our

consummation and fulfilment in being directed towards the new heaven and the new earth. This is to establish a situation in which differences are promoted and celebrated, and where human beings live in harmony (Naude, 2002). But the nature of the church and to achieve peace should be in the forefront to participate and to share in God's mission of reconciliation (De Cruchy, 1991). Furthermore, De Cruchy's emphasis was that humanity ought to remember that it is a community in which worshipping and witnessing to both within and beyond the boundaries of the church that healing and forgiveness will be recognised. The healing process as a means to reconciliation should be costly and not cheap like shaking hands, hugging and crying but involves forgiveness.

2.3.3.2. Reconciliation as a means of forgiveness

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

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. It is psychologically not possible to forget all the traumas of victims through forgiveness. However, this is the best approach to encourage rebels to lay down their arms and to assure their role in decision-making processes. The process is complicated but seems quite capable. Even though the victim will not fully agree to amnesty for perpetrators of crime against humanity during the conflict, this may be the only way for national healing. There is no doubt that most rebels have been involved in several forms of atrocities, and have committed numerous

human rights violations through killing, abductions, disappearances and threats. Similarly, the security forces and authorities were also involved in human rights violations (TRC, 1998).

One can conclude that for the achievement of reconciliation, all parties need to be involved. Tutu further recommends that all human rights violations and abuses, which led to a disintegrated society, should be investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. South Africa today should perceive this as a move to achieve social cohesion, either through trial, reparation and compensation; all human beings should be respected and should have rights to enjoy dignity. Juhant and Zalec (2012) analysed the relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness based on dignity of humanity and discovered that both of them are transitional and manifold. He elaborated further that humanity must be satisfied that person A has forgiven person B. This means that humanity must establish what person A has forgiven, of which his or her acts were the object of forgiveness (Juhant and Zalec, 2012). Similarly, it must be true to say that person A and person B have reconciled using forgiveness. This means that humanity must be precise and explicit to say I regard person A and person B reconciled, or which relationship they have established again.

Juhant and Zalec (2012) further ask whether it is valid in all established cases or kinds of reconciliation that forgiveness is a condition for reconciliation. He does not think so. However, John Milbank (2003:45) disagrees and argues that we are all to offer positive ideas of Thomas Aquinas' stipulated view that we can all provide human forgiveness based on the absence of repentance. But forgiveness is the beginning of repentance. But he also alluded to the fact that divine forgiveness cannot be offered unless based on pure faith (Milbank, 2003:45). In other words, repentance is more than an attitude. However, the two thoughts coincide on the point that forgiveness and repentance are

granted by the mediation of the grace of God. Forgiveness is the component of both repentance and reconciliation in the theory of restorative justice within the five “R” of restorative justice, namely, facing reality, taking responsibility, repentance, reconciliation and restitution. This process leads the researcher to the foundation of reconciliation.

2.3.3.3 The building blocks of reconciliation

Reconciliation does not stand on a vacuum, but a strong foundation. It is part of restorative justice. Genuine communication is the necessary foundation of reconciliation in a broken relationship. Reconciliation is based on the following foundations:

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

These six steps mentioned supra is undoubtedly positive factors of reconciliation. It is hard to say whether they are necessary and sufficient conditions of it. However, the

researcher cannot imagine of a genuine reconciliation to happen without the presence of all of these stages.

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

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

2.3.3.4. Reparation of relationship

The final stage of the foundation for reconciliation is more on repentance and building a new relationship. The person who is involved in repentance needs movement. Hence, Senokoane (2016:195) indicates that there must be action and change in salvation (*Epistrophe*). Blackness soteriology is a movement of black people from the sin of acceptance and dependence on whites to the recognition that they are human beings with full rights and dignity. This is the beginning of repairing the relationship in Mokopane. Roberts (2005:7) indicates that black and white Christians have been living an unauthentic life in America. This is a similar situation in Mokopane, South Africa, where people live in the area of race. Whites have noticed the necessities of love, justice and mercy. They are guilty of malpractice as so-called Christians; whites have been hypocritical and involved in double-dealing in the area of race. Words and deeds have been antithetical. Deceit and meaninglessness have been shared among whites, even in integrated congregations and denominational bodies. White Christians have been living and behaving in unauthentic existence (Senokoane, 2016:195). On the other hand, black Christians have passively accepted the blunt end of the misinterpretation and malpractice of white Christians that have also lived unauthentic existence. It is the goal of black moral theology to lead both blacks and whites to the authentic Christian life (Roberts, 2005:7).

In the context of this research study, black soteriology is a reparation of a relationship as a liberation act of God to save whites from dehumanising black people of Mokopane. Black soteriology is a real-life of faith that ought to be for whites; one that would enable whites to accept all humans as equal to themselves. This stage is an enabling stage of liberation where laws, policies and regulations are renewed to allow physical and spiritual revolution. This black soteriology challenges blacks to transform

from being receivers (heathens) of the message of reconciliation to be senders (missionaries) of this message to repair broken relationships in Mokopane in particular, and South Africa in general. Roberts (2005:7) argues that:

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

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

The first question that arises should be what are the possible ways or means of reparation of relationship. Thompson answers this question by saying that the first candidate is restoration. He extends by saying that the problem with restoration is that it is often beyond human capacities to restore the wrong, whereby in case of murder, people cannot undo the wrong as an example. Restoration can provide the person affected with murder merely with money, property, psychological support, empathy, compassion etc. The second candidate has reconciliatory reparation. Before we

consider it, let me notice that many scholars conclude that reconciliation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of the restorative justice (Lapsy, 1997). It is not an essential condition because justice restoration can take place even in the case when no reconciliation has happened. For instance, the perpetrator can do anything that is needed for restoration, but the victim can be adamant that no action will be sufficient for neither reconciliation nor restoration is a satisfactory condition. The sole fact that victims and perpetrators live in peace with each other does not mean that restorative justice has been done (Thompson, 1997: 45-50). The above values may assist the researcher in integrating the modern disintegrated society, which makes it difficult to reconcile for the sake of our future generation. For reparation and healing, human beings cannot walk away from the process of reconciliation.

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

2.4 DISINTEGRATED CHURCH AS A PROBLEM FOR RECONCILIATION IN SOCIETY

In this section, the researcher will journey through the history of the church and society in terms of church unity and church disunity as a reflection of South African lifestyle according to the nationalists' worldview of life for blacks and whites in South Africa in terms of the philosophy of apartheid. The researcher has observed his church where he served as a minister of the word and sacrament in Mokopane, how the so-called Dutch Reformed Churches are divided along racial lines, and where the society is moving towards unity in the so-called towns. South Africa is not a different or isolated country from other African countries. In this sense, it is vital to take a brief look at how the church should be in the African context.

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

reflections of the community of Mokopane as the site of this research.

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

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

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

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

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

Long before the establishment of the National party and the policy of apartheid, the DRC have already decided to divide people based on colour. The missionary society has played a significant role in planting the disintegration in the church that has an impact on the society later. Steadily, the work to expand segregation was growing. In 1819, Dr John Phillip, who was superintendent of the London Missionary Society (LMS) stationed in South Africa, advised the ZAZG to organise its converts into a separate parish, as LMS had decided to assist every society should it choose to adopt such policy (Giliomee, 2003:218). The director of LMS agreed to accept Phillip's offer of how to put converts in separate parishes. Admittedly, this was an indoctrination approach to people born 'non-Christian'. Many years later, in 1851, the ZAZG directors submitted a document stating that they had supported the 1819 decision but only on essential qualifications. It was unwise in my view as they declared to found separate congregations; instead, all illiterates and heathens should be instructed and be

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

Unfortunately, the patterns were set in 1824 when the Dutch Reformed Church convened its first colonial synod meeting to pass a regulation for its missionary work, and ordained L Marquardt as its first missionary. He had strict instructions to administer the sacraments only to heathens he had gathered together in a separate congregation. Although the DRC was not hostile to the missionary work, it wanted to bring missionary work done by its members (Saayman, 2007:35) under its control, mainly since they dominated the rank of the ZAZG and its affiliates, local bodies. One can have concluded that it was a tactical move by foreign. But the ZAZG and its associates did not want to be absorbed by the DRC, which would mean sacrificing their autonomy and parting with those members who were Lutherans.

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

The state of affairs of the inclusive church remained a church of Christ until 1850 when the church was divided according to the desire of white Christians in the Cape colony. Nicolas Hofmeyer (1853) and two Murray brothers (Andrew and John) had just returned to South Africa from their theological studies in the Netherlands. They were full of evangelic enthusiasm for missionary work as an inescapable obligation of the church. Hofmeyer (1853), who had high regard for Van der Kemp and his work, found

the DRC's poor records on missionary work embarrassing (Kriel, 1963:49). Using the pseudonym IT, Hofmeyer (1853) addressed the issue of missionary work in a series of articles in 1853 and 1854 in the official journal, die ¹Gereformeerde Kerkbode (Saayman, 2007:38-40). The use of pseudonyms was customary in the journal of the time. He did not want to bring about equating (gelykstelling) by disturbing the differences in rank or station in the social hierarchy that had developed under slavery. Writing from the depth of his evangelical convictions, he had as his priority the need to bring the gospel to souls who otherwise would be lost.

According to Giliomee (2003), Hofmeyer (1853) investigated three possible options for the reformed Church's missionary activities:

- First, he rejected the policy of delineating, which would later be known as 'segregation'; the practice of setting up utterly separate mission stations or 'congregation' for coloured Christians. In his view, this tended to destroy the bond between whites and coloureds and the influence of the church in society.
- Secondly, he rejected as unsuitable the fusion of white and coloured Christians by identical coloured treatment.
- Thirdly, he claimed that people of colour had a lower level of development, and suggested that the gospel must be brought to them. He further indicated to them that it was important that coloured Christians understood their place in the status hierarchy and not confuse religious and social privileges.

These three options sound strongly ridiculous because Hofmeyer (1853) did not have either psychological evidence or biblical reference. Hence, he quoted the experience of the minister who admitted into his parish, with many coloureds who promptly forget their station or estate in life.

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

However, Hofmeyer (1853) failed to be a reformed theologian or reformed minister where theology is justified by biblical support because, in the reformed tradition, the Bible is a point of departure. Instead, Hofmeyer (1853) was unreformed since he did not quote any biblical text to justify his thinking or authorities on mission policy. Instead, he pointed two of what he calls successful stories, that is, models of Cape Town. One was St Stephens' parish of main slaves in Cape Town who shared a minister with a white Lutheran parish, and the other was the Presbyterian Church which housed white and coloured parish meetings in the same church but at separate times. The success stories were relative to the pioneer of segregation in the church of God, which hurt the current church and society, where human beings were rated according to the colour of their skins and not as the image of God.

According to Plaatjies-Van Huffel (2017:1), as early as 1829, there was a motion on the synod's table about dividing people based on colour within the church. The concern raised was that whether the people of colour who are baptised and confirmed should be allowed, together with 'born again Christians (White people), to take the Lord Supper, or whether these people should take the Lord's Supper separately (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2017:1). The motion on segregation in the church based on the colour of the skin was rejected by the synod of 1829. There was no scriptural basis for church and society disunity based on racial lines as it is set-up in South Africa through the apartheid philosophy and the typical set up based on classism. The synods of 1834, 1837 and 1857 raise the issue of separate administration of the sacraments to the people of colour. Furthermore, forty-five members of the DRC placed a request to the church council of Stockenstrom and the DRC to be permitted to celebrate the Holy Communion separately. The church council rejected the request and referred the matter to the presbytery of Albany. The presbytery opened the door for separation administration of the Lord's supper by unanimously recommending to the Church Council of Stockenstrom that due to the biases and weaknesses of some congregants, the Lord's supper should be administered separately to "coloureds" and "Whites" (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2017:1). This recommendation opened up the discussion from the synods of 1829, 1834 and 1837 in a different angle; the angle of the biases and weaknesses of some congregants.

Subsequently, the synod of 1857 decided to condone segregational worship services. This was the beginning of a disintegrated church on a colour basis. Since the nineteenth century, the question of how to baptise slaves and other people who were not "born Christian" could be incorporated into the establishment of churches of the Cape Colony to be unresolved (Giliomee, 2003:218). This was witnessed when a

mission movement was established, namely Zuid-Afrikansche Zending Genootskchap (ZAZG). The ZAZG was the principal and active local missionary society. This movement was aimed at bringing as many 'slaves' to the catechumen as possible. However, few were confirmed in the Reformed and Lutheran congregations. All over the colony, the missionary society organised their followers into separate parishes. In the Cape colony, the churches were now divided into racial lines based on black and white Christians.

At this stage, one can conclude that there were two churches in one with the same identity. Again, not only the DRC engineered the process of segregation of churches, but other denominations are in the picture, such as Lutherans and Presbyterians. So it will be unfair to blame the DRC alone in the whole saga of church and community disunity in South Africa. There were no explicit stories in the church journal or article in the Gereformeerde Kerkbode during this period that favoured segregation (Loubser, 1987:87). The debate came to a head at the Cape Town synod of 1857. The item on the agenda caused some disputes in the town of Ceres in the Western Cape, where a conflict between elders ensued. They wished to establish a *gesticht* (segregate) to bring the gospel to people of colour.

On the other hand, church ministers argued that this conflicted with the 1829 synod, which rejected church division based on the colour of the skin. Andrew Murray, a senior minister in Graaff-Reinet, was particularly aware of a dispute in the parish of Stochstrom. This parish was composed of a small white minority in a sizeable Khoi-Khoi congregation. The former wished to receive the Holy Communion separately. Most important to note also at this synod (1857) was a special commission for mission work, who reported that the time was not ripe for a coordinated effort to extend missionary work. In response, the synod appointed a new committee composed of

Hofmeyer, Murray brothers and Albertyn. It promptly informed the synod that with the necessary zeal, progress would indeed be possible. A formula was needed, and this was what Hofmeyer's scheme would provide.

In the synod debate on the issue of whether to permit segregated facilities, several participants called for a reaffirmation of the church's policy of non-discrimination. Hofmeyer, one of the last two speakers, insisted that there was a more critical issue that addresses prejudice. That issue was to identify the most effective way for the church to promote the Christianisation of the heathen. According to newspaper reports, after he had spoken, the debate took a new turn. In the end, the Synod, a compromise and unbiblical resolution were accepted, which was proposed by Andrew Murray senior, a prominent evangelical and mission enthusiast. The decision declared that it was 'desirable and according to the scriptures to absorb members from the pagan population in existing congregations wherever possible. However, in cases where 'the weaknesses of some' hindered the spread of the Gospel, the synod agreed that people might enjoy their Christian privileges in separate buildings (Kriel, 1963:54-59). This resolution sanctioned different facilities but not segregated parishes, and it was not in conflict with what other protestant churches were doing at the time. So the line was visible for separate churches but in one parish. In such situations, the following questions were raised: Was there no objection towards such a move? Was there biblical justification for such a decision? Or was this a transparent form of biological racism. These questions are endless. Kriel, (1963) did not object to separate church building or chapels, as they were called if they could accommodate the unique needs of non-whites. He believed that the synod had erred for focusing on white prejudice (Huet, 1860:28-53). One could conclude that it would be wrong to blame sponsors of the 1857 (foreign mission) decision to condone segregation in the DRC. The

entrenchment of segregation was a process; insidious process some would say. Plaatjies-Van Huffel (2017:5) puts it clear that it seems clear that long before the National party took power in 1948, the church had adopted the policy of apartheid, which was regarded by the DRC editor of *Kerkbode* in 1948 that the apartheid policy is the church policy? This legacy is still with us today. These separate churches have a bearing on the disintegrated society, as the colour of the skin determines where one needs to stay and worship. So it also decides where one wants to stay, study and work, hence Mokopane as the site of this research.

2.4.2 The first actual disintegrated church in the Cape colony

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

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

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

Best (2002:63) explains that in South Africa, the DRMC had been established for people of colour by 1881. Its purpose was not the same as that of the mission society involved in church planting but was instead to entrench racial segregation. The DRC saw the mission not so much as a church moving towards autonomy, but rather as a coloured department of the mother church. The establishment of the DRCA was the outcome of the mission work undertaken by the African population through variation of synods of the DRC. At first, African converts were added to the DRC. In time separate churches and synods for African converts were established. The first to be created was the synod of the Orange Free State in 1910. Similar synods were created in the Transvaal in 1932, the Cape Province in 1951 and Natal in 1952. The separation between these synods came to an end in 1963 when the DRCA was formed. Eventually, in 1968, the Reformed Church in Africa (for Indians) came into being (Best 2002: 194; Meiring, 2004: 120).

The DRCA was based on racial segregationist principles, had the same structure, doctrine, traditions, and customs as the mother church, which retains extensive control over it by supplying 80% of its budget. Its clergymen were not allowed to white congregations, and intercommunication between the two churches and these ministers were to be watchdogs of two mission work (Best, 2003:214). From its inception, the DRC enjoyed independence or autonomy as a church. It was started in article 4 of the church order of 1932 of the DRC, which was handed over to the black church. The DRC must have representatives at all levels of the black church. In other words, at a church council, presbytery and synod levels. This arrangement was very disturbing to many theologians and ministers of the word within the DRCA and DRMC (Modise, 2013; Meiring, 2004: 122-128).

The disunity in the DRC family was questioned, and the need to become what the church initially was, one church, was expressed. Believers from the black church, coloured church and Indian church wanted to be accepted as believers in Jesus Christ (as in the articles of URCSA today) and continue to be classified as black or coloured or Asian Christians. The DRCA, therefore, called for church unity in its different synods (NGKA Akta, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991). These synods sitting gave birth to what is known today as the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa-URCSA. The church, as an ecumenical church, cannot even promote or advocate reconciliation in the society due to its ecumenical disintegration in terms of operation while claiming to be united in terms of affiliation to the South African Council of churches or other bodies. The churches gave testimonies of their participation in apartheid and how they can restore the damage caused by this policy in the truth and reconciliation headed by Desmond Tutu. The church in South Africa in the real sense was not supposed to appear before the commission, but to institute the commission and to drive

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

2.5 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION ABOUT THE CHURCH AS AGENT OF RECONCILIATION

In this section, the researcher will discuss the TRC about the church as an agent of reconciliation and truth for two reasons. Firstly, the church is the body of Christ, who said he is the truth. So the church should represent Christ on earth by being the truth. Hence the church is relevant to handle the TRC. Secondly, Paul said the church should be the ambassador of reconciliation. Therefore, the government of national unity instituted the TRC with the idea that the church ought to drive this process forward by utilising credible church leaders like Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine to head and facilitate this process in a theological-political context.

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

In reaction to the struggle for unity, justice and reconciliation, and ultimately everlasting peace, there are critical elements for both victims and perpetrators in both churches (the DRC and URCSA). Given their vastly different backgrounds and experiences of

the traumatic past and the way these formed their identities, it is obligatory for healing and reconciliation that they share it in public with each other. Suppressed and forgotten truth is part of the healing process and a form of communal identity.

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

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

When planning around the commission on truth and reconciliation, the government did not forget that this is the competence of the church as per scriptural mandate. Hence, it appointed clergymen to head this commission. Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine led the commission. The researcher highlighted a brief biography of the two clergymen to illustrate their connection to the church.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a South African Anglican cleric and theologian, was born on 7 October 1931. He is known for his work as a passionate anti-apartheid and human rights activist. Tutu served as the Bishop of Johannesburg from 1985 to 1986. After that, he was appointed the Archbishop of the Church of the Southern provinces based in Cape Town from 1986 to 1996. In both cases, he was the first indigenous black African to hold the position. Theologically, he sought to fuse ideas from black theology with African theology; politically, he identifies himself as a socialist. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1960 and moved to the United Kingdom 1962 to study theology at King's College London. In 1966, he returned to southern Africa and taught theology at the Federal Theological Seminary and then the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Back in South Africa in 1975, he served first as dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg and then as Bishop of Lesotho, taking an active role in opposition to South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and white-minority rule. In the years 1978 to 1985, Desmond was general-secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Although warning the National Party government that apartheid would lead to racial violence, as an activist, he stressed non-violent protests and international economic pressure to bring about change.

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

The other clergyman who was appointed by the government to head the TRC was Alex Boraine, who was born in Cape Town and grew up in a poor white housing area. Due to economic reasons, Alex left high school in Standard 8, just two years before matric. He worked as a ledger clerk; his decision was a secret to his parents. His theological career started as a lay preacher of the Methodist Church in 1950. In his early twenties, he studied at Rhodes University in South Africa where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology and Biblical Studies in 1956. He was ordained as a minister of the word and sacrament in the Methodist church in 1956, where he served Pondoland East as the first congregation of his career. He furthered his studies in England Mansfield College at Oxford where he obtained Master of Arts in 1962. A further scholarship saw him attend Drew University in the United States where he received his PhD in Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies in 1966. In 1970, he was appointed the youngest ever President of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, a position he held until 1972. Boraine was one of the chief architects of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The brief biographies of the two clergymen that serve in the leading and facilitation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission illustrate that the church ought to be an agent of reconciliation in the society. It is disturbing that the Dutch Reformed Church, the Uniting Reformed Church and other churches have submitted to the commission instead of being key role players to reconcile the society. The researcher will focus on two churches that made submissions to the TRC, namely the DRC and URCSA as the foci of this research study.

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

The scriptural consciousness of the DRC was not at ease to submit to the commission as the church. Leading up to the inception of the TRC, and after that, the Afrikaans media was prominent in spreading negative rhetoric regarding the TRC (Meiring, 1999:96-97). It referred to the TRC as a witch hunt and a one-sided process where the Afrikaners will be placed in the dock. The effect of this negative rhetoric created scepticisms and instructions among the Afrikaans community towards dealing with the apartheid past, in particular the work of the TRC (Gaum, 1996:6). The DRC did nonetheless take cognisance of the aim and work of the TRC (Gaum, 1996:1). It made a conscious decision to support the work with prayers as early as the end of 1995, and specifically requested the TRC to act reasonably to all sides (Meiring, 1999:20). Meiring, as a member of both the TRC and the DRC, urged the DRC to participate in the TRC process by giving support, pastorally care for the victims and perpetrators (and their families) and to pray for the commission. Meiring also assured the DRC members that it would be an opportunity to testify. If the DRC could submit a report that will not only explain their role during the last three to four decades but will also help future generations to understand how the church felt about apartheid, and why they did what they did and what they failed to do (Gaum, 1995:6). The moderator of the DRC supported the call by Meiring to participate in the TRC process, Rev Freek Swanepoel as well as the decision by the DRC in the Eastern Cape to call on its members to testify before the TRC (Meiring, 1999:86).

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

In an editorial on the Die Kerkbode 18, the editor stated that in no uncertain terms that the presbytery of Stellenbosch has placed General Synod of the DRC in a complicated situation and that their submissions only indicated the role of the DRC in the dark part of our history. In a split of this criticism, the Western and Southern Cape synods of the DRC continued to become the only regional synods of the DRC to submit a report to the TRC at its extraordinary synodical meeting held on the 7th October 1997. It is however commendable that the Northern Transvaal Synod, although deciding against submitting to the TRC, missed the opportunity by a mere 18 votes out of 400 present (Thesnaar, 2013: 55).

Although initially the General Synodical Commission (GSC) decided against the submission, it was a positive and wise move to submit an official confession before the TRC (Meiring, 1999:95). Instead of a formal presentation, the GSC requested Dr First Gaum to compile a document (Journey to apartheid) to explain the journey of the DRC with apartheid legacy to its congregants for inputs (Thesnaar, 2013:56). The moderator (Rev Freek Swanepoel) submitted the document as instructed by GSC even though the entire DRC was not in agreement that it should be done that way. But both outside and inside saw the move as significant, and as an example to its 'family churches.'

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

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

Based on this background, the URCSA must become a significant participant in the reconciliation process. It needs to be upfront and provide strong advocacy as an agent in this national project of reconciliation, unity and justice. This move is good because it will make it (URCSA) to champion this process and to adhere to a gospel call of oneness in Christ. The reflection on the document "Journey with Apartheid" by the DRC to the TRC was essential because the TRC's report states that both the DRC and URCSA championed and reinforced the acceptance of the apartheid cause in their minds and often demolished their opponents (TRC Report Volume 1-4, 1998:67).

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

URCSA confessed that it failed to live up to its faith convictions and that it found it difficult to implement its decisions against apartheid in practical actions. Hence, today, it should be an agent for those decisions. In its submission, URCSA indicated that in fact, it watered them down, that it did not give the necessary support to young people and those who suffered, or to organisations engaged in the struggle against apartheid (URCSA submission to the TRC 1997:10). Indeed, it states that the 'absence of decisions' and the actions represent a blatant omission and a silent approval of the cancellations, and is the leading cause of human rights violations (URCSA submission to the TRC, 1997:6 & 7). It is in the content of its submission to the TRC and the message of Belhar Confession that it became instrumental and made URCSA stand tall and serve the people in the name of unity, justice and reconciliation. It took a victim from history.

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

2.6 THE PASSIVENESS OF THE CHURCH IN THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION

The Belhar confession challenges the passive, silence or neutrality of the church during the Kairos moment. This section discussed the passiveness of the church in the democratic era in times where the church was confronted with divisions of different kinds, racism, classism, sexism, handicaps, homophobia and xenophobia (Koopman, 2007). The church ought to stand somewhere or being active. The Belhar confession and its role in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity is discussed as a motivator of active participation of the church.

2.6.1 Passive church amidst a disintegrated society

Banana (1991:2) asserts that the role of the church is to reconcile all men and women and to bring them into union and fellowship with one another across cultural, religious, racial and regional boundaries. He further writes that the church has a mission in society: the mission of renewal, reassurance and reaffirmation of fundamental human rights among the oppressed and the marginalised. In terms of this view, the church has an active and positive role to play in national development. Thus, it must exercise its prophetic voice and a democratic voice in the sense that it becomes an expression of the popular will of its entire membership. Briefly, the church must have concerns of the people at heart.

However, Tshaka (2009:159) thinks that the silence of the church and its leaders in public issues was surprising in a democratic South Africa. It is nevertheless interesting to observe that this silence of church leaders on general matters is in no way unique

to the South African context, but has become a worldwide phenomenon (Tshaka, 2009:159). In the context of this research study, the church has been inactive in the process of reconciliation during and after the TRC. It is the understanding of the researcher that the church has been passive during the reconciliation era in South Africa. Therefore, the church ought to be a carrier of TRC recommendations to the point of actualisation.

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

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

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

This is an affirmation that the Belhar confession attests to the fact that the church ought to be an agent of reconciliation as it lives and acts according to its confession. It saw reconciliation as the main task of the church. Furthermore, the church confesses that God has entrusted to His church the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. The church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Church is called blessed for one reason: it is a peacemaker. This is evidenced by both words and deeds to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. The church has a biblical and confessional mandate to act as an agent of reconciliation instead of being a spectator in the process of reconciliation. The appointment of certain clergymen to the process of reconciliation in the country is a clear indication that the church was asleep or chose to be passive to this process.

Masuku (2014:151-167) argues that the active participation of churches is now following quiet diplomacy. Masuku (2014) emphasised what was said by many theologians about that churches in South Africa in the democratic era, that the voice of the disintegrated and poor people of South Africa is now becoming passive and silent. He argues that during apartheid, religious leaders led mass protest; today their absence is visible. The South African Council of Churches and other Faith-Based Organisations had a clear direction of events in the country and provided leadership. This role has since become questionable because of its stark passiveness (Masuku, 2014:151-167). The argument put forth above deals more with the universal church in South Africa and the ecumenical movement like SACC, which consists of the DRC and URCSA as member churches. It is vital to look at theology that is preparing the church to become prophetic or passive.

Amanze (2012:189-204) postulates the current theology presented to South Africans in mental, complex theological concepts that make no sense to South Africans who are concerned with dealing with concrete, practical and pressing challenges of everyday life, namely disease, poverty, food and shelter. One of the reasons for the passiveness and silence of theology and religious studies is that they seem to be too mental and concerned mainly with the afterlife rather than the here and now. In the content and context of the Belhar confession, there is a challenge to the church to “Yes” to life in fullness (John10:10) and to say “No” to evil in all its forms. Hence it is vital to discuss the Belhar confession with its impact on public theology and passiveness of churches in a democratic South Africa that is still disintegrated.

2.6.2 The Belhar confession for active participation of the church in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity

The socio-political realities in the apartheid South Africa had a bearing on the decisions of the DRC Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) synod of 1982 to come to the decision to draft the Belhar confession. The adoption of the Belhar confession did not take place in a political vacuum. It was adopted in the so-called coloured community, in a racially divided Reformed church, specially constituted by the DRC in 1881 for people of mixed descent. Dames (2017:288) argues:

The Confession transformed the structuralist philosophy, identity and culture of apartheid ideology and its theological justification. The Confession embodies Christ’s creativity, transformation, social cohesion, compassion, reconciliation, love, hope and peace. The Confession assisted the former structuralist DRMC to decentre itself and to embrace a new identity with an alternative narrative.

The Belhar confession is standing in five central claims which can be sum up in five words: unity (Article 1), reconciliation (Article 2), justice (Article 3), embracement (Article 4) and obedience (Article 5). For the sake of this study, all four articles are vital, but instead, under passiveness of the church in a democratic era, the researcher will focus on embracement, “standing where God stands” (Belhar Confession, 1986). The Belhar confession challenges the church to take a side as Ernst-Habib (2019:45) puts it, that confession carries the reward, which consists in humanity or the church being allowed to stand on the right side of God. The condition in confession that humankind stands on God’s side is a severe and liberating implication that God stands on humanity’s side. Boesak (2008:143) and Barth (2002) agree that the church ought to stand where God stands. The Belhar Confession professes that the church should not be passive where there is injustice, disintegration of society and irreconciliation. Hence URCSA confesses with all other churches that confess that Jesus is Lord:

- 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 water, 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.

In the Belhar confession, there is always “Yes” and “No”, the negative is as essential as the affirmative. Hence the Belhar confession is used here to negate the passiveness of the church in the process of reconciliation in South Africa in general, and in

Mokopane in particular. This negation is confirmed in the words of the Belhar confession: "Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel" (Belhar confession). Based on the Belhar confession, there is no room for the church to be passive when there is still division and class within the people of God. Macmaster (2017:277) emphasises the light that the Belhar confession brings to public pastoral care in the sense that Christians and non-Christians are the community of God that need to embrace each other with Christian love. This community needs to stand where God stands. Where does the DRC stand in terms of the Belhar confession?

There was a significant turning point in 2011 when the DRC decided to start a process of accepting the Belhar confession church orderly. The DRC participating synod of the Southern and Western Cape agreed to take the Belhar confession as their confessional basis and to reaffirm the DRC decision of 1990 that the Belhar confession is based on Scripture and Reformed traditions in May 2011. The resolution reads:

Synod convinced that the Biblical claim of justice to all people, reconciliation among people and the unity of the church belong to the essence of the Gospel. The Confession of Belhar expresses the Gospel claim for justice, reconciliation and unity in a different way than other Confessions of the church. The Synod, as a church meeting, adopts the Confession of Belhar and therefore requests the General Synod to make the Confession of Belhar part of the confessional base of the DRC in a Church Orderly way.

The decision of the participating synod of Southern and Western Cape on the Belhar confession has impacted the General synod of the DRC to initiate the process to accept the confession on 13 October 2011. Dr Braam Hanekom and rev Nelis van Rensburg explained the process that Southern and Western Cape followed where the Belhar confession was approved by the synod. Rev Nelis van Rensburg illustrated how the Belhar confession fits all general requirements of a confession. This argument

explained how the Cape decision impacted on a decision of the General Synod to initiate the process of accepting the Belhar confession (URCSA Pastoral letter of 14 October 2011). The Belhar confession is relevant to all Christian churches currently because it addresses critical issues that were emphasised in the Scripture - unity among the people of God, reconciliation within the church and society, injustices of all kinds, and God's bias on behalf of those who have wronged (Modise, 2017:147).

The ecumenical movements and URCSA viewed this process as a significant breakthrough in the DRC. On the other hand, there was an obstacle on the way ahead of the process of accepting the Belhar confession as a confessional base. The stumbling block was article 44, which states that all regional synods should obtain a two-third majority for the church order article to change. In the process of accepting the Belhar confession, ten participating synods voted, six participating synods convened, and three (Free state; Namibia and Northern Cape) out of six said "No" to the inclusion of the Belhar confession to the DRC church order article One. Highfield did not reach a two-thirds majority, and only two said "Yes" to the addition of the Belhar confession into the DRC church order. Taking these statistics and article 44.1¹ of the DRC into consideration, it stands to reason that the Belhar confession cannot be included in the confessional basis of the DRC in Article one. The church Order of the DRC as formulated makes it difficult for church unity and inclusion of the Belhar confession in the DRC church order. The researcher needs to look at how the DRC plays with words within article 44² in terms of the amendments of article 44.1 and 44.2.

¹ 44.1 Amendment of the Confession is possible only after it has been approved by a two-thirds majority of each synod and two-thirds of all the church councils²⁰, each supporting it with a two-thirds majority.

² 44.2 Article 44.1 and 44.2 of the *Church Order* are amended after each synod has approved it with a two-thirds majority and General Synod thereafter approves it with a two-thirds majority.

44.3 General Synod may, with the exception of article 44.1 and 44.2, amend or augment the *Church Order* with a two-thirds majority.

All other articles can be amended by two-thirds majority of the General Synod while 44.1 and 44.2 can be amended after every participating synods approves with a two-thirds majority and the General synod with a two-third majority. This church uses the church order as the gatekeeper for the Belhar confession not to enter its church order. We have learned from the apartheid era that if one needs to keep people separate, one needs to have many acts and regulations. This is the same situation in the DRC at this point. The Belhar confession is part of the package of the church unification together with church unity and restorative justice. If one may use the metaphor of the three-legged pot for the united church, without the Belhar confession, this church will not stand. These three points are points of reference in the memorandum of Agreement between URCSA and the DRC.

Plaatjies Van Huffel (2017:62) provides a table that illustrated how the DRC has voted for the acceptance of the Belhar confession for inclusion in the confessional basis of the DRC church order as follows:

Participating Synod reading the Belhar confession as a historical text voting on the amendment to the DRC confessional basis, 2013

No	Synod	Yes Vote	No-Vote
1	Western and Southern Cape	73.3%	26.7%
2	Eastern	73.2%	26.8%
3	Eastern Cape	70%	30%
4	Namibia	58%	42%
5	Highveld	51.9%	49.1%
6	Kwazulu-Natal	52%	48%
7	Northern Synod	49%	51%

8	West Transvaal	42%	58%
9	Northern Cape	33%	67%
10	Free State	32%	68%

Plaatjies van Huffel (2017:62) indicates that only three out of ten of the DRC secured a two-thirds majority. Statistics provided above shows the tendency that on the simple majority, the Belhar confession is welcomed by the DRC regional synods, while the church polity experts crafted the church order in such a way that the DRC cannot include the Belhar confession in the DRC church order. The position of the URCSA and the DRC is that the unity process continues from the bottom, meaning from the congregational level. Where does Mokopane fit in these statistics? Mokopane is a town with two DRC congregations that fall within the boundaries of the Northern Synod, which have not secured the two-third majority to include the Belhar confession in the DRC church order article one. This inclusion of the confession in church order has a bearing on church unity, which has an impact on social integration in Mokopane. The numbers illustrate the position of Mokopane as a community within the conservative participating synod. Despite the disappointment on the inclusion of the Belhar confession in the church order of the DRC, there is a move from participating synods which secured a two-thirds majority to integrate the black church (URCSA) with the white church (the DRC), which is a decisive move in the integration of society at a later stage.

2.7 SUMMARY

In conclusion, the researcher defined, clarified and outlined terms and concepts used in this study. This includes concepts like justice and reconciliation. These concepts were explained from different fields of study with particular reference to liberation theology as a doing theology. The role played by the church in dividing the South African society was discussed in depth from their historical background. The part that the church ought to play in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity was also pointed out, and different authors were engaged in this respect. The role of the DRC in supporting and encouraging apartheid in South Africa and its legacies was discussed from 1829 to 2016, where there were attempts to unite congregations of the DRC and URCSA. The researcher addressed the role of the Belhar confession in the process of reconciliation, justice and unity of the South African society. The next chapter deals with the method employed to conduct this research study from literature to observation as a research tool.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

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

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research method is of paramount importance in the sense that it assists in data collection, and allows the researcher to conduct an authentic research study. This will be achieved through interviews, surveys, other research techniques, and the use of both present and historical information. The researcher uses the qualitative approach, specifically interviews and report analysis. The research method is designed to assist the researcher to understand meanings that people assign to social, religious and political phenomena, and to clarify the mental processes underlying certain behaviours. In the qualitative paradigm, the researcher becomes

the instrument of data collection, and the results may differ greatly depending on who conducts the research (McConney et al., 2002: 87; Steckler et al., 1992:146-156). Qualitative research allows for the collection of subjective data, and the use of complimentary approaches provides a means of eliminating gaps, which can be present, if only one type of approach is adopted.

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

3.2.1 The concept of socio-theological research

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

Razavieh and Sorensen (2006:19), is the application of scientific approach to the study of socio-theological phenomenon.

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

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

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

As indicated above, the researcher has chosen to use the qualitative research method due to the nature of the research, which is highly subjective and deals with a heated debate on contemporary phenomena. This phenomenon is the issue of reconciliation that ought to lead to genuine unity in the South African communities, in particular Mokopane as the site of this research. According to Bailey (1982:104), the qualitative method allows the researcher to unearth deeper into the subject matter for the researcher to reach people's feelings and attitudes in their organisation. Qualitative data subscribes to a phenomenological, inductive, holistic, subjective, process

oriented and social anthropological worldview. Qualitative research is based on the constructivist philosophy that assumes reality as multi-layer, interactive and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals. Qualitative researchers believe that reality is a social construction, that is, individuals or groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific entities, such as events, persons, processes or objects. People form constructions in order to make sense of entities and to re-organise these constructions as viewpoints, perceptions and belief systems (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:396). In short, people's perceptions are what they consider "real" to them and what direct their actions, thoughts and feelings towards other people or objects. Hence, qualitative researchers seek to interpret human actions, institutions, events, objects and customs. The ultimate aim is to portray a complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that someone who has not experienced it can understand it (Ary et al., 2006:450).

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

3.3.1 Qualitative research techniques

Qualitative research depends on multi-method strategies to collect and integrate data. Hence, interviews and observations are primary data collection techniques in

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

Qualitative researchers study participants' perspectives through interactive strategies. Each qualitative strategy is particularly matched for obtaining a specific type of data (Ary et al., 2006:474):

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

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

3.3.1.1. Interviewing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Provides insight on participants' perspectives on the subject of study;
- Provides the meaning of events as they unfold for the people involved in the research study; and
- Provides in-depth information for investigation.

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

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

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

- They impose no restrictions on the respondents' responses, which could be used when the researcher is uncertain or has limited knowledge of the subject matter.
- They are used where a wide range of opinions are expected, to find out which information the respondents are prepared to divulge.
- They help to get down to more details, and more deep-rooted motives like sensitive behaviours are explored.

The disadvantages are as follows:

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

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

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

3.3.1.2. Observation

Observation is regarded as the most powerful, flexible and 'real' data collection strategy because it is not dependent on the respondent's personal views, but seeks explicit evidence through the eyes of the observer directly or through a camera lens. It is a holistic approach concerning the observation of 'everyday' events and the description and construction of meaning (Briggs and Coleman, 2007:237).

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

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

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-41), observation is an "interactive technique of 'participating' to some degree in naturally occurring situation over an extended time and 'writing' extensive field notes to describe what occurs". The researcher does not collect data to answer a specific hypothesis; rather explanations

are inductively derived from the field notes. Observation can be done using a naturalistic approach (participant observation) or a formal approach (systematic observation). In the former, the researcher is drawn as a participant in specific events and contexts either overtly or covertly. In the latter stage, the researcher is non-participatory and often uses systematic observation strategies as a means of gathering data (Briggs and Coleman, 2007:240).

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

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

3.3.1.3. Documents analysis

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

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

as memos, minutes, working documents and proposals) and objects (such as symbols and values).

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

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

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

3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis techniques

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

Johnson and Christensen (2004:500) further state that data analysis in a qualitative research study is reliable. Qualitative researchers alternate between data collection (e.g., interviews, observations and documents) and data analysis (creating meaning

from raw data). This means that data analysis in qualitative research is done concurrently or simultaneously with data collection through an interpretative, recursive and dynamic process (Ary et al., 2006:490).

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

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

3.3.2.1. Familiarisation and organisation of data

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

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

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

3.3.2.2. Coding data

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

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

3.3.2.3 Summarising data

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

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

3.3.3 Selection and sampling of population

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

3.3.3.1 Selection of the population

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

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

3.3.3.2 Sampling

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

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

Purposeful sampling, as a dominant strategy in the qualitative approach, has been adopted in this particular study. Purposeful sampling, according to Ary et al. (2006:472), in contrast with probabilistic sampling, seeks to select information-rich

cases which can be studied in depth. The researcher selects particular subjects from the population that will be representative, and provides maximum insight and understanding about the research questions. Information-rich cases are those from which the researcher can learn a great deal about issues under investigation.

3.4. VALIDITY OF THE STUDY

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

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

The term validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), means the degree to which scientific explanations of the phenomenon match the realities of the world. The explanations about an observed phenomenon approximate what is reality and truth, and the degree to which the explanations are accurate. These comprise the validity of the study. In other words, the validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants

and the researcher. The researcher and the participants agree on the description or the composition of the events, especially the meanings of these events. If a piece of research is invalid, then it is worthless.

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

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

3.4.1. Mechanically recorded data

A digital and video camera will be used to record some observations and all interviews conducted to enhance the validity by providing accurate and relatively complete records. The main interviews and several scenes will also be recorded in the field notebook. Professional transcripts will be made, and due to cost considerations, some transcripts will be done by the researcher.

3.4.2. Low-inference descriptors

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

3.4.3. Participant review

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

3.4.4. Triangulation strategies

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

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

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

3.5. RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

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

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

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

3.6. RESEARCH ETHICS

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

3.6.1. Informed consent and permission

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

facts that would influence their decisions. Informed consent encourages free choice of participation. Before a participant can participate in a research study, the researcher must give the prospective participant a description of all features of the study that might reasonably influence his or her willingness to participate.

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

In this study, the researcher consulted each participant and requested his/her consent. Identified participants confirmed and indicated their willingness to participate in the study (See Annexure C, which is a consent letter sent to participants of the study).

3.6.2. Anonymity and confidentiality

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

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

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

3.6.3. Voluntary participation

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

3.6.4. Competency and relationship with participants

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

3.7. SUMMARY

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

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

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research methods and design, while the current chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the research data collected from the research site. Furthermore, throughout the study, the researcher has handled reconciliation, justice and unity issues within the disintegrating society. In this empirical research conducted over a period of five months, the researcher presents, analyses and interprets data in this chapter. It entails the collection of data, interviews and observation. The researcher aimed at unearthing whether the church has played its role of reconciliation, justice and unity amongst the people of God.

4.2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH DATA

The researcher presents data that need to be analysed and interpreted based on the literature study conducted in chapter two of this research study. The researcher aims at two things: to check the correlation between the literature study and the current socio-political situation in Mokopane in terms of reconciliation, justice and unity of the society, as well as the success or failure of the church as an agent of reconciliation. The researcher will first present data from literature based on liberation theology, which illustrated that there was unity, and then division, and the church ought to strive for reconciliation. As mentioned in chapter 3 of this research study, the names that are used for the interviewees are not their real names for the sake of ethical consideration.

The researcher is of the view that there is still oppression and domination, which he called internalised domination.

4.3 THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION FOR HUMANITY FROM INTERNALISED DOMINATION

One of the problems is the internalised dominance by both black and white communities, especially in Mokopane. This exists at the subconscious level of black and white communities. As a result, it makes it difficult to start the process of reconciliation, justice and unity from the local level, where everybody can be involved and participate to the fullest in the process. Outsiders will ask a question: 'what happens then' when a white community still holds negative emotional feelings towards black people and vice versa. How will liberation for humanity be achieved if the internalisation of the past is still dominant with these two faces? In true liberation theology, it should have reciprocal influences (Begg, 2007: 317). This is the same sentiments that are advanced by Gutierrez (1988:17) that the situation of the poor countries as dominated and oppressed leads to the argument of economic, social and political liberation. The crux of the matter is of a more integral and profound understanding of human existence and its historical future. Liberation, in fact, expresses the inescapable moment of radical transformation which is foreign to the ordinary use of development. The South African situation was found to be lacking behind in liberation in terms of Gutierrez's analysis since there are still the rich and the poor in the name of development, such as the situation in Mokopane area where the poor and the rich cannot live together in harmony to advance the development of the entire country.

Furthermore, Guitierrez (1988:20) sees internalised oppression and domination as a lack of psychological liberation. Hence, he indicated that the scope of liberation on the collective and historical level does not always and satisfactorily include psychological liberation. Psychological liberation includes dimensions which do not exist in or are not sufficiently integrated with the collective, historical liberation. Guitierrez (1988:21) argues in line with Marcuse's analysis on the over-repressive character of the affluent society, and envisions the possibility of the non-repressive society. Marcuse's analysis, according to Guitierrez (1988), advanced industrial society, capitalistic or socialistic, lead to the denouncement of the emergence of a one-dimension and oppressive society. For the liberator to achieve a non-repressive society, however, it will be necessary to challenge the values espoused by the society which denies human beings the possibility of living freely. This is labelled a Great refusal: "the spectre of a revolution which subordinates the development of the productive forces and higher standards of living to the requirements of creating solidarity for human species, for abolishing poverty and misery beyond all national frontiers and spheres of interest, for the attainment of peace" (Guitierrez 1988:21). It was found that through literature study and interview conducted in this study, the great refusal is lacking in the South African liberation context in general and Mokopane in particular.

Because the old fashioned racist behaviour is no longer institutionalised and acceptable, it is likely that blacks respond emotionally to express in more mysterious ways. To whatever extent, the impact is that these feelings still obstruct progress to reconciliation, justice and unity in society. Guitierrez (1988:21) provides solutions to the findings, that the conception of history as a process of human liberation is to consider freedom as a historic victory; it is to understand that the step from an abstract to a real freedom is not taken without a struggle against all forces that oppress

humankind, a struggle full of pitfalls, detours and temptations to run away. The objective is not only better-living conditions, a radical transformation of structures, a social revolution; it is much more, the continuous creation, never-ending, of a new way to be human, a permanent cultural revolution. This permanent Cultural Revolution is what was found lacking in democratic South Africa throughout the liberation process. Hence the researcher has engaged himself in this study to challenge the church to play an active role in transforming the society. If the permanent Cultural Revolution is lacking, then this brings us to what Batt calls a modern form of racism, which comes in different displays because of black people who occupy positions of power both in public and private sectors. But the status quo remains.

When one evaluates the South African liberation, one is compelled to consider Gutierrez's analysis of the situation. It is an indisputable fact that South Africans have achieved political liberation as the first step to freedom, which addresses human beings' wellness and welfare.

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

Americans and South Africans have one thing in common socially, politically and historically. The economic imbalances of the 1960s and 1970s have similar taste. Blacks in the two continents have often seen themselves as brothers of the African diaspora. In both Northern America and South Africa, Christianity made its way to respective society via the white man (Bagg, 2007: 319). As I said earlier, in the 1960s and 1970s, blacks on both sides of the world were fighting similar social injustices perpetrated by the very people who had brought them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Both

environments produced individuals such as Malcolm X, Athans, Allan Boesak, Takatso Mofokeng, Desmond Tutu, Itumeleng Mosala and many more.

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

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

4.3.2 Internalised domination within Mokopane community

The researcher observed the situation in Mokopane within the racial lines of South Africa. The researcher finds that the expectation of local and international communities about South Africa is different in Mokopane. It has been widely expected that in a new democratic South Africa, internal power and internal superior and inferior complexities would come to an end. In fact, black political leaders indicated this assumption as the main reason during negotiations at the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Twenty-five years later, the opposite was observed, especially after the

TRC process. This commission came into being in an effort to bring reconciliation, justice and national unity through the healing process. It was believed that the stories from the past had to be narrated before the past could be buried (Du Toit, 1999: 15). This is observed through service delivery protests, racial divided settlements and class division of people in terms of high profile settlement areas. This is the reflection of churches in the Mokopane area, moreover the DRC and URCSA, which are the same churches with the same origin, and same doctrinal teaching but divided along racial lines. These racially divided churches disempower the agents of its members for reconciliation. In the next section, the researcher will focus on what is observed in terms of the role of churches in Mokopane area.

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

The researcher has observed that churches in Mokopane are divided along racial lines and areas of settlements. The DRC is still exclusively the church for white people with rules that maintain the old divided society, while the URCSA has an open policy in terms of membership. The involvement of the church (even other denominations) is always significant irrespective of the circumstances. However, since 1994, the different denominations have almost been silent on issues of reconciliation to such an extent that questions were asked. Where have all prophets' opinions gone (Mayson, 1999: 55)? Mayson is of the opinion that religion does not know which way to go, and concluded that religion did not find its role in the new South Africa (Mayson, 1999:58). This is the spirit to surrender quickly. People such as Frank Chikane made huge contributions although in a different approach. The loudness of the excitement of

freedom might be too strong to overcome the prophetic voice. In its final report, the TRC also emphasised the role of the church in the process of reconciliation, and stated, inter alia, the following (TRC, 1998 Volume 5:316): “Faith communities enjoy a unique and privileged position in South African society. In my view, it should take an upfront role, and the government of the day to provide such environment/space”. Faith communities are widely respected and have far-reaching moral influence. As such, they should play a key role in healing and reconciliation initiatives. It is therefore important that the role of the church and its foundation (theology) be clearly defined. The last chapter of this work brings ideas on how theology can contribute to the betterment of such role. A model has been designed to address the issue at stake.

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

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

4.4 Presentation of data based on case study and interviews

4.4.1 Case 1 (An interview with a worker)

The case study one is based on a disintegrated church that encouraged a disintegrated society. As indicated above, churches in South Africa are racially divided. Moreover, the DRC is exclusively a church for white people in South Africa. Mr W is a black male adult person who is sixty-two (62) years old residing at Mahwelereng Township. He worked for Mr H (white male adult) in one of the suburbs in Mokopane for eleven (11) years. This indicates the relationship that they have with each other. One day Mr W was on duty on a particular Sunday in the garden, while Mr H was at church for the Sunday service. Suddenly, an electric box burst and smoke came out of the box. Due to the fear that the house might catch fire, he ran to the church where his boss was worshipping. On his arrival, he silently sat down and moved his eyes looking for his boss. He suddenly heard the preacher (pastor) saying, "Oh God vandag die vlieg het in die melk in geval" (Oh God today the fly has fallen into the milk). Immediately people turned and looked at the back, and that is where his boss also saw him. Mr H came to him quietly and Mr W explained what happened. By that time, Mr W was upset as he was absorbing what he has just heard because he was a Christian too and could not make sense of what was said. Mr W came to a conclusion that because he is black among the whites, so the meaning was loud and clear. These words angered both Mr H and Mr W. In the interview between the researcher and Mr H, the latter left the church as his pastor could not explain the saying. Mr W was perplexed by the fact that the name of the church is closed to that of his (NGK/NGKA). The good thing about Mr W was that he could not hold grudges against Mr H as he apologised to him. The question is why the pastor could do that to a fellow human being. During this research, the pastor retired and is not living around, leaving a scar amongst fellow Christians.

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

4.4.2 Case study on businessman

Information provided in this section indicates how the colour of one's skin determines their future in Mokopane in the Limpopo area. Mr S was interviewed on 23 April 2010, and said the following: "I feel that South Africa has not changed from the old apartheid behaviours, being black is not advantage to business venture in places like Mokopane." Furthermore, he argued: "I was denied an opportunity to open a business in the centre of the town as a black person but my business plan was used to advance other people of a different race." From the information provided above, it is clear that racism is very strong in Mokopane as the researcher has observed as a former minister of the word and sacrament in the area. The decline of the business of Mr S was always followed by similar businesses in those areas. There is a tendency of internalised domination and oppression. Due to internalised domination, Mr S still felt that white people can assist him to open a business, to the extent that he disclosed his plans to

them. Hence, a similar business was the result of his business plan. People's colour of their skin and their background were used to exclude them from life opportunities, and their intellect was stolen. My view is that regulations are required towards such behaviour as it has no space in our era.

4.4.3 Case study and interview of ordinary people

I conducted interviews with ordinary people in the streets of Mokopane during the research just to get their feelings about the state of affairs in the country, particularly in their own space. Both black and white were interviewed. Both Mr **Z** and Mr **W** agreed that there is a possibility of reconciliation in South Africa, moreover in Mokopane. Mr **Z** argued: "There are still chances of reconciliation in this area, as long as the pastors, ministers and congregation can prayer and actualise reconciliation." Mr **W** indicates in response to the question "Is reconciliation possible in Mokopane?" Mr **W** responds: "If God has reconciled his people through his Son what can make it impossible for the South Africans to reconcile?" He further said: "The churches are standing far from each other, this makes this process of reconciliation very slow." But according to interviewees, this might take decades if both do not come close to one another. Mr **W** is sharing the view that the community is already doing things together. The spirit of extreme negativism has decreased. Mr **Z** feels that the government must do more to achieve social cohesion. More opportunities should be opened to improve the life of ordinary people, particularly the youth. They alluded to things such as education as a strong tool to develop human beings to stand on their own. Mr **W** is of the opinion that social cohesion is a non-existent theory as people are united in Christ. Blacks do jobs that are known to be white people's jobs. Opportunities are available for everybody; so

it is an advantage for one to grab them. In terms of opportunities at our space, Mr **Z** is of the opinion that they are channelled to historically advantaged people (whites) while they are excluded. Mr **W** agrees as he alludes to the fact that policies are designed to exclude them in the name of BEE. That is a deliberate exclusion in a new fashion. The two interviewees are on the same stance that government is not doing enough to improve the lives of ordinary people as adequate services are not provided; instead officials enrich themselves or rather channel the resources otherwise. In other words, those in power are accused of stealing resources if allocated.

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

4.4.4 Case study and interview of people living in the streets

The researcher encountered two people who are staying in the streets of Mokopane (homeless). They turned this place as their home. Mr **X** and Mr **M** were friends for the

past nine (9) years living in the streets. They share the environment as they do almost everything together for survival. They beg for money at robots, collect scrap metals for selling and beg for food at shops during tough times. What is more painful is that they seem to take days with no normal bath or clean clothes.

The history of Mr **X** is that he was raised by a single parent in the Lephalale area after his father passed away when he was still at primary school. His mother died in 1996. His wife left him after he lost his job as a driver in 1997. This situation makes him live a crime life in order to survive. One day he got a job from a company which was drilling water around Limpopo. This company used to fetch and drop them in the streets of Lephalale where they worked for two weeks. In the morning of payday, the man did not show up but disappeared. Because he was borrowing money from neighbours, they did not accept his story, and he was afraid that they might harm him. Hence he ran away and found himself living in the streets of Mokopane.

Relating his story, Mr **M** came from another province in the small and he is an elderly person. He lost both parents in the 1980's. His parents were not rich and were working for other farmers as assistants. After they had passed away, he could not get anything as he found that his parents did not even have a bank account. After he had confronted his parents' boss about their pension or any money to show that they were working, he was expelled.

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

in Mokopane. That is where he met Mr **X** in 2009 and they have been together ever since.

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

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

4.4.5 Case study and interview of the DRC minister

The minister has been with the congregation for more than a decade. The congregation is one of the DRC congregations in Mokopane. This alludes to the fact that the church is in a newly developed area of the town. They call it Hulp and Hoop (help and hope). He confirms that his congregation is involved with unity issues with URCSA. But his personal challenge is the model in place. In his view, it is not necessary to put structures in place, but practical activities are true evidence of the gospel.

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

Recently, they are running projects in URCSA facility in Mokopane such as soup kitchen, camping for young groups (black and white), and continue to provide subsidy to the salary of the minister and the centre for disabled. A URCSA member manages the centre (the DRC and URCSA are trustees). They are committed to the course, and to him, that is a visible unity. Cooperation in the mission is the call of God, and not a coming together because someone may be disadvantaged. According to this minister, unity is not what URCSA sees to call off the coming together to witness the Gospel. I think he misses the point where God is not interested in colour, race or language because he created them to glorify his creation. Not to identify himself through them. Reading the mind of the DRC, one concludes that there are no scriptural grounds not to achieve unity in our lifetime. The DRC betrays the element of confession on the authority of the scripture as articulated in Article 5 of the Belgic confession.

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

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

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

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher has presented, analysed and interpreted information collected from interviewees and literature throughout the study. It was finding the presentation that liberation theology, according to Guitierrez, was used to interpret the South African liberation in general and Mokopane in particular. Information from literature was verified through interviews, which were presented in the form of case studies. The role of the DRC and URCSA was presented in terms of unity, reconciliation and justice within the Mokopane area, as informed by the Belhar confession.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The researcher searched for the role of the church in democratic South Africa from the perspective of reconciliation, justice and unity, including the role played by the church to divide the society and the role it can play to unite the society in Mokopane community. It has become evident that this was a study to look for progress of the church in bringing reconciliation, justice and unity in South Africa. One can conclude that much needs to be done as the journey is still long to advance unity as the church is still highly divided on racial lines. Ultimately, it is a challenge for efforts by the gospel to bring the message of reconciliation to society. The church seems passive in the process of reconciliation whereby unity and justice seem to be an everyday dream. Relevant theological components such as liberation theology and others were used to find solutions to the challenge facing the church and society in restoring the past for the sake of visible unity. However, because of internalised dominance by both URCSA on the Belhar Confession and the DRC on superiority, visible unity will be difficult to achieve.

Many scholars define reconciliation as a way to healing, a means of forgiveness and foundation of reconciliation. They conclude that the disintegrated church is a problem for the reconciliation of society. In other words, the church is not living what it preaches. As a result, it fails the true gospel. The role of the DRC on the notion of 'weakness of some' and the thinking of forgiving and forget will not help the process. Both churches should take advantage of confessions at their disposal. What needs to be open to all

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

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

The problem statement was formulated in chapter one and has guided the study to this point. The main problem statement is that the church, in general, has played a role in dividing the South African society according to the colour of their skin long before the establishment of the National Party with its apartheid policy. This division has left the church and society disintegrated in a democratic South Africa. Liberation theology needs to be a tool that can assist the researcher to analyse South African liberation in the light of Gutierrez's analysis while using the Belhar confession to engage the process of URCSA and the DRC unity, which ought to promote unity in the society. Based on this summary, it is vital to look for findings from the literature and interviews. These findings will lead the researcher to recommendations for the future solution to the challenge of the disintegrated church and society in a democratic South Africa.

5.2. Findings

This section provides findings of the study conducted in Mokopane area on reconciliation, justice and unity in the church and society, and the role played by the church to divide the society as well as the role it ought to play to unite society. These findings will be presented in terms of the research aims.

5.2.1. Presentation of findings

This section presents the major findings of the research after the process of data collection. It is the mid-phase of the research whereby interviews on different cases and the general information as taken from informants are recorded. These findings are found from primary and secondary sources.

5.2.1.1 Findings based on the first aim of the research study

- It was found from the literature study and from data presented from interviews that the church has played a role in dividing the society in South Africa in general and Mokopane in particular. The decision of 1857 of dividing the church according to the racial lines due to weakens of some has the long standing influence in the church and country.
- It was found again that the church (the DRC and URCSA) has admitted that it has played a role in dividing the society even before 1910. The DRC and URCSA submissions to the TRC bear evidence to the effect that they participated directly or indirectly in dividing the society in South Africa before

and during the apartheid era. It is found that the legacy of that division is still alive in South Africa in general and in Mokopane in particular.

5.2.1.2 Findings based on the second aim of the research study

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

5.2.1.3 Finding based on the third aim of the research study

- It was found that the Northern Synod of the DRC where the DRC in Mokopane forms part of that synod did not reach two-thirds majority vote in favour of the Belhar confession; they only reached 49 per cent vote in favour of the Belhar confession. Based on these findings, there is hope for change in Mokopane since there are at least 49 per cent of DRC members who voted in favour of the Belhar confession, which implies voting in favour of unity.
- It was found that the Belhar can be used in different theological disciplines as a tool to interpret live challenges.

The findings in this study lead the researcher to recommendations for the church and society to pursue reconciliation, justice and unity within South African.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the study that the church has contributed towards the disintegration of the society as early as 1857 even before the National Party was established with its

apartheid policy. It is also clear that the church was silent in the democratic era. The findings provided above demand from the researcher to provide recommendations to remedy the situation and recommendations for future study. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

5.3.1 Recommendations based on the findings of the first aim of the research study

- The first thing the church needs to do is to rebuild its credibility and trust within the entire Christian and non-Christian communities.
- The DRC and URCSA should find the means to fast track their unification process as a way of rebuilding their credibility and trust.
- The church needs to instil the culture of reconciliation and unity amongst the communities and amongst itself.
- *Koinonia* and Holy Communion: Participation in the life of the crucified and risen Lord changes the relationship towards one another. Allowing changes of believers to participate in the life of God and in the victory of the risen Lord that overcomes the forces of death appears to be the main thrust of *koinonia*. Not to exclude or marginalise the poor and to share with fellow believers is of importance in the *koinonia* of congregations.
- *Koinonia* and the sharing of resources: The fact that God has gone out of his way to overcome our forsakenness by entering our situation in Jesus as a human should motivate Christians in South Africa to go out of their way to participate in the situation in Africa by sending them collection as a symbol of

their unity to assist the poor and marginalised. Such *koinonia* would enrich the lives of those who contribute.

5.3.2 Recommendations based on the findings of the second aim of the research study

- Efforts to re-read the Bible from the perspective of marginalised people in order to help the church to come to a deeper and clearer understanding of the meaning and implications of reconciliation for personal and civic life.
- Partnerships with government, other institutions and poor communities in structural-developmental campaigns to reconcile and unity community of Mokopane.
- Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the society, the children, the youth, people with disabilities and the elderly collective as the DRC and URCSA as project for reconciliation and unity.
- Resisting structures of the exclusion in the church, in society, in the economy and in the state on local, national and international levels.
- The church to make endeavours to overcome denominational, religious, class, gender, social and other divisions that obstruct the workings of the Holy Spirit inside, through and outside the church.
- The church to attend to the needs and the suffering of other human sections of church and society in order to create new community.
- The church to develop a theology that will enable its members to understand that justice, without reconciliation and unity, needs to have pastors and

ministers that are educated in the line of theology of justice, reconciliation and unity.

- Critically reviewing our Christian engagement in social actions of reconciliation with respect to other traditions, teachings, languages, customs and social patterns.

5.3.3 Recommendation based on the findings of the third aim of the research study

- URCSA in South Africa in general and in Mokopane in particular needs to internalised the Belhar confession in such a way that the church should live that confession so that the society may be influenced positively by way of life of these members.
- The DRC to effectively utilise the 49 per cent of its membership in Mokopane and within the Northern Synod in order to advocate and mobilise Mokopane community to live the Belhar confession by pushing for unity and reconciliation within the area.
- The church to use the Belhar confession for public theology and counselling in marriages, community conflicts and protest marches.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that the following topics may be studied in detail in future studies:

- The study can be conducted on how the DRC family and the URCSA internalised the Belhar confession as a tool for reconciliation, justice and unity within the church and society.

- The impact of disintegrated society on poverty and lack of development in the South African context.
- The ecumenical impact of the Belhar confession on ecumenical movement debates and its utilisations by other international denominations for their own reconciliation and unity purposes.

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