



**Embracing Ethnic Diversity: A missio Dei
perspective founded in biblical and theological
principles**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the late Govender family members: my grandmother, Lilly Govender; my uncles, Mahyma and Joval Govender; and my aunties, Dolly Naicker and Devana Appanna. They will forever be remembered for their love, kindness, and hospitality that held no boundaries.

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ABSTRACT

Although the apartheid laws long ended in South Africa, the prevalence of racial and ethnic conflicts is questionable by many citizens. When the country transitioned from being a segregated country to a democratic country, many attempts and efforts were made by the government, Churches, and other religious organizations to reconcile the nation and embrace racial and ethnic differences. However, when one observes the extent of the racial and ethnic divide, it is clear that the attempts and efforts that were made to unite the people were not effective.

Based on studies done on the Church in the midst of racial and ethnic conflicts, it was found that racial and ethnic conflicts did not only affect societies and communities, but they also affected the work and mission of the Church. Churches too are divided along racial and ethnic lines. This is a sad reality considering that the church is called to be an alternative community and God's reconciling agents in the world. When the church is divided, the church cannot and will not be effective in its mission to reach all nations with the gospel. A Church that is united despite differences, is a church that lives according to who God has called them to be. It reflects what heaven will one day look like. In light of this, the researcher sought to investigate how the Church in South Africa can embrace racial and ethnic diversity and thus enhance its commitment to Christ's command to reach all nations with the gospel.

Key terms: ethnicity, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, race, racism, culture, unity, reconciliation, mission, missio Dei.

ACCRONYMS

AIC – African Initiated Churches

ANC – African National Congress

ATR – African Traditional Religions

BEE – Black Economic Empowerment

BEEE – Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

CCMA – Commission of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration

CI – Christian Institute

COP – Congress of the People

DA – Democratic Alliance

DRC – Dutch Reformed Church

DRMC – Dutch Reformed Mission Church

GK – Gereformeerde Kerk

GNU – Government of National Unity

LMS – London Missionary Society

LOP – Lausanne Occasional Papers

NGK - Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk

NP – National Party

NT – New Testament

NWU – North-West University

OT – Old Testament

PCR – Programme to Combat Racism

RCSA – Reformed Churches in South Africa

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

SA – South Africa

SACC – South African Council of Churches

SONA – State of the Nation Address

SPROCAS – Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

WCC – World Council of Churches

ZANU – Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZCC – Zion Christian Church

CONCEPT CLARIFICATION OF KEY WORDS

Ethnicity/Ethnic – Ethnicity refers to people grouped based on their identity and geographic origin. As asserted by Jacobs, ethnicity is the “classification of a person or persons into a particular group based on factors such as physical characteristics, cultural identity, or geographic origin” (2000:323).

In the Greek New Testament, ethnicity (*ethnos*) refers to: “nation, people, heathen, pagans, Gentiles,” and is derived from the word *ethos*, which refers to a group of people that share the same customs (Verbrugge, 2000:368). Kittel *et al* (1985:201-202) explains that “*ethos*” means “mass,” “multitude,” “host,” and may be used for a “herd” or “swarm” as well as a human group.”

The Old Testament use of the concept nation in the Hebrew translates *gôy*. According to Redditt (2000:949), a nation in the OT included at least four components: “(1) a related group of people (2) living in its own territory (3) with its own government and (4) worshipping its own god or gods.” A more general term used is the word “people” (Heb. ‘am; LXX *laós*). This is a term that does not have a specific political significance but can be used as a synonym to the word nation.

The New Testament maintains the distinction between *ethnos* and *laós* (Redditt, 2000:949). Sigrist (2014) points out that, “while *ethnos* is often used in contrast to *laós*, in NT literature the nations (*ethnos*) become the object of Christian mission work. It is commonly used in the plural since it is not a self-defined group designation like *laós*.” Verbrugge indicates that “in the NT *ethnos* occurs 162x (43x in Acts, 54x in Paul’s letters). It is used about 40x in quotations from the OT. The “*ethne*” often mean all peoples (cf. Matt 24:9; 28:19; Mk 11:17; Lk 21:24; Rom 15:11).” In 14 places the Jewish people are referred to as *ethnos* (e.g., Lk 7:5; 23:2; Acts 10:22). This is seen in the gospel of John because the Jewish people did not place faith in Jesus Christ (11:48, 50-52; 18:35), and in other places there is a clear distinction between *laós* (the people of Israel) and *ethne* (the Gentiles) (Matt 4:15; 20:25; Lk 21:24; Acts 4:25; 7:7; 13:19; Rom 1:5; Gal 3:8; Rev 10:11; 14:8; 15:3-4) (2000:370-372).

There are about 100 instances where *ethnos* is used in contrast to believers in Jesus. Believers are to live differently from the *ethne* (Matt 6:32; Lk 12:30). The difference between the Jews and Gentiles is seen in the Book of Acts and the NT letters. Israel was God’s chosen people, and the Gentiles were not part of this unique relationship with God. However, through the work of Christ on the cross, the difference between Jews and Gentiles has been broken and they now share in God’s covenant and salvation. In the Book of Revelation, we read that Christ has redeemed for Himself a people from every nation (5:9-10). He will rule over all the nations (12:5), and in the New Jerusalem, the *ethne* (all peoples) will live (21:24, 26) (Verbrugge 2000:370-372).

Ethnocentrism – This is a term that is used to define the assumption or belief that one’s culture is superior to the other. “They often think of themselves as better than other groups” (O’Donovan, 1996:283). Piper (2011:115) defines ethnocentrism as “the conviction or the feeling that one’s ethnic group should be treated as superior or privileged.”

For one to conclude that their culture is superior to another culture involves the evaluation of the norms, practices, and values of one’s culture. However, arguing from a biblical perspective, Benitez points out that ethnocentrism is the result of human sin.¹ “It is one thing to see others from our cultural and historical point of view and it is quite another to conclude that others are inferior or worthless” (2009:326).

Wan (2000:324) asserts that, ethnocentrism can be manifested in two ways, “individual action or institutionalized policy toward others as in the case of anti-Semitism, apartheid, bigotry, fascism, and racism.” Ethnocentrism can also manifest in other ethnic conflicts such as xenophobia, tribalism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Daniel (2012:3-5) expresses how this was evident in pre-colonial Africa. Some of the causes were due to migration, war, diseases, the issue of land, etc. One would think that ethnic conflict long ended, but Daniel, further explains that ethnic conflict is still evident in many African countries. An example is the genocide in Rwanda between the Hutus and the Tutsi.

Xenophobia – Before 1994, immigrants to South Africa suffered discrimination and violence due to the apartheid laws. With the establishment of the democratic government, one would think that xenophobic attacks have declined. Instead, Pillay (2017:7) observes that xenophobic attacks have increased over the years. According to his research, 62 people were killed in the xenophobic attacks in May 2008, and in 2015 there was a nationwide attack on foreigners that motivated foreign governments to intervene by sending their citizens back home.

Xenophobia simply means the fear of strangers. Its meaning is derived from two Greek words: xeno (stranger) and phobia (fear). Pillay (2017:7-8) explains that xenophobia “describes attitudes, prejudices, and behaviours that reject, exclude, and often vilify people based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.” Pillay (2017:8) further explains that xenophobic people don't accept foreigners residing amongst them because of the perception that they are a source of threat. The perception is that foreigners have come to take away the opportunities of citizens in the country. People with xenophobic

¹ Refer to chapter 4 to see how sin is the root cause of all racial and ethnic conflicts.

attitudes display feelings of anger, fear, and bigotry which then results in foreigners being harshly treated both emotionally and physically.

Race – The approach to defining the concept “race” can be divided into three types: According to Bridger (1995:716-717), the first approach is Analytical – refers to genetic factors. Second, Folk – refers to physical features, and third; is Social – “holds that concepts of race are produced by societies who chose to attribute social meanings to physical and cultural variables.” The social definition of race contrasts with that of Analytical and Folk. Mayers defines race as “a human population that is sufficiently inbred to reveal a distinctive genetic composition manifest in a distinctive combination of physical traits.” His definition is biologically based on the genetic makeup of man rather than a “combination of distinguishing physical traits.” He asserts that physical characteristics are not ignored. It is recognized as a contributing factor, not a sole criterion (1980:18). With Mayers's definition, it can be concluded that “race” refers to groups of people classified according to genetic and physical factors. Genetic as the primary factor, and physical as the secondary factor. However, when looked at race in the Bible, Mayers advocates to the view that there is no Biblical reference to the term race. “Yet, the Bible has been made the center of very deep-rooted feelings regarding race” (1980:22).

The Bible teaches us that man is created in the Image of God and in Acts 17:26 it reads, “From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.” The first humans that God created, Adam and Eve, symbolizes “the human race.” Together, they were given the image of God. The only difference between them was that of gender. When they sinned, all of humanity sinned (Rom 3:23). Therefore, salvation is for all of humanity. Christ is Lord over all nations. In the human nature of Christ, all of humanity finds expression (Bridger, 1995:717-718). Though scientific, genetic, and physical factors group humanity into different races, the Bible teaches us that there is only one race, which is the human race.²

Racism – Similar to ethnocentrism, racism is the belief that one race is superior to the other, resulting in discrimination and segregation. The Oxford South African Concise Dictionary defines racism as “discrimination against or antagonism towards other races” (2010:970). The implications of classifying people into different races based on genetic and physical distinctions raise the problem of racism. A hierarchy is created based on those distinctions.

² This is further discussed in chapter 4.

Mayers explains that “within specific societies, racial distinctions have arisen that have developed into racist attitudes” (1980:22). Some refer to racial attitude as prejudice or bigotry, but to Smith, racism is more than prejudice or bigotry. He asserts that “everyone is prejudice, but not everyone is racist.” Being prejudice means having opinions that are not based on facts. It is having a preconceived or false opinion about another race. To Smith, racism is backed up by power. “Racism is the power to enforce one’s prejudice. More simply stated, racism is prejudice plus power” (2012:85).

There are many references to racial discrimination, but the teachings of Darwin’s evolutionary theory which scientifically explains racism have given some people a reason to accept and practice racial discrimination. In his book, ‘The Descent of Man,’ “Darwin depicted Africans as less evolved than white people.” This characterization was used by scientific communities in Europe and the United States to promote racial discrimination (Borg, 2020). Another example of Darwin’s racist attitude is seen in his interaction to some South American Indians. He described them as “the miserable inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego,’ that they were on a very low rung of the evolutionary ladder, and were nothing more than cannibals, almost beast” (White & Comninellis, 2005:146-147). Pressman (2017:2) notes that the idea of social Darwinism was a manifestation of Herbert Spencer’s “interpretation of Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection.” Spencer advocates to the view that species are created with an instinct for self-preservation. To survive you have to be stronger than others. This perception invented the term “survival of the fittest.” “When applied to imperialist societies, this concept asserts that groups who are more economically, technologically, or politically advanced than neighbouring groups will naturally dominate and conquer.” Therefore, natural selection is demonstrated in the successful conquering of one society by another. This perception promoted and validated the superiority of white Anglo-Saxons by alluding that their success was rather natural than a result of their own desires to suppress others (Pressman, 2017:2-3). Such teachings have largely influenced the racial domination around the world. However, teachings on evolution did not make people feel more empathetic towards each other.

White and Comninellis (2005:146-147) argues that teachings of evolution encourage the evil instincts within man to think that he is better than others. They rightly state that “Evolution may be a “fairy tale for grown-ups,” but it carries a moral implication even more destructive than a nuclear bomb”. Such teachings in society needs to be a reminder to Christians of the extent of sin in the world and the need for the gospel. While Darwin may have had a great influence on the

racial issue that the world is faced with, this evil is rooted in the sinful nature of humanity.³ In the words of Sanou (2015:97) “Racism is more than a social problem. It is a sin, a moral and spiritual issue.” It’s a sin because it prevents Christians from obeying the command to love your neighbour and is rooted in pride and arrogance.

Culture - Culture shapes our thinking and the way we do things. It is the common ideas, feelings, and values that guide the community and personal behaviour. It shapes our views on God, the world, and humanity (Conn, 2000:252). The context in which we live is widely shaped by culture. Adeney affirms that culture is God-ordained. However, customs that glorify God are not the only things that we observe. Our culture has cultivated thinking and behaviour that is also displeasing to God (2009:418). The problem is not culture, the problem is the fallen nature of man. The sinful nature within man has caused the man to use culture in a way that is displeasing to God. In the tradition of Augustine and Calvin (Ryken, 1995:278), “despite the fallenness of human culture, commitment to Christ allows a person to transform culture into a Godly pursuit.” Though culture is ordained by God, God is above culture, and he wants us to glorify Him in and through our cultures. Christ is the one that saves and transforms the hearts of man, thus; he can shape and transform our cultures in a way that will honour God.

Unity –The Hebrew word for unity in the Old Testament is unitedness, and the Greek New Testament is oneness. Leitch (1977:844) expresses how scripture portrays great richness and variety in the use of the term as follows:

There is the unity of the believer with his Lord, and there is the union manifested in the body of Christ, the Church, which rest eventually on a deeper unity of believers in “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Unity in Christ is illustrated in many ways: that of husband and wife, or the stones and the building. The classic analogy is the vine and the branches (Jn 15). Apart from such unity the follower of Christ can “do nothing.” The unity is his life and the ground of his action.

The word unity is not a very common word in the Bible, but the idea of unity is seen throughout the Bible with the term “one people in God”. Though we read of the dispersion of the nations in Genesis 11, the Psalmist in 133:1 encourages unity amongst God’s people because Israel is from one father (Bromiley, 1985:1127). Church (2003:1639) has found that “central to the faith of Israel is the confession of the unity of God” (Deut 6:4). He states, “because God is one, one set of laws

³ Although there are many reasons to explain the cause of racial and ethnic conflicts, this research has argued that sin is the root cause. The argument is presented in chapter 4.

was to apply to both Israelites and foreigners” (Num 16:16). However, sin disrupted this ordained unity from God. Man was created to enjoy unity with each other, but sin in the garden of Eden resulted in mistrust, accusation, stubbornness, pride, etc. In Ezekiel 37:15-23, there is an anticipation for the day that God will reunite the divided kingdoms. This union will include all peoples under one Lord (Zech 14:9) (Church, 2003:1639). Church (2003:1639) additionally adds that in the NT Jesus prayed for believers to experience unity amongst each other, modeled by the unity he experienced with the Father. Jesus’ prayer was fulfilled within the life of the early church (Acts 2:1, 43; 4:32). However, sin did threaten the unity of the church (Acts 5:1-11; 6:1; 15:1). Paul’s ministry emphasised the one body in Christ which reflected the union in the trinity and transcends all differences (Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 12:13, 27-30; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:14-15; 1 Cor 12:6; Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 12:4) (Church, 2003:1639).

It is through the cross that the church has been brought together and can once again enjoy oneness with each other. “The wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and indeed between Greek and barbarian, bond and slave, male and female, is broken down. There is now the one people of God embracing men of all nations” (Eph 2:12-13; Gal 3:28) (Bromiley, 1985:1127). The death and resurrection of Christ has reconciled man to God and to each other.

Reconciliation – Reconciliation is a term that is used to describe relationships that were once destroyed and are being restored. The Oxford South African Concise Dictionary defines reconciliation as “the action of reconciling.” An occasion where friendly relationships are being restored (2010:986). In Biblical understanding, the fallenness of man did not only destroy the relationship between man and God but also between man and his brother/neighbour. However, the relationship that was destroyed is restored through the death and resurrection of Christ. For this reason, Woodruff (1996:663) concludes that reconciliation can also be subjective, “in that the sinner is spoken of as being reconciled. It is a relationship that comes between man and wife as well as Jew and Gentile.” Humanity cannot approach God in worship if he or she has not reconciled with his or her brother. The Bible teaches that when man comes before the altar to offer a gift and remember that he has something against his brother, he must leave his gift, reconcile with his brother and then come and offer his gift. Woodruff (1996:663) further advocates that “Reconciliation is something done by the one who offers it, it is not just something that happens to the estranged people. It is the cross of Christ that reconciles both Jew and Gentile”.

Trulear (2000:810) explains that reconciliation is the process through which God works to restore broken relationships. In Colossians 1:20, Paul teaches us that through Christ God reconciled to himself all things on earth and in heaven. Peace was brought through the blood of Christ that was

shed on the cross. Reconciliation is God reconciling man to himself and each other through His son Jesus Christ.

Mission – The word mission is an important concept in theology, ministry, and the Christian life. Although the Bible does not refer to the word mission, throughout the Bible God is seen on a mission to redeem a people for himself and calls the church to partner with Him in this mission. Accepting the call to partner with God means being sent into the world as his witness. According to Larkin (1996:534-535), the divine activity of the mission is sending. We are sent out to preach the gospel so that the purposes of God are furthered. He confirms that the Biblical concept of mission “is expressed by the use of verbs meaning to “send”, normally with God as the expressed subject”. The concept of “mission” encompasses the authority of God, who is the one that sends; and it gives understanding to the obedience, task, power, and purpose needed to accomplish what we are sent out to do.

Missio Dei - This is a theological and missiological term used for ‘the mission of God.’ It describes “God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate” (Bosch 1991:10). The missio Dei speaks of Gods mission in the world that the church is called to participate in. Ott and Strauss (2010:62) enunciate that, God is a missionary God, and mission is rooted in the sending activity of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The clearest biblical understanding of this is seen in Jesus’s words to his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21b). God does the sending, and he sends out the Church. Throughout the bible, the mission of God is seen in God wanting to redeem His people. For this reason, the bible can be read through the lens of the Missio Dei.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

In an article titled "Building a biblical theology of ethnicity for Global Missions," Davis (2003:91) observes how globalization is changing the western world from being tribes and nations into a global city. He explains that the world, nation, and communities are rapidly changing. Immigrants and refugees are taking their customs and traditions to other countries. Nations, like never before, are pictures of different ethnicities. Davis (2003:91) calls this "nations within nations." This is a very relevant situation for the country of South Africa.

South Africa is probably one of the most diverse countries in the world, consisting of people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. Berggren (2016:19) describes SA as a "continent in a continent." It is one of the first "multi-ethnic places in the world." These descriptions of SA are based on its enormous diversity, and this is a great opportunity for the Christian church to partner with God in reaching every nation, tribe, and language with the gospel. Stetzer (2012:126) agrees that God is moving people of different nations into our cities and neighbourhoods. Sending people overseas to preach the gospel is needed, but we can also remain where we are and make disciples of every nation because the nations are right next door. Therefore, the question that we need to ask is this: "what does it mean for the church of Jesus Christ to live and do mission in a multicultural and multi-ethnic world?" (Davis 2003:91).

Ministering the gospel cross-culturally and to people of difference can be a great challenge for the Church in South Africa considering the history of the country. Since 1994, SA has been a democratic country, yet the problem of race and ethnicity still lingers in communities and societies. People are still torn by "ethnic rivalries, intolerance, and violence" (Mbevi, 2013:1). Mbevi (2013:2) remarks that "... the dream of a 'Rainbow Nation' remains uncertain." This is a sad reality that many South Africans live with, even more so to know that the Christian Church is also living with the effects and influence of apartheid. The apartheid legislation spread through the society and brought division in the church based on racial lines (Berggren, 2016:19), causing separation and segregation in our worship to God and our relationship with people inside and outside the church. Burns (2004:35) affirms that "racism, inside and outside the church, is alive and well," and Berggren (2016:20) agrees that after many years of democracy, society is still divided and there is no exception in congregations and churches in SA. Similar patterns are emerging in other countries but for SA, it is unique because of its history of apartheid.

However, amid racial and ethnic rivalries the Church must still participate in the mission of God. Smith (2012:16) argues that the missional side of the church is kingdom advancement, a common

denominator of a multi-ethnic church. The church is God's instrument to take the gospel to the world. Therefore, if the church wants to reach a multicultural society, issues of race and class cannot separate the people of God. Kingdom advancement in the early church was not separated between Jews and Gentiles, and it surely cannot be like that now.

To reach a diverse society with the gospel, the church will have to unite, but the church can only be challenged with this if they understand ethnicity from a biblical perspective. In the words of Davis (2003:93), "our response, I am convinced, will largely depend on whether we have the courage to develop and implement a truly biblical perspective on ethnicity." Building a biblical perspective of ethnicity will expose the church to God's heart for the nations and challenge the church to unite for the sake of the gospel. The urgency and desire of the church to reach every nation with the gospel will cross the barriers of race and ethnicity, resulting in the church being more effective in the mission of God. A mission without a nation-focus misses the entire point of the mission of God. Therefore, "Christians need a heart for the nations because God has a heart for the nations" (Stetzer, 2012:125).

1.1.1 Ethnicity and the missio Dei

God's heart for the nations is seen throughout the bible, beginning with the creation of humanity. Adam, not identified by a race or ethnic group, but whose name simply means 'humankind' together with Eve became the parents of all existing people groups today. When God created Adam, He created him in His image. This means that everyone today, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, and culture, is created in the image of God. The creation story of humanity is not based on any ethnic group, instead, it focuses on all people (Hays, 2018). Segal (2020) explains that until the time of the dispersion of the nations at the Tower of Babel, the world had not experienced racial or ethnic hostility. He states the following:

To be sure, the world has known division and hostility before Babel, even murderous hostility (Gen 4:8), but apparently, it had not yet experienced racial or ethnic hostility. Families and generations multiplied from Adam to Noah, and then for 350 years after the flood, from Noah until Babel. And still, after nearly four centuries of being fruitful and multiplying, "The whole earth had one language and the same words" (Gen 11:1).

The purpose of the dispersion was for man to not immerse themselves deeper into sin. However, instead of seeing the beauty in being created in the image of God, they thought of themselves as better than God. This was the effect of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3). This is why God confused their language and scattered them over all the earth (Gen 11:1-9).

God, being the loving God that He is, had a plan to restore and bring back His people to worship Him. His plan is universal and extends to all of humanity, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). God is a universal God with a universal plan. As stated by Ott and Strauss (2010:57), “God is frequently referred to as the God of heaven and earth, and of all nations, a universal God.” His universal plan to redeem all nations begins at the time of the patriarchs when God made a covenant with Abraham that through him all nations will be blessed. In the Old Testament Historical sections, God thrusts His people into redemptive contact with other people. The Global intentions of God’s mission have many references in the book of Psalms and in the book of the prophets, the prophets saw a time when God will be known not only by Israel but the whole earth. This is fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus which focused not only on Israel but extended to the Gentiles. In the book of Acts, it is taught that whoever believes in Jesus belongs to the church. In the Epistles, individuals from all peoples are embraced in the church, and lastly, in the book of Revelation, the global mission that began in Genesis is finally fulfilled. People of every nation, tribe, and language are seen standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb (Miley, 2003:30).

The bible is very clear about God's redemptive plan extending to all the nations. In the words of Stetzer (2012:122), “I would point out that there appears to be an ethno-linguistic thread through the Scripture. Every tongue, tribe, and nation are a thread woven through Scripture from the beginning to the end.” However, some may argue that nations in the bible refer to one ethnic or people group, mainly because Israel was the chosen nation. Rankin (2005:17), giving the Greek translation of ‘all nations’ (panta ta ethne), explains that when Jesus commissioned his disciples to make disciples of all nations, he meant “to bring into the Kingdom of God and make disciples, Christ-like followers, of every ethnic, cultural, and language group in the world.” Kgatle (2018:4) also affirms this notion that the Great Commission extends to ‘all nations.’ It is a commission not only to the lost sheep in Israel but includes the Gentiles, and people of all races, religions, colour, and class. The Great Commission extends to all ethnic groups and includes all the geographic and cultural contexts of the world.

Contrary to this, some churches view the Great Commission as a church growth mandate. Not that church growth is not biblical, but if the church is more concerned about growing the church in numbers instead of intentionally reaching every people and nation with the gospel to grow the church, then the church has missed the point of the Great Commission (Piper, 2007:157). Piper (2007:157) argues that the call for missions “cannot be defined in terms of crossing cultures to maximize the total number of individuals saved.” The will of God for missions “is that every people group be reached with the testimony of Christ and that a people be called out for His name from all the Nations.” Perkins and Rice (1993:157) rightly states that “if the disciples took the words of

Christ and related it to his lifestyle, then they would have understood what Christ meant". In the three years of his ministry, he interacted with people that were despised, and "the great commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself," he said, meant especially loving those who are different from you." The ministry of Jesus showed no partiality but extended to both Jews and Gentiles. It is not race or ethnicity that matters, but its faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

God desires for everyone on earth to hear and respond to the salvation message. This is because the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection is for everyone who will call on the name of the Lord in repentance and faith (Nix, 2013:44-45). The beauty of Christ's death and resurrection is that it reconciled humanity to the Father, but also, broke down the barriers of race and ethnicity between humanity. In a blog written by Bowers (2019), "*Bound together for good*", he argued that "Racially divided worship may feel comfortable to most people, but this comfort is out of step with our Saviour's heart, who died to tear down such divisions." Jesus Christ is the end of all ethnocentric and racial pride. At his return, the new way of defining the people of God will be `faith in him`. "Faith in Jesus trumps ethnicity" (Piper, 2011:122). Physical identity does not make the church, instead, it's the blood that Christ shed on the cross that unites all of humanity, forming one body in Christ (Piper, 2011:122).

It is this universal message that Christ commands the church to extend to all people. It is not limited to one ethnic group but extends to people of every nation, tribe, and language. "This is the universal God, and it is the ultimate justification of the universal scope of mission" (Ott & Strauss, 2010:58). If the mission of God is universal and extends to all nations on earth, and God invites the church to participate in this mission; how then will the church respond amidst the racial and ethnic barrier?

1.1.2 The Church and the missio Dei

According to McNeil & Richardson (2004:19) the church seems inadequate to have awakened itself to the concerns of the problem of race and ethnicity. He asserts, "We have failed to have proactively declared and demonstrated the truth and power of the Gospel to create unity across cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities". Christians seem powerless to begin bridging the gap between God's vision for us and our current social reality. People have turned to the church for answers, but the church may have failed to live up to what it is preaching. Though it may acknowledge its identity and the role it plays in the mission of God, it is still living in the past. What Martin Luther King Jr. (as cited by Mokgatle, 2016) once said 50 or more years ago, "the most segregated hour in America is eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning," Mokgatle (2016) believes to be a very relevant statement that describes the churches of South Africa today. He states the following:

Even though we have had an integrated society since 1994 – our schools are integrated, our places of work are integrated, even our neighbourhoods are integrated – on a Sunday we get in our cars and drive to our homogenous churches to worship our God who has called us to be unified in Jesus by the power of his Spirit.

The answer is not to ignore ethnic differences, but to embrace one another's ethnic difference and live out God's plan of a multi-ethnic kingdom. "The church of the kingdom of God transcends race yet recognizes the beauty of ethnic diversity..." (Smith, 2012:23). This is God's design. He is the creator of all ethnic differences, and He desires for the church to embrace this beauty and unite.

Unity and oneness with people of different ethnicities testifies to maturity and growth in Christ. Bowers (2019) pointed out in his blog that Christians need each other to grow into the fullness of Christ. He states, "white Christians need black Christians and vice versa. Individuals cannot grow in the fullness of Christ without each other." As Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:18-19, that together, with all the Lord's holy people, we will grasp how deep the love of Christ is and be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

In a blog post published by Acts 29, titled "A call to justice, restoration, and renewal," it is noted that one of the enjoyments of being in community within the church is true reconciliation. However, it is argued that this "will not be achieved without confrontation and responsive action..." (Acts 29, 2020). The church as a community of believers will have to corporately confront the issues of the past and its current implications to the church. Individually, each one will have to repent from their sins and together, they are to "denounce the evil that has been committed as well as the systems that support it." True reconciliation can be practiced within the church when genuine gospel-centered repentance takes place (Acts 29 2020).

God's mission in the world is reconciliation. Therefore, "Christians participate with God's mission by being transformed into ambassadors of reconciliation" (LOP, 2004:2). Ethnic issues such as tribalism and ethnicity that exploded in many African countries including South Africa is a great mission field to participate in ministries of reconciliation and healing. "As affirmed by recent horrors in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and elsewhere, Africa is ethnically a conflict-ridden continent" (Daniel, 2012:4). This is an urgent call for the church to re-examine the meaning of "mission, evangelism, discipleship, and even church in relation to God's reconciling mission" (LOP, 2004:3). Onwunta and Hendriks (2009:315) points out that "the theme of love and the concept of reconciliation were at the heart of the mission that Jesus inaugurated," and Paul echoed this in his ministry (Jn 13:34-35; 2 Cor 5:17-20). Based on the ministry of Jesus and the

teachings of Paul, they argue that “from the outset reconciliation propelled by love is the crux of the mission of God in the world.” However, the church has not always lived up to the mission of God.

The picture of a multi-ethnic kingdom found in Revelations (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15) emphasizes ethnic diversity amongst Gods people. This is a model that the church should strive towards (Hays, 2018). Tizon (2018:148) emphasize that the image in the book of Revelation is that of the Great Reconciliation. This image should reflect in words and deeds. They further explain that if the church does not find its inspiration in the reconciled gathering mentioned in the Book of Revelation, then the church “jeopardises the Greatness of the Great Commission”. The church is a body of believers united in Christ through his death and resurrection, and this unity should be seen in the Church. Piper (2011:126-127) advocates that if one of the purposes of the cross was to reconcile different ethnic groups by bringing them closer to God in Christ, then the church magnifies the cross better when it practices ethnic diversity and harmony in its daily living. Piper firmly states the following (2011:126-127):

If Christ died - mark this, died! - to make the church a diverse, reconciled body of Jew and Gentile - “red and yellow, black and white,” and every shade and shape in between - then to glory in the cross is to glory in the display of the fruit of that cross.

Amid racial and ethnic divides, the church is to serve as a beacon of hope to communities and societies because the gospel of Christ transcends all man-made boundaries and unites everyone at the feet of the cross, and the church is to be a testimony of this great truth. As indicated in a blog written by Meyer (2019), “the church exists to show the world, which is divided by man-made boundaries, that the Gospel moves beyond these boundaries and that the Gospel transcends it.” Racial and ethnic barriers can end because of the Gospel. Sanou (2015:100) rightly states that “the church cannot take pride in doctrinal and theological purity if we allow tribalism and racism to dim the light of the Gospel.” The church will have to constantly evaluate itself, then only will the world be convinced that the church is a better alternative.

In a globalized society, one of the marks of a healthy church is a diverse church. However, Mokgatle has pointed out in his blog post that the church today is not practicing diversity. He states, “today, people walk into churches and say: that’s the black church, that’s the white church, that’s the rich church or the poor church. This should not be!” (2016). Considering how globalized societies are, it is believed that there is a great need for more transcultural and multi-ethnic churches. For this reason, Mokgatle (2016) encourages church planters and church leaders to plant “churches that embrace diversity and through the unifying power of the gospel, create new

communities in Christ.” The church should always strive at becoming a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic church. Smith (2012:27) agrees with this by pointing out that multi-ethnic churches are a biblical mandate, but this has been a problem for the church to plant, grow, and sustain. People are more comfortable with people of their own, therefore; it’s easier to plant, grow, and sustain a homogenous church. However, Robertson (2005:24) has argued that a homogenous church will not reflect the universality and diversity within the body of Christ and it will not grow to maturity. In Padilla’s (2010:162-182) study on the unity of the church and the apostolic teachings, his findings showed that there is no indication in the New Testament that the apostolic church based their missionary strategy on planting homogenous churches, as the most effective way to reach people with the gospel. However, there is an acceptance for churches separated according to language and culture living in the same geographical area. Padilla (2010:162-182) explains this as follows:

We must admit that at times “the witness of separate congregations in the same geographical area based on language and culture may have to be accepted as a necessary, but provisional, measure for the sake of the fulfilment of Christ’s mission.” But the strategy of forming homogenous unit churches for the sake of mere quantitative church growth reflects “the fear of diversity and the chauvinistic desire to ignore, barely tolerate, subordinate or eliminate pluralism...”

A homogenous church may be acceptable based on language or culture, but to strategically plan on planting homogenous churches is not biblical. In a diverse society, Christians must intentionally reflect God's plan of a multi-ethnic kingdom. Ethnic diversity is an important factor in the *missio Dei* and it is not biblical for the church to claim that they are effectively involved in the mission of God yet not embrace ethnic diversity within the church.

It must be noted that there are a lot of churches, mostly in cities, that are diverse. However, the problem arises when the church is not embracing unity and is unwilling to be inclusive. Diverse churches are sometimes not effective in including people of different ethnicities or cultures in the decision making or ministries of the church. They believe that diversity is enough. Diversity may be a good start, but it is not enough. In a blog titled “*When diversity is not enough*”, Scheepers (2020) advocates that “diversity cannot be the goal for our churches. Instead, we must move beyond mere diversity towards inclusion (being able to speak), belonging (being listened to when you speak), and trust (being asked to lead when you speak).”

When churches are not inclusive of other ethnicities and cultures, people feel unvalued and unwelcomed. Therefore, negatively affecting the mission and outreach of the church. In a blog

written on evangelicalism and white evangelicalism, Chang (2017) discusses how white evangelicals are failing to fully embrace people of colour. He begins his article by explaining why American raised children of immigrants left the immigrant churches for other churches. He points out, “one of the primary reasons they left was because they felt as though they weren’t considered in the shaping of the church.” The children requested for their culture to be represented, but the church was not willing to embrace other cultures. The children did not feel like an integral part of the church and therefore, left the church. According to Chang (2017), “it is critical to note that the issues for which they left the immigrant churches weren’t doctrinal or theological, but cultural.” This is a sad reality that many church members are faced with. This is an issue that should awaken the church to becoming a true image of God's multi-ethnic kingdom. Especially if they want to be effective in reaching people with the gospel. In light of this, Scheepers (2020) challenges the church with the following questions:

Who leads your church? Whose voices shape and bear authority in your church? Is there only racial diversity or also economic diversity? Is there space for the voices of women and youth? What would it look like to include, listen to, and be led by the voices of the marginalized?

A diverse church is not seen in how many different ethnic and cultural groups it encompasses. True and biblical diversity is seen in inclusivity. If the church is not willing to embrace and become inclusive of other ethnic groups and cultures, then the church will not fully embody who Christ is, nor the work that he accomplished on the cross. As a result, this will impact the mission of the church.

Peters (1972:199) defines the church as “god's chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, purchased people.” He explains the purpose of the calling of the church by asserting “...that the church should show forth the virtues of him who called her out of darkness into his marvellous light” (Peters 1972:199). The church is the visible manifestation of Christ Jesus and was birth on the day of Pentecost to accomplish god's purpose in the world. The church will never fully show the virtues of Christ and accomplish God's purpose in the world if they are divided based on appearances. To show that the church are people belonging to Christ and to accomplish God's purpose in the world, it will have to embrace ethnicity, reconcile, and unite for the sake of the gospel as God’s chosen instrument to take the gospel to the world.

1.2 The Research Problem

Despite many efforts and initiatives taken by the government and the Christian church to combat the problems of race and ethnicity in South Africa, divisions based on race and ethnicity is still

evident in the country. The question arising is, “how is the Christian church responding to this ongoing problem?”

While the church is called to be an alternative community and partner with God in reaching all nations with the gospel, it has been observed that disunity and conflict based on race and ethnicity is also evident within the Christian church, affecting its mission and witness to the nations. As noted by Sanou (2015:100), “tribalism and racism in the church can easily destroy the early work of evangelism.” Agreeing with Sanou is Greenway (1999:156) when he stated, “unity amongst believers contributes to the spread of the gospel, but disunity damages missions”.

The ongoing conflicts and divides that the country is faced with is a platform for the Christian church to raise its voice and enhance its mission to the nations. The church still has a role to play in the social and political concerns of the country but can only be effective in its witness and mission when it is united. This researcher argues that when the church is united, its witness and mission in a community that is divided will be more effective. Davis (2017:155) has rightly pointed out that “multi-ethnic churches that intentionally bring people together around the gospel and demonstrate loving unity in diversity have a voice and an influence that can radically impact communities, cities, and nations”. The church will be a biblical example to communities of what unity in diversity looks like, and they will have a great impact in reaching a diverse nation with the gospel. If the body of Christ is willing to unite amidst the racial divide, the gospel they preach will attract a diverse nation – which is what God intends.

To effectively live out its God given mandate in society, the church must re-examine its role and mission, and through theological reflection apply biblical and practical steps in embracing racial and ethnic diversity. The problem arising is on how the Christian church in South Africa can become Gods agents in a society that is still divided by race and ethnicity.

1.3 Research Question

Key Question

The main question for this study is:

How can the understanding of biblical principles of unity in Christ, embracing ethnic diversity from a missio Dei perspective enhance obedience to Christ’s command to make disciples of all nations?

Questions arising from the key question.

The following questions are questions arising from the main question, to clarify the main question:

- What are the causes, effects and extent, of the race and ethnicity problem in South Africa?
- How has the problem of race and ethnicity affected the church and its mission in South Africa?
- How has the church been responding to this problem?
- What does the Bible teach about race, ethnicity and the missio Dei?
- What recommendations can be made to the church in South Africa to embrace unity and diversity for the purposes of enhancing its involvement in the mission of God?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

Aim

The aim of this study is to strengthen the church in South Africa in its understanding of biblical principles of unity in Christ, that embrace ethnic diversity from a missio Dei perspective and thus enhance obedience to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- Describe the extent, causes, and effects of the problem of race and ethnicity in South Africa.
- Analyse how the problem of race and ethnicity affected the church and its mission in South Africa, and how the church is currently responding to this problem.
- Establish biblical teachings on race, ethnicity and the missio Dei.
- Recommend biblical and practical steps that the church in South Africa can take to embrace ethnic diversity and thus enhance its involvement in the mission of God to reach all nations with the gospel.

1.5 Central Theoretical Argument

The central theoretical argument in this research is that when the church understands the place that ethnicity holds in the heart of God's mission, they will see the purpose of uniting for the sake of the gospel. The fact that the mission of God extends to all people, will challenge the church to unite and move beyond the barriers of race and ethnicity and intentionally take the gospel to the nations.

1.6 Research Design

The proposed study field for this research was missiology. The researcher began with a detailed description of the extent, causes, and effects of the problem of race and ethnicity in South Africa, followed by an analysis on how the problem of race and ethnicity has affected the church and its mission. The researcher then did a study on relevant Scriptures and narratives in the Bible to help establish a biblical understanding of unity in Christ, embracing ethnic diversity from a missio Dei

perspective. Based on the information analysed and presented. Recommendations on biblical and practical steps that the church can take to embrace unity and diversity that will enhance its involvement in the mission of God. Overall, this research consists of six chapters; with chapter one being the introduction and background of the study and chapter six, the conclusion.

1.6.1 Research Methodology

“Methodology is the way you go about achieving the purpose already stated” (Vyhmeister, 2001:25). In this chapter the researcher looked at how the method for the research presented in the research design was used. How exactly did the researcher go about doing the research? (Smith, 2008:157).

a. Descriptive

In describing the extent, causes, and effects of the problem of race and ethnicity, the researcher began by looking into the history of South Africa. How, when, and why did the problem of race and ethnicity begin, and how has this impacted societies and communities today? To obtain this information, the researcher consulted with relevant literature pertaining to the history of South Africa with regards the ongoing challenge of racial and ethnic divides in post-apartheid South Africa. This section of the research concluded with an analysis on the response of the government and citizens to the ongoing challenges of race and ethnicity in the country.

b. Analysis

To answer the question on how the problem of race and ethnicity affected the church and its mission, and how the church has and is responding to this problem, recent literature pertaining to race and the church was reviewed. The researcher focused on analysing specific church denominations that was visible during the time of apartheid and has analysed whether or not these church denominations and the church as a whole, is still visible in the continued struggles of the country. This section of the research concluded with an analysis on how the continued problems of race and ethnicity impacts the church and its mission, as well as the continued role and mission of the church in post-apartheid South Africa.

c. Theological Reflection

In this section of the research, the researcher conducted a biblical and theological study by tracing the mission of God throughout the Bible. The researcher focused on Scriptures and narratives from both the Old and New Testaments, that was relevant and added value to the study. In understanding the Scriptures and narratives chosen, it was important to investigate the historical context of the text and to do a word study on some of the words. To establish the theological

meaning and application of the Scriptures and narratives chosen, the researcher consulted with different Bible commentaries, surveys, and historical backgrounds.

c. Application to Ministry

According to Vyhmeister (2001:153), this is a section that should be made up of three main parts: 1.) A summary or synthesis of the theological discussion, 2.) The writer's own conclusions on the topic, and 3.) A suggested course of pastoral action to apply the conclusion to a real situation in ministry. The application or practical steps recommended are based mainly on the conclusions of the literature and theological findings presented in this study. To formulate the most effective application to ministry, the researcher consulted with some new literature and compared the views of different authors.

1.6.2 Data Collection

Data collection for the research was done in the form of literature research. An analyses and comparison were done on a variety of academic books that was relevant to the research topic. The relevant resources were obtained from the North-West University library in Potchefstroom, and other theological and non-theological libraries. Other resources such as bible commentaries, concordances, and theological dictionaries was used specifically for the theological section of the study. Journals and articles were searched by relevant titles and subjects relating to the research in various search engines such as: NWU Library Catalogue, EbscoHost, Galaxie Journals, JStore and Google Scholar. The researcher attempted to use articles that were not older than 10 years.

1.7 Chapter Outline

- Chapter one: Introduction and background.
- Chapter two: Causes and effects of the problem of race and ethnicity.
- Chapter three: The problem of race and ethnicity in the church, and its response to this problem.
- Chapter four: The biblical teachings of unity in Christ, embracing ethnicity from a missio Dei Perspective.
- Chapter five: Recommendations on biblical and practical steps that the church can take to embrace ethnic diversity and thus enhance its involvement in the mission of God.
- Chapter six: Summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 THE RISE OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC TENSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA: ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS

2.1 Introduction

Despite many years into democracy, racial and ethnic tensions are still prevalent in South Africa. While unity does exist, the sad reality for many is that the country is still a divided nation. This segregation continues to impact the government and its people. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how racial and ethnic tensions continue to affect and manifest themselves in society today. This chapter will not present solutions to the problem, but instead; describe the problem, its causes, and effects. A short history of the country will be presented, including the racial and ethnic tensions that the country has and continues to experience. Looking at how the government and citizens are responding to this problem will help in understanding the current state of the country.

2.2 Historical Overview of South Africa

South Africa “borders the Atlantic and Indian oceans, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. It covers a vast area of land which is approximately 1, 219,080 square kilometres” (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:204). With its beautiful sceneries and different cultures, tribes, races, ethnicities, and languages; the country is known as one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is also famous for its strong economy and its well-developed infrastructure (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2009). The 2020 statistics SA estimated the mid-year people population of the country at 59.62 million.⁴

From the beginning of time, people have been on the move for various reasons. History asserts that migration has been an important factor in the Shaping of South Africa. It explains how the country has become so diverse but also, why conflict exists between different groups of people.⁵ Known as the largest people movement, the “Bantu Migration” was the first migration that took place in Africa. They came from the North in about 400 ethnic groups and slowly made their way down to Southern Africa.⁶ The Khoi-Khoi and the San were the first people to settle on the land.

⁴ Stats SA 2020 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022020.pdf>.

⁵ Sourced Online: <https://www.facinghistory.org/confronting-apartheid/chapter-1/introduction>.

⁶ Sourced Online: <https://sites.google.com/site/wwwbantumigration/>.

They “preferred well-watered areas – forest margins, valleys, riversides, lakeshores, and coastal plains” (Iliffe, 1995:97). They depended on agriculture and farming for their survival.

For more than 2000 years, these Bantu tribes wandered at the tip of South Africa until they were found by Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652. This was when Europeans migrated to the country and later imported slaves from India, Malaysia, and other countries.⁷ It was during this time that the Bantu tribes became more settled and created a system of chiefs and kings. Rivalry became a challenge amongst the tribes as they competed for land and resources resulting in tribal wars. These were so intense that tribes were scattered and some were forced to move further South.⁸ This made way for the European settlers to expand their territory northwards but also brought them into contact with the Bantu migrants. Conflict began to emerge between these two groups. By this time the country was seen as two different nations – one being developed and the other, primitive.⁹

By 1795 the British movement¹⁰ came and they occupied the Cape of Good Hope. As more people began to occupy the Cape, shortage of land became an issue. The colony began to expand east leading the British into contact with the Xhosa tribe, and this contact immersed political conflict between them. The conflict experienced between them gained British dominance over the Xhosa tribe.¹¹

With the British occupation came cultural domination. The British did not want to accept anything from the Afrikaners but instead imposed their culture and ways of living on them. Resenting British rule and some objecting the abolishment of slavery in 1834,¹² led to the biggest white migration. Known as “The Great Trek” and recognised as the Afrikaner nationalist movement, thousands of white farmers left the east and moved northwards in search of life away from the British. This movement led the Boers into creating three new independent, white-ruled states:¹³ Natalia (it later

⁷ SA History 2018/19 <https://www.gov.za/about-sa/history>.

⁸ These wars are also known as “Mfecane” and “Difaqane”. It is further explained in this chapter under the heading *Tribalism*.

⁹ SA History 2018/19 <https://www.gov.za/about-sa/history>.

¹⁰ This movement took place during Britain’s war with France. They migrated to the Cape of Good Hope to prevent the French from using the Cape en-route to the East.

¹¹ SA History 2018/19 <https://www.gov.za/about-sa/history>.

¹² Sourced Online: <https://www.facinghistory.org/confronting-apartheid/chapter-1/introduction>.

¹³ Ibid.

changed to Natal), the South African Republic or Transvaal (now known as Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo), and the Orange Free State (now Free State). According to Theuns, it was during this time, the 17th and 19th century when South Africa's struggle against the colonial powers began (2017:02).

Reinforcing these conflicts was the discovery of gold and diamonds between 1860-1873. 1880-1881 records the first Boer War and 1889-1902 records the second Boer War. Unlike the first Boer War, the second Boer War affected all South Africans, both black and white. After the war ended, the Boers were left in pain and trauma.¹⁴ It was then that the Afrikaaner Nationalism emerged in response to political and economic exclusion. In 1910, as part of the British Empire, the Union of South Africa was formed. It was only then that the Afrikaaners saw things change. Under the Union of South Africa, the Afrikaaners and the British united for the sake of the country. During this time, the Afrikaaners slowly started to use their political power and the foundation for racial segregation was gradually laid. In 1912, the African Native Congress was formed and later became the African National Congress. In 1948, after winning with the majority of white voters, the National Party came into power and racial segregation was legalised.

2.2.1 Apartheid

Apartheid, as defined by Birch (2013:06), is "the systematic and institutionalised oppression of people of colour in South Africa established by the government in power at the time, the National Party." Welsh (cited by Brokensha, 2010:146) defines apartheid as "segregation on the grounds of race" and describes the conditions of South Africa after 1948 when the NP won political power. From both Birch's and Welsh's definition of apartheid, it can be observed that apartheid was a policy based on racial segregation, which was institutionalized in 1948. Adding to this, Welsh (cited by Brokensha, 2010:146) points out that when the apartheid policy was implemented in 1948 "racial segregation was not new."

Racial segregation can be dated back to the Dutch settlers in 1652. According to Lewis (2016) "racism arrived with the arrival of all Europeans in Southern Africa. It's not something that suddenly surfaced in 1948!" Welsh (cited by Brokensha, 2010:146) points out that in 1659 van Riebeeck ordered a fence to be built between blacks and whites. Also, consider the Natives Land Act of 1913 which permitted blacks to only purchase and reside in land reserved only for them (Brokensha, 2009:146). Such practices existed before 1948. It can therefore be concluded that racial segregation existed before 1948 and was officially made legal in 1948 with the apartheid

¹⁴ The second Boer War is further explained below in this chapter.

policy. However, SA was not the only country that discriminated against people based on race. According to Welsh (cited by Brokensha, 2010:146), what made the situation in SA different was the fact that it was done “openly and legally”. The apartheid policy was a legal policy that permitted discrimination and oppression against people of colour.

The driving force behind legalising racial segregation was the desire to “take over the major institutions of the country: the economy, and the political and educational systems”. Therefore, after winning political power, the NP implemented the evil system of apartheid which elevated white people and deprived all other racial groups (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:205). The nation was separated along racial lines, with whites being superior and thus, privileged. Pillay (2017:06) explains that the apartheid policy was structured in such a way that white privilege was protected, and it was legal for whites to discriminate and dehumanize blacks. Due to the protection of white privilege, the apartheid system permitted blacks to be legally oppressed. Oppression, as defined by Birch is “the exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust way.” The government used their power and authority in an unfair, unjust, and unlawful manner to forcefully instil inequalities and discriminate against people of colour. Discrimination was seen in the areas of “housing, marriage, education, employment and health” (Pillay, 2015:06).

Under the evil system of apartheid, people of colour were prohibited and disadvantaged to many things. They were prohibited from freely moving around, participating in economic activities, and contributing to the development of the country – their own country. Instead, they became “cheap-labour for white-owned industries” (Berat, 2014:220). And to ensure that the people would abide by the segregation rule, the government (NP) implemented a set of laws of which, some are as follows (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:205) (Leatt *et al*, 1986:72):

- The Mixed Marriages Act (1949).
- The Immorality Act (1950).
- The Population Registration Act (1950).
- The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953).
- The Group Areas Act (1950).
- The Bantu Education Act (1953).

Matsinhe asserts that to whites, blacks became the ‘black spots’, blots, blemishes, disgrace, dirt, disease, stains, stigma that soiled the national body” (2011:58). Adding to this, Berat states that they were characterized by “poverty, overpopulation, underdevelopment and frustration” (2014:220). By treating the non-whites unfairly, they were made to believe that they were inferior and incapable of contributing to the development and economy of the country. Birch asserts that this was an imposed belief upon them which soon became a way of living (2013:6-7). Black people

started to believe that they were inferior and began to fear the whites.¹⁵ This was all done to protect the privileges of whites in fear that if the blacks contributed to the development and economy of the country, they would take over. People of colour suffered in much pain, torment, and agony. Apartheid remains the most painful history in South Africa and it took a long fight to get to where the country is today.

2.2.2 The Fight for Democracy

Since the early 1900s, the oppressed people of colour envisioned a new South Africa. Walter Sisulu, Olivier Tambo and Nelson Mandela, who were some of the men that fought in the fight for freedom, were all part of the ANC Youth League that was created in 1944.¹⁶ In 1955 the COP took a major step in bringing together different representatives to prepare equal rights for everyone in the new South Africa. This was a very successful meeting as they created the Freedom Charter¹⁷ (Sall, 2018:02).

The ANC continued in a peaceful fight, but in the 1960's violence and conflict emerged that challenged the government. To Vorster, violence and conflict leading up to the end of apartheid is described as "low-intensity war and strict international pressures" (2017:68). But to some, it is known as terrorism. The Sharpeville massacre that took place on the 21st of March 1960, is known as "one of the first and most violent demonstrations against apartheid in South Africa". About 250 non-whites were killed after police officers fired at them.¹⁸ On the 16th of June 1976 emerged the Soweto Uprising, where black students protested on the streets of Soweto against education being taught in Afrikaans. Approximately 10 000 students participated in the peaceful protest until they were met by police officers who fired teargas¹⁹ at them. In research done by

¹⁵ This is something that has been carried forward to today. Though they may not fear them, blacks still perceive whites as off high standing. If a white person went into a black community he will be welcomed and treated with respect. But if a black person went into the community, he will not be as welcomed as the white person. This can also explain why xenophobia is targeted towards black foreigners and not white foreigners.

¹⁶ The league aimed to encourage the youth to fight against racial segregation. For further information see <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/african-national-congress-youth-league-ancyl>.

¹⁷ The representatives that were present were: The South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats, the Congress of the People Campaign and the African National Congress.

¹⁸ Sourced Online: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Sharpeville-massacre>.

¹⁹ SAHO 2021 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising>.

Schoeman and Cachalia (2017:03), they have found that terrorism or violent extremism has been existent from the time of apartheid. They explain the following:

Throughout the apartheid era, various far-right groups carried out bomb attacks targeting black communities, liberal politicians and multiracial institutions... South Africa's most prominent far-right group is the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB). In the early 1980s members of the AWB were convicted of terrorism after terrorist plots had been uncovered. In the build-up to the 1994 elections, the group carried out multiple attacks aimed at destabilising the country and disrupting its first multiracial elections – most notably, with a series of bombings on the eve of the elections killing 20 people.

The end of apartheid meant that black Africans could now have equal rights and privileges to white Africans. The segregation laws ended, they became citizens in their land, they could move around freely and moved into previously prohibited areas. 1994 was the year when many South Africans were filled with joy and happiness as they celebrated the freedom they could now enjoy in their own country. After much realisation that the apartheid system was not good for the country from an economic and moral perspective, the apartheid policy ended with a peaceful process (Vorster, 2017:68)

After winning the elections in 1994, Nelson Mandela established the GNU to bring about reconciliation and unity. In the first month of his presidential office, he declared in the autochthony discourse, "Each of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld" (Matsinhe, 2011:63), expressing his heart for a united nation. Till today, he is known globally and remains the icon and hero of the country - the man who brought an end to apartheid, uniting black and white.

The new apartheid free nation was described by Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the 'rainbow nation', which symbolises hope and unity. This was not made into an official policy, but it foresaw a place of peace, forgiveness, and people that are united despite their differences (Sall 2018:02). The new SA gave people hope, assurance, and expectations, that no more will they live in the past. However, for some, this hope, assurance, and expectations have not come to pass. Many years into democracy and yet people of colour²⁰ still find themselves living separately from the rest of the country with added disadvantages. In fact, it is believed that Desmond Tutu's vision

²⁰ Referring to blacks, coloureds, and Indians.

and hope of a rainbow nation is more divided than before. People are still fighting and protesting for equal rights and privileges. And this fight has been passed down to a generation that has not even lived at the time of apartheid.

2.3 Racial and Ethnic Tensions in South Africa

2.3.1 Racism

Since the end of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic government, plans were put in place to maintain a democratic and free country for all. Admittedly, race relations have improved over the years. However, from what is seen through social media, social gatherings, and daily face to face reactions towards each other; racial issues still exist. In his argument, Boonzaaier (cited by Vorster, 2017:60-61) poses that “post 1994 South Africa still struggles with ongoing racist behaviour.” People of colour have the freedom to vote, freely move around, and live in previously prohibited areas; but the idea of “us” and “them”²¹ is still existent.

Racism is characterised by segregation and privilege, where whites and blacks were separated and treated differently based on the colour of their skin. Skin colour or race is what was used over centuries to determine privileges and advantages and attributes to the problem of racism. Felder (2020) explains that race may not have a genetic basis, but it is still used as a powerful social construction to maintain privilege and power. Vorster (2017:60) observes that the rise of racism and the hindrance to a non-racial society is the ongoing racial classification of white, black, mixed race and Indian people.” When people are classified into groups, especially based on the colour of their skin, then it is certain that racial tensions will exist, and one racial group will be superior than the other. The lighter your skin, the more advantaged you are; the darker your skin, the least advantaged you are. This explains the history of apartheid and racism where whites were labelled as superior and people of colour as inferior. Through the ongoing classification of race and skin colour, man will maintain the laws, policies, and strategies that was previously designed to segregate and treat people differently based on the colour of their skin.

In a newsletter written by Joorst²² (2019), he discusses how racism continues to be an issue in schools. Recent incidents, such as a teacher being accused of separating pupils according to

²¹ A division between groups of people. This is not a common term used verbally. But in books, articles or research, this is a common term used to express divisions between groups of people. E.g., the superior and the inferior, the black and the white, the rich and the poor.

²² Joorst 2019 <https://theconversation.com/racism-is-still-rife-in-south-africas-schools-what-can-be-done-about-it-110195>.

race²³ and schools that are favouring white students who have failed,²⁴ are examples of how race is still a defining factor in the schooling system. Atsango (2020) expresses her experience of racism during her schooling years by stating, “It became clear that as a black or non-white student in the school, teachers and white students merely tolerate your presence.” Racism was experienced through racial comments and insults, threats, and the use of the “N”²⁵ and “K”²⁶ words. Atsango (2020) further expresses that although SA is known as a Rainbow Nation due to its diverse population, it is unfortunate that many people are not embracing this diversity. Using the hashtags #racisminSAhighschools and #icantspeak, students have taken to social media to share their encounters of racism and discrimination within the education system and classroom.²⁷

Racism is also seen in the business and employment sector. In a 2010 report regarding race relations, Holborn observed that “racial identity is a deciding criterion for employment, promotion, ownership and control of enterprises and assets” (Vorster, 2017:72). Employment is a major factor in economic stability, but many people feel disadvantaged in this area due to the colour of their skin. The CCMA records on a daily basis complaints and cases related to discrimination in the workplace. Their records have shown that these complaints have increased over the years. Out of all the grounds listed for unfair discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment and race have consistently been the highest. With regards to racial discrimination in the workplace, there has definitely been improvement for equal opportunities and for people of colour to be employed. But according to the South African Human Rights Commission, blacks and coloureds remain predominant in low-skilled and low-income positions²⁸ (2016:27-34). Looking at how racial behaviours manifest in schools and the employment sector; racial bias is still a major factor in determining the rights and advantages of people.

²³ Busby 2019 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/south-africa-school-segregation-black-white-racism-teacher-pupils-laerskool-schweize-reneke-a8721111.html>.

²⁴ Pijoo 2019 <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-01-15-another-north-west-school-rocked-by-allegations-of-racism/>.

²⁵ “Nigger” – Also known as “Negro”. A term used of white racism towards black Africans in the American context. The word denotes *hatred* or *disgust* towards the black person.

²⁶ “Kaffir” – A slur used of white racism towards the black person in the context of South Africa, during the apartheid era. It is known as an extremely offensive word.

²⁷ Atsango 2020 <https://assembly.malala.org/stories/racism-in-south-african-schools>.

²⁸ More information on racial superiority in the employment sector can be found below under the heading *poverty and unemployment*.

In South Africa, racism is associated with whiteness – whites having power, whites taking over, whites being superior, and centres around colonialism and apartheid. However, whites are claiming that they too are experiencing racism. The term used is “reverse racism”.²⁹ With the new government in place whites feel like they are in the minority and feel threatened by certain policies such as the “Black Economic Empowerment”.³⁰ Such policies are seen as discriminatory because it promotes only one race. The Indian and coloured communities are also concerned that when they were under the white rule, they never felt secure, and with the current majority rule there is no certainty that they will be secure (Murray & Simeon, 2007:726). In the recent events of looting and riots that took place in the Phoenix area in KZN that was organised by predominantly black people, the Indian community “expressed concern that racial tensions had been deliberately enflamed by those orchestrating the violence” (Harding, 2021). Marvin Govender, expressing his concerns to the BBC news said, "It was like a war zone. It was something orchestrated. Something sinister. These were highly trained guys. They were trying actually to cause a civil war in this country. It was a direct attack - on the Indian community" (Harding, 2021). Although for the Indian community it was a direct attack on them that brought fear and concerns of racism, for the black community who participated in the rioting; it was the imprisonment of former president Jacob Zuma that fuelled the unrest. Later, it became the people’s response to governments unfulfilled promises, inequality, and poverty. This was not an act of racism. In fact, the argument that is used by some is that ‘blacks cannot be racist’.³¹ Insults and threats that are made against whites are not made because blacks think that they are superior. Instead, Du Preez (2018) in a news article on the myth of reverse racism, explains that “it is a reaction to white racism, white domination and historical injustices – and sometimes a sense of insecurity or frustration can play a role.”

In a blog written by McKaiser (2012) after someone trying to convince him that blacks cannot be racist, he argued that there is so much wrong with this statement. He explains that the argument is about social, economic, and political power. If a group has achieved this, then they can be racist. But for the blacks, they feel that over the centuries and even through the end of apartheid have not yet achieved this power. McKaiser (2012) points out that for blacks to make such a statement they are alluding that if a black person achieved social, economic, and political power then only can he be racist. Thus, as of now, at least not yet blacks cannot be racist. McKaiser

²⁹ Racism directed towards a racial or ethnic group that was once dominant or prejudice towards others.

³⁰ BEE is a government policy aimed at bringing economic transformation, equality, and an opportunity for people of colour to participate in the economy. BBBEE is responsible for implementing these policies <https://smesouthafrica.co.za/Brush-up-on-your-BEE-knowledge/>.

³¹ <https://www.news24.com/news24/xarchive/archive/maxdupreez/the-myth-of-reverse-racism-20180403>.

(2012) further explains that not all black South Africans are disempowered. They may be in the minority but a lot of them hold power. His assumption is that they are so “psychologically bruised that their apparent middle-class status, confidence, upward mobility and social and political capital mean nothing...”

If social, economic, and political power is what causes one to be racist and superior towards others, then the researcher contends that any race; be it Indian, black, coloured, or white can be racist.³² We cannot overlook the fact that in the context of South Africa, a lot of whites still hold power.³³ However, there are some blacks who have also obtained power. Looking at the current government, majority of the seats have been occupied by black Africans who hold the power of making decisions for the country. The truth of the matter is that any race or ethnic group who has the assumption or belief that they are superior to others and treats them differently based on the colour of their skin, are racist. But in the context of SA, it is difficult to accept this truth because of its history of whites discriminating against blacks and people of colour.

2.3.2 Xenophobia

Xenophobia is another ethnic issue that South Africa is challenged with. Although it existed during the time of apartheid, the country has seen a rise in xenophobic outbreaks.

The recurring xenophobic attacks can be dated from March 1990, when the locals burnt down 300 huts that belonged to Mozambicans. In 1993, the locals living in Cape Town complained against the Namibians and Angolans stating that they were being given access to land and services, while many South Africans were left homeless. In 1994, claims were made that the Namibian fisherman were stealing the jobs of the locals, and in 1995, Operation Buyelekhaya (go back home) was launched to intimidate and rid the country of foreigners (Choane, Shalika & Mthombeni, 2011:131-132). In 2008, there was another xenophobic outbreak where over 60 people were killed. The nationwide attack on foreigners that took place in 2015 motivated foreign governments to intervene by sending their citizens back home (Pillay, 2017:7). In 2019, there were other incidents of xenophobic violence recorded. Jean, a Congolese shop owner, managed to escape his shop safely, after being chased and stoned out of his shop. Syed, a Bangladeshi

³² Refer to chapter 1 for a definition on racism.

³³ In statistics presented by BBC news in 2017, 67% of whites are in top management positions. Followed by 14.3% black Africans, 9.4% Indians, and 5.1% coloureds <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48123937>. Studies have also shown that only 23% of black Africans hold shares in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange <https://theconversation.com/white-people-in-south-africa-still-hold-the-lions-share-of-all-forms-of-capital-75510>.

shop owner said that about 1000 Bangladeshi shops were ransacked by approximately 300-500 people. Nathalie, another Congolese, said that on the 27th of August 2019, she was severely beaten for being elected as class monitor.³⁴

There are many reasons why xenophobia has increased over the years in South Africa. For many, it is the previously mentioned history of segregation and transition to democracy that has given rise to xenophobic violence. Harris (2001:58) explains that because South Africans were excluded and disliked by foreign nationals who invaded their land and took over, resulting in apartheid; citizens have developed a fear towards people of different nationalities. The isolation that they lived in during apartheid makes it difficult to accept foreigners. Hence this hostility that exists towards strangers. In an interview on the impact of tribalism in SA, Ngwane stated that the hostility existing between tribal and national groups is inherited from the apartheid regime who tried to divide the country along tribal and language groups (eNCA, 2019). Adding to this, in the research done by Harris (2001:58) on the foreigner experience of violence, crime, and xenophobia in SA's transition, her findings also affirm that apartheid is what gave rise to xenophobic attacks in SA. However, due to human nature; the fear towards strangers, different tribes, and nationalities has always existed.³⁵

The tribal wars³⁶ that existed before the institutionalisation of apartheid speak volumes of the fear that some tribes had of other tribes. This fear towards the other or strangers, is the same fear that we witness black South Africans having towards black foreigners. In a Chicago tribune article written by Wende (1991) right after the release of Nelson Mandela and during the process of negotiations to end apartheid, he discussed the tribal reality in SA. He points to the fact that while South African's anticipated freedom, the unresolved tribal issues would also carry forward. He firmly stated, "as Africa returns, bringing freedom in its wake, it also brings Africa's problems with it. The worst of these is the demon of tribal warfare..." Wende's (1991) statement affirms that these unresolved conflicts between tribes carried forward into SA's democracy. He further alludes to the fact that by blaming apartheid for these fights, the truth is being avoided. The truth is that almost every war or form of violence that has taken place in SA has elements of tribalism, and these unresolved tribalistic problems have manifested into other conflicts. Therefore, tribalistic

³⁴ Sourced Online: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/09/17/they-have-robbed-me-my-life/xenophobic-violence-against-non-nationals-south>.

³⁵ Refer to chapter 4 for details on how tribal conflict existed from biblical days.

³⁶ Some of the tribal wars experienced in South Africa and Africa is explained under the heading *Tribalism*.

issues are much to blame for violence experienced today. To say that apartheid is what gave rise to xenophobia, is not entirely true. The transition to democracy, however, did intensify some of the violent outbreaks that the country experiences today.

South Africa's transition to democracy gave citizens expectations which many believe have yet to be fulfilled. This has left many feeling frustrated, disappointed, and angry with the government. While the end of apartheid meant that whites and blacks will live equally, economic prosperity was still a disadvantage to many black South Africans. In a sense, democracy exposed the economic divide between whites and blacks (Mutsvara, 2018). Black South Africans believe that poverty intensified³⁷ for them and with the increase in immigration, there are not many economic opportunities. This dissatisfaction resulted in violent actions towards foreigners, with claims that they have come to take away jobs and what limited resources are available. According to Schwarz (2020), "refugees and migrants ... have been made the scapegoats for the nation's ills and governments failure to provide essential services". In other words, foreigners are being blamed for the government's failure to deliver and as a result, they have become targets of violence to get the government to respond.³⁸ The Pew Research Centre 2018 survey shows that "62% of South Africans believe immigrants are a burden on the country because they take jobs and social benefits." The same survey also showed that 61% of the South African population believed that "immigrants are more to blame for crime than any other group" (Zulu, 2019).

Crime is another reason xenophobic violence has increased. Allegations that Nigerians are selling drugs to children and Zimbabweans are running human trafficking rings express at whose door South Africans place the blame for the country's crime rate. No-matter what the real reasons are and who is to be blamed, xenophobia cannot be condoned. It is a serious problem that urgently needs attention.

2.3.3 Tribalism and ethnic cleansing

Tribalism, as defined in an article written by Baloyi (2018:2), is "the attitude and practice of harbouring such a strong feeling of loyalty or bonds to one's tribe that one excludes or even demonises other tribes that do not belong to that group". In a speech addressing the issue of tribalism in Africa, Lumumba (Lank, 2019) defined tribalism by firmly stating that, "tribalist are not

³⁷ In recent statistics presented by Nqola, there are 64% of blacks and 1 % of whites who are living in poverty <https://www.power987.co.za/featured/sas-poverty-statistics-64-black-6-asians-1-white/>.

³⁸ See below, under the heading *Poverty and Unemployment* to understand how corruption contributes to governments failures.

people who belong to a particular tribe. But they are individuals who out of their naivety, stupidity, or arrogance, hold the view that they belong to a club and that that club invariably appeal to their very base emotions of people from their tribe". From both these definitions of tribalism, it can be concluded that tribalism is not just facts, physical appearances, or cultural backgrounds and language that places one in a particular tribal group. Tribalism, are feelings and behaviours that are derived from one's loyalty towards his or her own tribe. These strong feelings of loyalty that one hold towards their own tribe can manifest into conflict and violence against other tribes.

Like xenophobia, there are many who believe that tribalism is a result of apartheid. Baloyi (2018:3) is one of those who argue that tribalism was one of apartheid's strategies to ensure a divided nation. However, this does not explain why tribalism exists in other African countries. It is important to understand that tribal tensions have long existed and continue to manifest in society today. To understand the roots of tribalism, it is therefore important to look at some of these beliefs and values within the African traditional religions and see how such values and beliefs contribute to tribalistic conflicts.

Firstly, religion and God is an important belief for African tribes. The commonality between tribes is that they all believe in God and religion. However, they view God as being limited to only their tribe. Turaki (2012:33) explains this by saying that in kinship relations, God is not viewed as universal and whose justice extends to everyone. Instead, he is "stripped of his universality" and is viewed as a tribal god. This means that if the universal God of justice is viewed as a tribal god whose justice is limited to only one kinship community or group then there is no need to treat others with dignity and respect. Religion is for the entire tribal community. An individual born into the community is automatically religious and is required to participate in the beliefs and rituals. There is no need for conversion, and no one can convert to belong to another tribe. You can only be part of a tribe if you are born in that tribe. Mbiti (1969:2) explains that "a person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and his entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence". An individual is obliged to his own tribe, which means that if he leaves then he removes himself from his community.

Secondly, Kinship matters - referring to blood relationships, has been an important topic in anthropological studies, for it shines light on a person's behaviour. These behaviour patterns are derived from the expectations of one's kinship community on how to live and behave. An individual's identity, status, and role are embedded within his blood-group. Which makes an individual obligated to his own kinship community. Turaki explains that blood-group or kinship communities are "governed by the kinship values of loyalty, affinity and obligations" and can result

in “precedence over all other social and ethical considerations” (2012:24). This means that a person’s obligation to his own tribe is more important than how he relates or treats other tribes. The problem with this attitude is that it “fosters tribalism, sectionalism, and denominationalism. It results in behaviour that breeds crises, conflict, violence, a domineering spirit, prejudice, and stereotyping” (Turaki, 2012:171).

In kinship communities, outsiders have no place. This explains the importance of kinship law within the African society. In expressing this importance, different morality and ethic laws are created for insiders and outsiders. Outsiders are treated differently to insiders. They may even be treated less than animals. This expressers how unwelcoming blood-groups are towards strangers. Turaki points out that outsiders are not entitled to “1) equal treatment; 2) ownership; 3) affinity, loyalty and obligations; 4) community rights and protection” (2012:173). Many attempts have been made to challenge the African beliefs on kinship and blood-group communities, but according to Turaki, these attempts have failed to transform the African mindset (2012:24). Instead, violence and conflict continue to manifest itself between tribes as they compete and fight each other for their place in society.

In South Africa, tribal conflicts can be dated back to around 1820-1835 which records the “Mfecane” – a Nguni word that translates “crushing,” and describes the violent tribal wars that brought separation between central Africa and South Africa between (Mensah, 2016). In Sotho, Mfecane refers to Difaqane or Lifaquane and translates, “forced migration.” This was in a series of wars as the people of the different states fought over land and resources. The states involved in the Mfecane were: Ndwandwe – led by Zwide; the Mthethwa - led by Dingiswayo, and the Ngwane - led by Sobhuza (Mensah, 2016). The causes of the Mfecane were firstly, overpopulation amongst the Nguni people. People began to fight over cultivable and grazing lands. As the population grew amongst the different tribes, there was an increase in the demand for more land. Another problem was the refugee problem which was caused by the wars. After Zwide attacked Sobhuza, the Ngwane people moved from their lands and invaded unknown regions where they built the Swazi composite (Mensah, 2016). The Mfecane had the most profound effects on the central and Southern parts of Africa because it led to larger political developments such as the Zulu state and the Swazi composite. After the defeat of Zwide, Shaka the Zulu built the Zulu Kingdom. After the decline of the Zulu Kingdom, Mosheswe, who emerged as a leader for the Sotho tribe built a kingdom which is now known as Lesotho. The Swazi composite that was built by the Ngwane tribe is now known as Swaziland (Mensah, 2016).

In other African countries, 1994 records the Rwanda genocides, when revenge was taken by the Hutus against the Tutsi’s for being subjected to humiliation for centuries. The traditional class

system classified the Hutus as the majority who were farm workers and the Tutsis as the minority who were the upper class (Lewis, 2016:240). In 1924 when Belgium was granted political control over the area, the Catholic Church became a prominent influence amongst the Hutus. The Hutus were then placed in a powerful position. By 1962 when Rwanda became independent, resentment and conflict developed amongst the two groups. By 1994 the Hutu's sought to cleanse all Tutsis from the area for the humiliation caused over the centuries (Lewis, 2016:240).

The tribal tension in South Sudan goes way back to 1991 when the Nuer tribe killed approximately 2000 Dinka people. Attempts to create a united South Sudan failed when the unresolved issues escalated in December 2013. The tensions arose when President Riek Machar, who belonged to the Nuer tribe was replaced with Salva Kirr, who belonged to the Dinka tribe. Williams (2017) who wrote an article on the tribal wars experienced in South Sudan, described the "widespread ethnic cleansing, burning villages, looming starvation, and gang rape," as "prevalent, and that it has become normal." It had killed 50 000 people, forced more than 2.3 million people to flee their homes, 6 million people to live in hunger, and many schools to be closed.

The Gukurahundi massacres - a Shona term which translates "the Spring rain that washes away the chaff" (Coutts, 2020), is known as the "darkest period" in Zimbabwe's post-independence history. In January 1983 terror raged on the Ndebele people living in Matabeleland, Western Zimbabwe. The cause of it was a rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU. It resulted in more than 20 000 civilians losing their lives during the rule of Robert Mugabe. Sekeramayi reported that not only did Mugabe know about what was going on, but the killings were "under Mugabe's explicit order." The killings were co-ordinated by North Korean Trained, Fifth Brigade Soldiers (Doran, 2015).

Kenya is another country known for tribalistic issues, yet; hidden under the surface. Shalita (2008) alludes that Kenya, a country known for being "one of the few truly democratic countries in Africa", lost its character with the "recent tribal flares following what many believe to be a stolen election". President Mwai Kibaki squandered his legacy when he sought to hold on to power to maintain political power of his tribe. But it was either Kibaki protects his tribesman or hand over power to the Gikuyu tribe and watch the wrath of his people. Characterised by corruption, nepotism, and tribalism; Jomo Kenyatta won the hearts and minds of the Gikuyu tribe – the largest tribe in Kenya, who took over the Kenyan politics. According to Shalita (2008), independence for Kenya was won through a collaborative fight, but the Gikuyu tribe ensured that their tribe would maintain power. Jaramogi Raila Oginga Odinga, who comes from Kenya's third-largest tribe, the Luo, was "repeatedly imprisoned for opposing the government" (Shalita, 2008). Tom Mboya, another politician from Luo was assassinated in 1969, and Robert Ouko, foreign minister also from the Luo tribe was slayed. However, these cases were overlooked. The Gikuyu tribe would not imagine

losing power after 45 years. The Luos and Kalenjin tribes are seeking to end the rule of Gikuyu, so that they too may enjoy the benefits of independence and share in economic and political power (Shalita, 2008).

Tribalism is a major problem in Africa but specifically for South Africa, tribalism can also explain why xenophobic violence, which is being blamed on apartheid, is only targeted towards black foreigners and not white foreigners.³⁹ This can also take another form of racial or ethnic tension which is known as nationalism.⁴⁰ South Africans are more loyal to their “own” rather than the outsider. Baloyi (2018:04) expresses that tribalism have become a hindrance to the reconciliation process, democracy, and the transformation of people’s lives. It is therefore important to deal with the problem of tribalism if the country wants to move beyond a racially divided and xenophobic country, into a reconciled community.

2.3.4 Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism can also be a hindrance to South Africa’s reconciliation process. The ethnocentric mindset – the belief that your “group” is better than others, can manifest into the problems of racism, xenophobia, and tribalism. It is therefore important to understand ethnocentrism and how it contributes to the tensions in SA’s reconciliation process.

The difference between tribalism and ethnocentrism is that tribalism has to do with a person’s feelings of loyalty and obligation to his own tribe, while ethnocentrism,⁴¹ is when a person view thing from the perspective of his own ethnicity and culture. Ethnocentric attitudes arise when ones distinguished ethnic characteristics are used to assess other ethnic groups. Such an assessment aggravates the belief that one ethnic group is superior or inferior to the other. This ethnic stereotype is like racism. However, unlike racism where judgement is based entirely on skin colour; ethnocentrism is inclusive of language, religion, cultural beliefs, and place of origin (Vorster, 2017:35-36). Historical manifestations of ethnocentrism can be found in specific cases such as fascism of Benito Mussolini which, according to Wan (2000:324) “emerged in the 1920s in Italy.” In 1930, Adolf Hitler's control over Germany and his superior beliefs in “his kind” gave

³⁹ In South Africa and other African countries, tribal conflict is between black groups, because its only within black communities that groups are divided according to their tribe. Therefore, one of the contributing factors to xenophobia is tribalism because it is conflict between black South African’s and black foreigners.

⁴⁰ Nationalism is another form of discrimination. It is when nations hold strong feelings and interest towards people of their own nation and exclude those of other nations.

⁴¹ Refer to chapter one for a definition on ethnocentrism.

rise to the killings of the Jews. The racial conflicts experienced in the United States and Africa are also manifestations of ethnocentrism.

In the context of South Africa, the Europeans who settled in the country naturally believed that their ways of living were more valid and therefore, tried to impose their ways of living on the Africans. They believed that if they adopted the culture of the South Africans, then they would become one – there would be social integration. They refused cultural assimilation and therefore, adopted the anti-assimilation policy (Van den Berghe, 1965:225). This manifested into an excluded community, where South African's were banned from associating with the international community. As a result, racism increased, and apartheid was legalised. When one sees their own culture or way of living as correct, they may try to impose or forcefully convert others to living in that same way. In some cases, they can even feel threatened by other groups and this fear is what leads to xenophobic violence and genocide.

One of the ways in which ethnocentrism has largely influenced South Africa today and other parts of the world is through “consumer behaviour.” Kamwendo *et al* (2014:320-321) explain that consumers are thought to show interest and support for the economy of their own country. The findings from the Country-of-Origin research show that consumers are more favourable to products that are produced in their own country. Carter Jr (2009) adds by asserting that the greater a person shows favouritism towards his own country; the higher the probability is for that individual to express an ethnocentric attitude. An ethnocentric consumer rejects foreign goods and naturally favours products produced domestically.

Though ethnocentrism manifests itself into problems of racism, xenophobia, and tribalism; it is important to note that ethnocentrism is not the root cause of racial and ethnic tensions. In the context of South Africa, there are several root causes to the problems of racial and ethnic divides. Below is a descriptive analysis of some of these causes.

2.4 The Cause of Ethnic Tensions in South Africa

2.4.1 The Anglo-Boer War (1899 - 1902)

In the context of South Africa, the cause for racial and ethnic conflicts can often be traced back to Apartheid – when racial segregation was legalised. Though this is true, there are still other leading causes for racial and ethnic tensions in the country. One such cause is the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. This is a war that many do not talk about when it comes to generational conflict and trauma.

Wessels (2014:161) expresses that the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 was “a war that set-in motion a train of events that in due course, had profound implications for inter-group relations in

South Africa.” It is also known as the “*Boer War*” or the “*War of Independence*.” For the Afrikaaners, it is known as the “*Anglo-Boer War*.” Some scholars prefer the term “South African War” because both white and blacks were participants in the war (Pretorius, 2011). Wessels (2014:161) further explains that the Anglo-Boer war was the first struggle for liberation that saw the Afrikaaners being the first African freedom fighters. This war was the most “extensive and destructive” war that South Africa has ever experienced (Wessels, 2014:161).

The Anglo-Boer War was between the Afrikaaners and the British. There are a number of leading causes that had led to the breakout of this war and some are listed below, according to the South African History records (2020)⁴²:

- 1. Conflicting Political Ideologies** – After the first Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881), the British Government did not give up in its attempt of unifying South Africa under British rule. But the Boers were a stumbling block. They wanted to maintain their independence.
- 2. The discovery of Gold on the Witwatersrand** - In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, in the Transvaal. As a result, many blacks and whites were employed to work in the mines. South Africa became prominent in its production of gold. This would result in the Boer independent republics increasing their wealth. However, at that very time Britain was renowned around the world for its industry and trade and needed a good supply of gold to maintain their position.
- 3. Tension between Political Leaders** – Political leaders had opposing views. Paul Kruger, the president of the Transvaal supported Boer independence. However, Cecil John Rhodes, who was the premier of the Cape Colony was in support of uniting South Africa under British rule.
- 4. The Jameson Raid** – Dr Leander Starr Jameson planned a raid against the Transvaal. The plan was for Rhodes to take over the government and turn it into a British colony. However, the raid failed. Rhodes tried to stop the raid but Jameson’s party had already made its way into the Transvaal. The Transvaal government were prepared for the raiders and this did not end well for Jameson and his party.
- 5. The Uitlander Franchise** – The Uitlanders came from all over the world to make money in the Transvaal. Some were not concerned with the political situation of the republic, whilst some believed that they had a say in the political situation because of their contribution to its riches... The government, realising that this could be a threat to the republic, developed bills and laws whereby only under specific conditions Uitlanders could have a say in political matters. Jameson Raid was aimed at gaining respect and after the failure of the raid, called

⁴² SAHO 2021 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/second-anglo-boer-war-1899-1902>.

up a meeting with Kruger to discuss the Uitlanders Franchise. But Kruger refused to discuss the affairs of internal matters. Jameson then attempted to get Britain involved in the Transvaal political affairs. His attempts stirred up more tension between the two countries. Sir Alfred Milner was sent to South Africa as British High Commissioner with the hope that Kruger will not be elected again as president. Milner was afraid that the Boer republic will take over the entire country. He therefore, encouraged Jameson that a war was the only way to prevent this from happening.

Looking at the reasons listed above for the cause of the war, it can be concluded that the Anglo-Boer War was a war based on political power and control between the Afrikaners and the British. Both the British and the Afrikaners were not fully prepared for the war. Later, the Boers became more aggressive in their fight and the British Army became forceful in their strategic plans to defeat the Boer onslaughts. Wessels (2014:163) explains the drastic measures taken by the British Army as follows:

The scorched-earth policy and concomitant camp system; the building of some 8 000 blockhouses across the length and breadth of the war zone; mobile drives against the Boer commandos; and the employment of as many as 140 000 black and brown (as well as a few Asian) local inhabitants (either in a combatant or non-combatant capacity), as well as more than 5 500 Afrikaners who had surrendered and then joined the British forces.

The British violent and aggressive response instilled pain and trauma upon the Boers and some blacks. Buildings and farms of approximately 30 000 belonging to the Boers, houses belonging to black labourers, and approximately 40 towns and villages were brought to destruction. Half of the Afrikaner population and more than 100 000 blacks (not belonging to the military) were left destitute. Wessels (2014:163) describes the condition in which the Boers found themselves as a "humanitarian disaster." About 28 000 white civilians, of which 80% were children; and 23 000 black civilians were killed. Sangster (2000:100) expresses that the grief between the British and the Boers lasted a long time.

On the 28-29 February 1900 Lord Kitchener of Khartoum succeeded Lord Roberts as the British commander-in-chief. He desired for the war to end. However, the Boers were very frustrated and continued to fight which consequently led to harsh treatment from the British, increasing the trauma. Wessels (2014:164) believes that if the Boers surrendered to the British rule, considering they were losing the battle, they would have spared themselves from increased suffering and pain. However, the Boers continued to fight for their independence.

By May 1902 the Boers realised that they were placed in a hopeless situation and through negotiations they surrendered to the British rule under certain conditions - whoever surrendered to the British would have freedom and the right to keep their possessions; and Dutch will continue to be the medium of instruction in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Schools. Another negotiation was that the Boers, after self-government, will be able to determine whether or not blacks and coloureds will be allowed to vote. In practice, when the Afrikaners were given political power, blacks and coloureds were not allowed to vote. To maintain the peace between the Boers and the British, the privileges of blacks and coloureds had to be sacrificed (Wessels, 2014:166). However, not only were the privileges of blacks and coloureds sacrificed, but they were also being oppressed. The same oppression that the Boers experienced during the war was now being inflicted upon people of colour, in fear that if “another” took over the country, then the Boers would go back to being oppressed. Such actions speak to the trauma and humiliation that the Boers were left with after the war.

2.4.2 Trauma and Humiliation

Helene Lewis, author of the book “Apartheid: Britain’s Bastard Child,” became “obsessed with trying to understand why apparently 'good' Afrikaaners ... had invented something as ugly as apartheid.” This obsession led her into doing research in psychology. During her research, she came across work done by Lawrence Kohlberg on “Moral Reasoning” (Lewis, 2016:236-237). For some time, Kohlberg worked “smuggling Jewish refugees from Romania through the British blockade into Palestine.” With his work, the horrendous World War II, and the Holocaust; Kohlberg became convicted and asked the question: “what inspires us to commit atrocities against fellow human beings?” It was this that led him to write a dissertation on “Moral Development” where he argues that a person’s moral maturity can be measured through the assessment of their moral reasoning. He explains this as follows (Lewis, 2016:236-237):

Moral reasoning ... is determined largely by an individual's psychological and social circumstances, and the culture in which they grew up. This implied that people who'd passed through severe trauma, and lived in constant fear of its recurrence, were likely to be more rigid in their moral thinking than those born and raised in less stressful environments.

It can be understood that people who may have experienced pain and trauma in the past responds, acts, and behaves differently compared to a person who may have not experienced severe pain and trauma in their past. This pain and trauma, if not dealt with in the early stages can manifest into shame and humiliation. When a person is continuously being broken down, their

self-esteem and dignity is also being destroyed. As a way of dealing with their pain and humiliation they inflict pain on others.

In a psychohistory conference, Lewis learnt that humiliation is the driving force to repetitive violence. According to research done on humiliation, it is suggested that humiliation caused by social pain is the same experience to physical pain – it can be lived a lifetime and inherited by the future generation (Lewis, 2016:236-237). In Hartling's (2005:446) research on the "experience of humiliation," her findings showed that those who had high scores "described their experiences of humiliation as if it had happened yesterday." Though their experience of humiliation may have happened many years ago, the experience was still fresh and real to them. In an interview when explaining the relationship between shame and humiliation, Lewis explained that "Humiliation is the most powerful (most damaging), and often a longer-lasting form of shame." Unless the problems are rightly addressed, revenge is a way of being "whole again, to reclaim esteem and restore dignity" (Lewis, 2017).

In the context of South Africa, to reclaim their esteem and restore their identity, the Boers took revenge on people of colour; even though they were not the ones who inflicted pain on them. Due to shame and humiliation and not having dealt with the problem correctly, conflict has repeated itself and this has created new cycles of humiliation for the next generation. Cycles of humiliation is seen in the British inflicting pain on the Boers, and then the Boers inflicting pain on people of colour. Today, many years after the fall of apartheid, there are still many people that are living in shame and humiliation caused by past hurts. This is seen in recent protest and lootings. People of colour are still angry with the way they were treated during apartheid. This pain has now been passed down to the youth. Even though they have not lived under apartheid, they too are angry about the past and have created their own movements and protests. Such actions demonstrate how unresolved trauma and pain, can be unintentionally passed to the next generation.

The Anglo-Boer War and the sufferings they had to endure is part of the Afrikaaner historical identity, and because they did not attempt to deal with the trauma caused, this psychological pain is inherited by their children. "In the minds of many Afrikaners, there was the idea that what the Afrikaner had to go through during the Anglo-Boer War, should never again happen to 'us' (Wessels, 2014:169). Instead of learning from their past and dealing with pain, they became the new oppressors, the new traumatisers, the ones who would now inflict pain on others. In support of racial segregation, the apartheid government used different theories and tools to defend their evil actions. One of the tools used to defend the apartheid law was the Bible. Some Afrikaaner's abused the Bible by asserting that they were the chosen and thus created differently.

2.4.3 Theologised Politics

Religion and theology played a crucial role in the painful history of South Africa. Convinced that God designed racial segregation, Reformed theologians and the apartheid government were sure that apartheid laws were pleasing to God. This belief supported their racial thinking and justified the oppression of blacks. The Afrikaaner theology, according to Lephakga (2013), promoted the belief that God created the whites different from the blacks. The whites were known as 'civilised' while the blacks were considered to be 'heathens.' This thinking established the apartheid theology and produced theologised politics. Lephakga (2013) further explains that with the influence of the "pseudo-interpretation of the doctrines of Calvin", the Afrikaner civil religion was strengthened and thus promoted racial segregation and apartheid laws.

B. J. Vorster, who was the prime minister in South Africa from 1966 to 1978 stated, "Yes, I believe profoundly... that we [Afrikaaners] have been appointed by providence to play a role here [in South Africa], and that we have the human material to play that role." This understanding and belief was the driving force of Afrikaanderdom - that they were the elect *volk* (nation) to be Gods agents (Leatt *et al*, 1989:66-67). This theology was influenced by the Old Testament, as they compared themselves to the Israelites – God's chosen people. Contributing to this are other biblical stories, events, and verses that were used to build a biblical case for apartheid and some of the ideas are shared below:

1. **Creation Order** – In order for the world to function, God created hierarchies, institutions, structures, and relationships. In the Context of South Africa, whites were placed at the top of the hierarchy and as such they were in a position of control.
2. **Different Races** – The Bible is clear that God designed racial segregation and that people are recognized by their race. The story of Babel and verses such as Acts 2:5-11, Rev 5:7-9 and Rev 14:6 support this belief.
3. **Designated Regions** – Based on Acts 17:26, the apartheid government was convinced that God allocated regions for different nations and races, and He created boundaries between them. This was an important verse used as a biblical defence for apartheid because it settled the matter of racial segregation and boundaries.
4. **Submission to Authorities** - Based on Romans 13:1-17, God had placed the government into authority. They have the right and power to implement laws and the biblical response from citizens is to submit to authorities.

Whoever obeyed these laws were obedient to God and whoever did not accept these laws were disobedient to God. Some Reformed churches⁴³ and leaders were in support of these teachings and were certain that these teachings were grounded in scripture. F. Potgieter, one of the most prominent Reformed theologians, went as far as stating, "It would be in a direct contradiction of the revealed will of God to plead for a commonality between whites, coloureds, and Blacks" (Giles, 2016).

This is how the Bible was abused to commend apartheid. However, the Bible was not the only tool used. Scientific theories and social Darwinism have had a great influence on the contribution to racial segregation. These teachings and theories did not only perpetuate the problem of race and ethnicity in South Africa but has had and continues to influence the entire world.

2.4.4 Scientific Theories and Social Darwinism

Over the years, scientists have worked on promoting different explanations on racial differences. Though many people and mostly Christians, believe that these explanations are not true and are misleading; social darwinism, the eugenics movement, and the creation intelligence testing⁴⁴ did not fail at influencing racial beliefs and conflicts (Pressman, 2017). Herbert Spencer, who formulated "survival of the fittest" and Francis Galton who promoted eugenics, are the driving forces behind scientific racism. Though Darwin did not promote eugenics, his theory of "natural selection" did influence Francis Galton (Pressman, 2017) and opened a gap for further research to be done on eugenics.

Before the popularisation of darwinism, people referred to race according to nationality. But this, does not mean that arguments on race and racism did not exist. The problem of race, ethnicity, and tribalism has always existed. But the release of Darwin's book in 1859, "On the Origin of Species", increased these arguments and people started to view different groups according to different races. Darwin's evolutionary theory taught that different groups, people, and races evolved at different times. This meant that everyone is different and have different advantages. This way of thinking perpetuated racial attitudes and prejudice. Ham (2006:221) points out that "Darwinian evolution was (and still is) inherently a racist philosophy." Racial attitudes that have

⁴³ Not all of the Reformed churches and leaders supported apartheid. Some were against it and fought in the fight to end apartheid. This will further be discussed in chapter 3 when looking at the Churches contribution to apartheid.

⁴⁴ Intelligence testing – one of the methods used scientifically to determine which group between the whites and blacks is more dominant.

largely been influenced by Darwin's teachings is responsible for the evil of racial and ethnic conflicts.

In explaining the origin of species, Darwin's theory on 'natural selection' points to the fact that evolution is progressive and organisms with specific characteristics that survived under pressured circumstances will pass on to the next generation and multiply. Conversely, organisms with bad traits will not survive under pressured circumstances and their characteristics will not pass to the next generation and so multiply. Based on this hypothesis, Darwin believed "that white races, especially the Europeans, were evolutionarily more advanced than black races, thus establishing race differences and a racial hierarchy" (Rose, 2009:297). In other words, Europeans had good traits and were considered more fit and able to survive under specific pressures because they had means. On the other hand, blacks or non-white groups did not have good traits and the means to survive under pressured environments. Therefore, they were considered as "less-fit". This meant that their characteristics will not pass down to the next generations and therefore will eventually cease. Because of this, they were considered inferior to whites.

One of the ways in determining who has better traits or which group is more fit was through conflict. Pressman (2017) points out that, "Social Darwinism asserts that racial conflict is a natural means of evolutionary progress." Survival is embodied in racial conflicts and the group that loses the battle is labelled as unfit or inferior. Herbert Spencer advocates to the view that species are created with an instinct for self-preservation. To survive you must be stronger than others. This perception invented the term "survival of the fittest" (Pressman, 2017). This meant that people groups who are more economically, technologically, or politically advanced will survive and will naturally dominate and conquer. Pressman (2017) further points out that natural selection is demonstrated in the successful conquering of one society by another. This perception promoted and validated the superiority of white Anglo-Saxons by alluding that their success was rather natural than as a result of their own desires to suppress others.

Based on the belief that blacks were inferior and less fit to survive, whites and Europeans were encouraged to avoid them. To ensure that whites would avoid the blacks, Darwin's theory on "purposeful mating" was utilized. In avoiding "inferior or tainted genes of the blacks to be inherited by their offspring", whites or the Europeans were encouraged to mate with their own because they were perceived as healthier, while the blacks were said to be of "poor health, with higher rates of tuberculosis and venereal diseases, and low intellectual ability" (Pressman, 2017). Mating with non-white groups would mean that the bad traits of the blacks would be inherited by the whites. Considering that the blacks were seen as less-fit and did not have the means of surviving, inheriting their traits would be a hindrance to the survival of the whites.

Darwin`s teachings have influenced racial domination all around the world. People have become more distant and even overbearing to other groups of people. White and Comninellis (2005:146) went as far as stating that teachings of evolution encourage the evil instincts within man to think that he is better than others. To some, racial dominance, racial hatred, racial pride is good and brings order to the world. The truth is that racial attitudes, actions, and prejudice have caused more negative implications than one can imagine. Today, the world remains divided by race, people are unequally treated, and as stated before; most of the conflicts that the world is faced with has to do with people`s physical appearances. If Darwinism asserts that different races do exist, some have advantages more than others, hierarchies are part of the evolutionary process, and in order to survive you have to be more fit and stronger than others; then in a world that is globalised, where every day people are in contact with people of different cultures, races, and ethnic groups; how is it possible for one to live in peace with the other if there is this constant feeling of threat and fear, or the feeling of “I am better than you”? Considering that racial and ethnic tensions have always existed, and the problem has not fully been dealt with, in a globalised society and community, people are finding it difficult to love and treat their neighbour with dignity and respect. Looking at the context of South Africa, it could be said that globalisation and migration have intensified racial and ethnic conflicts.

2.4.5 Globalisation and Migration

Globalisation is the connection and relationship of people, countries, and continents across the world that has created different opportunities for development through their dependency on each other. Migration, as defined by Akokpari (2000:76) is the “movement of people from one location to another within and beyond a country of normal residence.” These people are known as emigrants. The link between globalisation and migration is that globalisation has influenced the vast movements of people around the world. With international influence and relations being built to benefit the economy internally, a gap has been opened for citizens to flee to or seek better opportunities in other countries.

South Africa is known as one of the most multi-cultural, multi-ethnic countries in the world. People, from mainly other parts of Africa have migrated to the country for different reasons. According to the records by Theuns (2017) and Nyingi (2017), South Africa has approximately 2 million⁴⁵ foreigners living in the country, of which majority are from: Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique and Somalia. Looking at how global South Africa has become; it could influence an

⁴⁵ In mid-2020, it was estimated that 2.9 million immigrants are now in the country. Some estimates are higher than this.

entire continent and build international relations to help the country become more established and developed. However, for South Africa, globalisation has been a negative experience. There are so many possibilities in globalisation, yet it stands as one of the hindrances to reconciliation and peace.

Though international relations were meant to strengthen the economy internally,⁴⁶ economic difficulties and unemployment seems to be the main reason for immigration. Countries like South Africa, with a developed economy becomes attractive to people from countries that are economically underdeveloped. Nyingi (2017) affirms that “South Africa’s status as one of the largest economies in Africa makes it attractive to migrants, some of them seeking a greener economic pasture, others safety and security.” The movement of black nationals to SA may have increased after democracy, but this movement existed for a very long time prior. To the Zimbabweans and Mozambicans, coming to South Africa for work has been a tradition. “This tradition is reflected in the dates when Zimbabwean respondents first arrived here - 1962, 1970 1979, 1987, 1989” (Harris, 2001:75). These dates indicate the movement of black nationals to South Africa for years.

Although economic factors remain the main reason for coming to South Africa, other factors such as wars and natural disasters has also been the cause for movement. Harris has pointed out that the reason no other African country is first choice may be due their negative portrayal. With strict police services and the fear of their human rights being abused, it is also assumed that compared to SA, people are not very welcoming to strangers. Whilst the decision to come to SA was based on their expectations for their needs of human rights protection, employment, health care, and education to be met, emigrants have found that not only have their needs gone unmet, but they have not been welcomed and their human rights are being abused in the country from which they have sought asylum.

Instead of positively impacting the country, globalisation has given rise to racial and ethnic conflicts. As observed by Vorster (2017:52), globalisation is a major cause for the rise in xenophobic and racial tensions around the world. With the borders opened to foreigners, citizens feel threatened that foreigners have come to take away their limited resources such as employment. Pillay (2017:09) believes that out of all the reasons, economic factors are the most dominant. Du Rand (2017:99) agrees that “the primary reason for xenophobic attacks is undoubtedly related to economic factors.” Migrants and citizens are in competition for jobs and

⁴⁶ By this, the researcher refers to the economy within a country.

resources. With more emigrants in the country, the unemployment rate for many South Africans seems to have increased. Many South Africans are unemployed, and unemployment increases poverty. This explains the frustration and dissatisfaction of the locals, which results in the accusations made against foreigners, “they have come to take the jobs and privileges of the locals” (Choane, Shulika & Mthombeni, 2011:135).

Another way in which globalisation has intensified violence and conflict in South Africa is through the assumption that foreigners have come to take over their land. By doing so, they are fragmenting the South African culture with their traditions, cultures, and values. South African’s are once again feeling like they no longer belong to their own country. Vorster (2017:52) expresses this by stating, “the hyper plural nature of modern societies often leads to various members of societies experiencing an absence of a sense of belonging and identity.” This speaks to the idea of ethnocentrism – where an ethnic group believes that their ways of living are more important than others. As a result, they impose their beliefs, cultures, and traditions on others. With South Africans and emigrants having differed cultural and traditional beliefs, these stand as a hindrance in integrating with each other and can result in ethnic conflict.

Looking at the history of racial and ethnic tensions in South Africa, integration has always been a problem. Having not dealt with these issues, and with globalisation bringing us into close contact with others, citizens have found it difficult to relate or live with the ‘other’. Frustrations, fears, and insecurities can be understood, but the way in which South Africans are responding is erroneous. Xenophobia is not the answer to the country’s problems. In Christian perspectives, this is a heart issue that can only be transformed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Globalisation may have intensified racial and ethnic tensions, but this is an evil caused by sin that is deeply rooted within humanities hearts.

2.5 The Effects of Racial and Ethnic Tensions in South Africa

2.5.1 Unemployment and Poverty

One of the ways in which racial and ethnic tensions of the past has and continues to affect South Africa is through unemployment and poverty. Theuns (2017:0607) explains that “poverty levels in SA are a cause for concern.” In the compiling of the Human Development Index by the United Nations in 2016, it showed that in 2010 the poverty index stood at 0.044 – this showed improvement, but in 2015, it showed 0.041. At the time of this research, 53% of the South African population were living below the poverty line of which; 9.4% were earning less than R17.50 per day. StatsSA 2014 showed that in 2011, majority of the people living in poverty were under the age of 25. It also pointed that rural poverty was much greater than urban poverty (Theuns,

2017:06-07). Considering that SA is now a democratic country, why has the problem of unemployment and poverty not decreased, but instead increased?

Professor Lumumba (Ngoforum, 2014) believes that the reason for increased poverty in Africa is “corruption”. He argues that corruption has left Africa being the poorest Continent in the world. Though we recognise the impact of corruption, we still tolerate it. In his speech addressing the issue of corruption in Africa, he boldly stated, “Our level of tolerance for corruption in Africa is amazing.” Instead of validating the good men and women in our continent, we revoke them and instead; celebrate the thieves in the Continent. This, according to Lumumba (Ngoforum, 2014), “is the tragedy of Africa.” When we are given the opportunity to elect leaders, we elect them based on class and ethnicity. And our expectation is for them to lead well. “Corruption is a cancer, that must not be allowed to grow”. Ofusori (2020) is also in agreement that corruption is at the top of the list for economic decline. Resources meant to improve the lives and wellbeing of societies are being mis-managed or utilized to benefit those in power. Instead of leading the country in a way that will benefit the people and develop the country, leaders in government positions will lead the country illegally to benefit their own needs and desires.

The Zondo Commission⁴⁷ has revealed an overwhelming scale of corruption and fraud involving public bodies under the presidency of Jacob Zuma (2009-2018) in South Africa. Zuma’s leadership, that is being characterized by corruption and fraud has been a threat to the sustainability and development of the country. When the resources are not managed well, creating jobs will be difficult, the economy will decline, and violence will increase. Having not been able to meet the needs of citizens, citizens are left frustrated and angry with the government. This is seen in the actions of many South Africans as they strike for the government’s attention. If the government works on moving away from corruption and leading the country such that it benefits the people and develop the country, then they will be able to meet the needs of the citizens – jobs will be created, and the economy will grow. However, it will be difficult for the issue of corruption to be dealt with considering that it has been in the country for many years. In a news article on corruption in SA, Friedman (2020) described corruption as “South Africa’s oldest tradition.” Dating back to colonisation and the legalisation of apartheid, corruption was embedded on how the country was ruled. This did not change after 1994. Instead, over the years corruption has increased. Citizens have lost hope and trust in the government they thought would make a

⁴⁷ This commission was established by Raymond Zondo to investigate alleged corruption and fraud that occurred under the leadership of Jacob Zuma <https://globalriskinsights.com/2021/03/the-zondo-commission-consequences-for-president-ramaphosa/>.

difference. Corruption is a symptom of the past that continues to affect the people today. One of the ways in which corruption was practiced in the past was through the education system. Due to this, many believe that the lack of education and skills is the main reason for unemployment and poverty.

To achieve their political agenda and interest, the Afrikaners manipulated one of the major institutions in society - education. The main reason for the discouragement of black education was that; if blacks were to be educated, it would mean that they would be equipped with skills and therefore, contribute to the economy. To the whites, this would have a negative impact on them in the labour market (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:206-207). Pillay (2017:6) explains that the job market was intentionally designed to protect the economic rights and the wealth of white people. Therefore, blacks were not permitted to be educated.

However, as the country developed, there were many economic and political changes that required the government to permit black education. The need was for cheap labour, and if blacks were skilled then they would contribute to meeting this need. Another problem that occurred, was violence perpetuated by unemployed black youth in urban areas (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:207). Looking at the economic and political changes, blacks were now permitted to be educated, but the education that blacks were permitted to receive was designed to perpetuate the unfair treatment of blacks, and the dominion of whites. This made no sense considering that the exception of Bantu education was for them to help in cheap labour and to stop them from becoming violent. Mhlauli *et al* (2015:207), expresses this by firmly stating, “this is one of the most pathetic incidents in the history of Bantu education, where instead of it being emancipatory, it is turned into an instrument of oppression.” Violence continued as the youth did not accept such treatment and fought for equal rights in education. The event of June 16 in 1976 that took place in Soweto highlights the youth’s response to the curriculum being taught in Afrikaans in secondary schools. This resulted in the killing of Hector Peterson. During this fight, about “1,200 black students were killed, hospitalized or brought before the courts, among these 44 % were between the ages of 13 and 16” (Mhlauli *et al*, 2015:208).

It is long since that the Bantu Education system had been abolished, and all students are given the right to quality and equal education. However, it is unfortunate that there is still a dividing line in the schooling system between whites and blacks.

On the SABC news, Cleophas (2020) reported that dividing line in the schooling system is no longer justified by race, instead, class. He explained that the schooling system is still designed to favour white children over blacks, but instead of justifying it by race, it is justified by “people’s economic ability and capability within society to give their children the best of everything”. White

people have benefitted from apartheid and instead of taking into consideration or advocating for equal education they are enjoying their benefits. Whites are privileged in the sense that they have the ability to access the best of everything, whereas blacks do not. Sall (2018:04) puts it this way by stating, “this touch on the right to access versus the ability to access”.

It is the privilege and ability to access, as the legacy of apartheid that still contributes to whites becoming richer and blacks poorer. Scheepers (2010:166-167), using the analogy presented by Alister Sparks of the double decker bus, explains the reason for the wealth gap between the blacks and the whites. The whites, because of their access to education are skilled, but the blacks who were deprived are unskilled and therefore poor. This is further explained in the analogy of the double decker bus as follows (Scheepers, 2010:16-167):

Those in the upper deck are mainly wealthy whites, due to the legacy of colonialism. Those in the lower deck are mainly black, poor and without skills, due to the lack of education and opportunities, and what is working for those on the upper deck of this economic bus is not working for those on the lower deck. So, unemployment is increasing and the wealth gap is widening.

The analogy of the double decker bus asserts that whilst the skilled people are growing in their wealth, the unskilled continues to live in their poverty. If nothing is being done to change this situation, then this problem will be generational – unemployment will pass down to the children of the unemployed (Scheepers, 2010:166-167).

However, in research done by Naidoo *et al* (2014:09), on racial-discrimination in the labour market, their findings showed that the wage gap between the Africans and the whites have now narrowed. This is due to the access of education that blacks now have. A university degree narrows the employment gap between blacks and whites. However, for the Africans who were limited to a matric certificate or a lesser qualification, the possibility of being employed is very low.

From what has been observed above, it can be concluded that although the wage gap between the blacks and whites have now been narrowed due to democracy, many blacks are still unable to find jobs because they cannot afford to obtain a university degree. As a result of apartheid, many black families have been left unskilled and poor and therefore, cannot afford to send their children to universities to further their education or get the skills needed for employment. On the other hand, whites can send their children to universities for further education because they have the means. Unemployment mainly affects those that are unskilled, uneducated, and those who only hold a matric certificate.

This researcher argues that generational unemployment and wealth is true to a certain extent. Some people inherit what their families have, and some don't. In the case of poverty, children born in poverty will not in all circumstances remain in poverty. There are many stories of people and children who may have lived during apartheid and suffered in poverty or born in an impoverished family, but their lives have now been transformed tremendously. At the same time, there are some people who benefitted during apartheid and some who were born in rich homes, but life unexpectedly made them lose their inheritance and they have found themselves in poverty. Looking at how people who were born in poverty, lives has changed, it is insufficient to say that unemployment or wealth is generational. But in the context of South Africa, one must admit to the fact that apartheid and the Bantu education system did contribute to many blacks who continue to live in poverty. Black people who were deprived of education and found themselves in poverty bear testimony to the way in which deprivation of education and skills has left them in dire poverty and has affected their children even today. Contributing to their poverty was their land being taken away from them. This forced them to move into underdeveloped areas with no source of income.

2.5.2 Unfair Distribution of Land

The question of land has been a topic in South Africa for a very long time. Some, even believe that the unfair distribution of land is one of the contributing factors to unemployment and poverty. Founded on the 1913 Land Act, black South Africans were denied access to the lands they owned. They were forcibly removed from their lands and made to settle in rural and impoverished parts of the country (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2009) (Berat, 2014:220). The white settlers occupied more than 90% of the land while blacks occupied the remaining portions of the land. Hall and Ntsebeza (2007:3), points out that blacks went from being farm owners to farm labourers. The land they owned became the place where they now worked to benefit and profit the whites, while others had to search for employment away from home.

Van de Brink *et al*, (2007:160) affirms that the reason the whites took for themselves the best parts of the land, was for economic benefits, thus making the blacks tenants or labourers on the farm. Today, the most fertile lands in South Africa are occupied by large farms, and the most infertile lands are occupied by the highest population in SA, that is the black population. These areas are known as the "rural geography of apartheid," that was established through the favouring of white settlers and removal of African owners (Van de Brink *et al*, 2007:161). Black communities who still reside in rural or township areas feel like over the years their economic crisis has not changed, and the unfair distribution of land is to be blamed. The removal of blacks from their land has left many of them economically challenged as they were unable to utilize what they owned to

benefit themselves. Many are still living in underdeveloped communities, while the whites continue to benefit and grow economically with land that was unfairly taken.

In 2001, James Gibson surveyed about 3 700 South Africans with regards to the Land Issue. He made a statement and asked the people to agree or disagree. The statement reads, "Most land in South Africa was taken unfairly by white settlers, and they therefore have no right to the land today." The results of the survey showed that 85% of the participants agreed with this statement. Further findings showed that two thirds of the Africans agreed that "land must be returned to blacks in South Africa, no matter what the consequences are for the current owners and for political stability in the country" (Van de Brink *et al*, 2007:153).

Though the 1913 Land Act long ended, the land issue in South Africa remains a painful subject for many. It was an unfair treatment that still needs to be dealt with. Frustrated and economically challenged, citizens have sought to fight for their land claiming that whites must return their land. This frustration has manifested in violent and murderous attacks on white farm owners. Until citizens have obtained economic benefits or are satisfied with their economic situation, the land issue will remain a thorn. Looking at how much pain the unfair distribution of land has caused many people can explain why citizens are afraid that foreigners have come to take away their land and have therefore, responded in xenophobic attacks. This violent response from citizens has jeopardized SA's relationship with the rest of the continent. With the governments ineffectiveness to resolve such issues, African countries have found it difficult to partner with SA and its reputation is tarnished.

2.5.3 Foreign Policy and International Relations

Ubuntu is an idea that is of great importance in South Africa's foreign policy. It affirms the countries interest in the development of others and its commitment to its Bill of Rights – which "affirms the values of human dignity, equality and freedom" (Hengari, 2016:1-2). There are three main interventions on which SA based its foreign policy. 1.) The link between ubuntu and SA's diplomacy is the Freedom Charter which states, "South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, black and white." 2.) The national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika (God Bless Africa), expresses the countries commitment to the African continent. And 3.) Nelson Mandela in his seminal 1993 article on Foreign Affairs vowed that "South Africa would promote the human rights of others" (Hengari, 2016:1-2). The question, is whether SA has been fulfilling its promise to develop others and value their rights, equality, and freedom; including that of the foreigners? But with the government failing to meet the needs of its citizens, how can it take into concern the foreigner?

Domiro (2019:02) explains that after winning the elections in 1994, the ANC "sought to renew South Africa's image and reintegrate it into the international community." To reach its goal of a

new image, they founded the foreign policy on the pillars of: “human rights; respect for justice and international law; the advancement of African interests; and regional and international economic co-operation.” The government made a pledge, committing to the foreign policy being founded on human rights. This expressed concern for people that are being oppressed all around the world. However, the ubuntu diplomacy started to fail when SA was “unable to provide consistent and principled leadership on matters of justice and injustice in Africa and elsewhere” (Domiro, 2019:02). It is difficult to explain how SA became a hotspot for xenophobic violence, but this can be traced to the “wear and tear of the country’s own domestic democratic project, including an economy that has not lived up to the aspirations of the majority” (Domiro, 2019:02). Xenophobic violence threatens the vision of SA’s foreign policy and questions the country’s commitment to the human rights of others and its value of Ubuntu, as stated in its foreign policy (Hengari 2016:1-2). Hengari (2016:03) expresses that “with xenophobia South Africa has lost its moral suasion to champion one of its most compelling entry points into African politics – the potential for an exemplary diplomacy based on domestic political tolerance and human rights.” Efforts to resolve the issues of xenophobia was made, but they have been inadequate to resolve it. The xenophobic attacks contradict SA’s diplomacy of peace and human dignity.

Reports on how South Africans have treated the many refugees from Zimbabwe and Somalia was extremely negative. This is an example of how SA has damaged the good reputation that other African countries had viewed of it, especially in the time of their struggle in apartheid and the actions they took when political power was reversed (Saunders, 2014:229). Countries like Nigeria have a growing resentment towards SA. Considering that Nigeria supported SA during the apartheid era, Mayowa Adebola feels that South Africans are ungrateful. In a news report by Kripphal (2019), Adebola stated, “I remember reading Nelson Mandela’s book, Long Walk to Freedom. He praised Nigeria during the apartheid, how Nigeria stood by as a big brother”. How is it that South Africans would forget the support given by the Nigerians in the most difficult time of history, and treat them with brutality? Not only did Nigerians stand with SA in their fight for freedom, but they opened their borders to South African students who were denied access to education.

Kripphal’s news report (2019) records responses of other Nigerian’s and foreigners who are disappointed in the way South African citizens have been responding to foreigners living in the country. In the time of oppression, there were many black South Africans who went to Nigeria to study. The Nigerian government provided scholarships that gave these students access to the best schools. However, it was an unfortunate situation for Tobore Ovuorie, a Nigerian who considered studying in SA. Looking at the recent attacks on his fellow citizens he said, “Maybe it is God that does not want me to go there, so let me look elsewhere for scholarship. Those of us

interested in going there for PhD degrees are now looking for somewhere else to go". Another student, Jennifer Acho pointed out the successful South African businesses in Nigeria that are not being attacked and said, "We allow their businesses to operate here in Nigeria without any hindrance, whereas they are killing our own people over there." Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama of Nigeria expressed his anger towards these attacks, by saying, "Received sickening and depressing news of continued burning and looting of Nigerian shops and premises in South Africa by mindless criminals with ineffective police protection." Nick Mangwana, (Zimbabwe's Government Spokesperson) expected for the South African government to protect its immigrants. But instead, the opposite has been happening. He therefore warned the Zimbabweans, "If you are going into a place where there are criminals you have to be cautious, sensible and responsible." On the other hand, Lusaka officials responded in anger after hearing about the attacks on Zambian truck drivers. Chanda Kasolo expressed his concerns by labelling the events as "unfortunate and barbaric." He challenged the authorities of South Africa to "take charge of the situation" (Kripphal, 2019). Looking at how people from other parts of Africa are responding to the xenophobic attacks, it is clear that SA has failed to live up to its promises, expectations, and reputation. All around the continent, no longer is SA being remembered for its long walk to freedom, but the violent and unwelcoming spirit towards foreigners.

If xenophobic attacks continue, then not only will South Africa lose its reputation; but the countries that are contributing to the South African economy will take their resources to other economies. As explained by Choane, Shulika and Mthombeni (2011:138), the development of a country is dependent on domestic savings, which at times is insufficient. Therefore, there is need to obtain resources from other countries that will complement the domestic economy. But with the continuation of xenophobic attacks, SA's relationship with other countries may be compromised and so negatively affect its dependence on other countries for help and resources. It is about time that the government stepped in and took action to resolve this issue.

South Africa's negative response to foreigners shows how people, even at present are finding it difficult to accept and relate to people who are different from them. This is a struggle that has definitely formed part of the history of SA. Due to the apartheid laws, this struggle has intensified. And not only is it observed in how South Africans are negatively responding to foreigners, but it's also seen in how interracial relationships are disapproved in communities.

2.5.4 Inter-racial Marriages

Historically, interracial marriages and interracial sexual intercourse were discriminated against and prohibited. These laws were founded on the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act No. 55 of 1949 and the Immorality Act No. 23 of 1957. In 1985 these laws were abolished under the

Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment Act No. 72 of 1985. Since then, there has been an increase in interracial relationships (van de Walt & Basson, 2015:1). Amaoteng and Heaton (2017:367) agree that when all apartheid-era legislations were abolished, interracial marriages started to increase. This is due to the reconstruction of the society in areas such as “education, religion, and neighbourhood” (Amaoteng & Heaton, 2017:367). Now that people of colour are able to integrate in society without boundaries, different racial and cultural groups are in constant contact with each other. This has opened the gap for relations to be built across the racial barrier. But people, bound by the past, are not willing to accept interracial or multicultural relationships.

Though individuals now have the freedom to choose whom to marry, interracial couples still experience discrimination. It is still difficult for people to accept that people can date or marry outside their race. As a result, discrimination towards the couple occurs. Van de Walt and Basson (2015:2-3) presents three different ways how this form of discrimination is active:

- Heterogamous discrimination – People that are in committed interracial marriages experience unequal and harsh treatment which includes: negative, ambivalent, and at times positive encounters.
- Indirect discrimination – In this case, discrimination towards the stigmatised partner in the relationship, indirectly effects the non-stigmatised partner.
- Internalised racism – This is a result of systematic oppression where one racial group is dominant and the other is subordinate. Depending on the social-group status of the individual, they will either self-elevate or self-depreciate. If the individual is stigmatised or disadvantaged, “internalised racism creates expectations, anxieties and reactions which adversely affect their social functioning and psychological wellbeing” (Van de Walt & Basson 2015:2-3).

No matter what form of discrimination inter-racial couples experience, discrimination causes pain and can bring about feelings of rejection. Not only are individuals or couples being discriminated on marrying outside their race, but when they are discriminated against, this is based on one race being superior or better than the other. Discrimination also indicates that their relationship is not accepted. When this happens, couples find it difficult to respond to society and this can make them feel intimidated even just to show up in public. To avoid people’s comments, opinions, and negative attitudes, they respond by keeping their relationship a secret.

Mojapelo-Batka is one that is involved in an interracial relationship. Her relationship began three years after the abolishment of the Immorality Act 23 of 1957 and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 55 of 1949. She explains that “during those times mixed race relationships and marriages were, however, still perceived as immoral and socially frowned upon in South Africa”

(2008:1). Her family and friends responded negatively towards her relationship which made her want to keep it a secret to avoid the pain of rejection and disapproval:

The reactions from our families and society made me aware of how a private issue like loving someone could turn into a public and socio-political concern. Maintaining the relationship as a secret became one of the ways of dealing with the pain of rejection and disapproval from our families and our friends, as well as the negative effect that our relationship had on my partner's business. At some stage we felt marginalised because we did not fit in any social group (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008:1).

Mojapelo-Batka's experience of being in an inter-racial relationship, shows how people are brainwashed by the past and other influences to think that interracial marriages are not accepted, even after the laws were abolished. Her experience led her into doing research on people's experiences in multiracial relationships in the context of South Africa. Her findings pointed to white families responding more negatively towards multiracial relationships compared to black families. But the different family reactions are dependent on the social-status of the respective families. Whites are perceived as high-status and blacks, low-status. Research shows "that high-status groups are more likely to discriminate than low-status groups" (2008:170). This means that black groups are more acceptable to marrying outside their race - specifically to a white person, because they are perceived as prestigious or of high standing. But it is difficult for whites to accept an interracial couple, because the black person is perceived as menial or of a lower status. However, if people's reactions to multiracial relationships are based on the social-status of racial groups, then both black and white races can find it difficult to accept multiracial relationships, because any race given full political power, rights, and control can be perceived as high standing.

Irrespective of which group holds the high or low status, multiracial couples are finding it difficult, even though South Africa is now a democratic country. All of the participants in Mojapelo-Batka's research "asserted that their M-R relationships attracted social attention" (2008:179). The social reaction towards multiracial relationships indicates the unfamiliarity of such relationships in South Africa, and how social categories are to be accepted as a norm. In some societies and communities, interracial relationships are still not accepted. According to the results of a national survey conducted in 2004, "the approval for M-R marriages in South Africa has remained relatively static over a period of time, and there is no sign of attitudes changing" (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008:179).

Though multiracial relationships have increased over the years, people's negative attitudes have not changed. Due to multiracial marriages not being accepted in the past, with all the apartheid

laws being banned, multiracial relationships are still foreign. It is difficult for communities, societies, and families to accept that it is ok to marry outside one's race or culture. This has left many couples feeling rejected and unaccepted by their communities. This is one result of apartheid and teachings that supported racial segregation that has left a huge stain on a democratic and multi-racial South Africa. In the case of multiracial couples, when they are not accepted, they tend to keep their relationship a secret. But for an individual who is not accepted based on the colour of their skin, then they will do whatever it takes to be accepted. This is another way in which racial and ethnic tensions have affected South Africans.

2.5.5 Colourism

Colourism is an issue not often heard of, but if closely looked at it is a serious problem. Colourism as defined by Jagarnath (2020) in a blog, is defined as the "discrimination against people based on the tone of their skin." This form of discrimination, though experienced more in South Africa, is also experienced around the world:

It happens everywhere from Thailand to Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, South Africa, England and the US. In places like Angola and Haiti it has taken on an intensely political form. The lighter-skinned people have privileged access to some forms of political and material power. In South Africa light-skinned African women sometimes find themselves referred to as "yellow bones". These women have often reported their experiences as being double edged. On one hand they are praised as beautiful but at the same time they are also subject to stereotypes and derogatory remarks. But in the main, colourism means that light skin is seen as desirable and dark skin as undesirable (Jagarnath 2020).

Due to colourism, black South Africans believe that if they have lighter skin then they will be accepted. This has led many – mostly women, into acting by changing the colour of their skin. Research done by the University of Cape Town pointed out that in SA one in three women bleaches her skin. There are different reasons as to why people are doing this but the most common is to have lighter skin (Fihlani, 2013). For local musician Nomasonto "Mshoza" Mnisi, "skin bleaching is a personal choice, no different from breast implants or having a nose job" (Fihlani, 2013). Nomasonto has been criticised by the media for her new skin, but she asserts that her new skin "makes her feel more beautiful and confident." "I've been black and dark-skinned for many years, I wanted to see the other side. I wanted to see what it would be like to be white and I'm happy," (Fihlani, 2013). Although Nomasonto claims that bleaching was a personal choice, her statement above, indicates that she was uncomfortable and unhappy with her original

skin. If one is made to feel like they are not beautiful or unaccepted because of their physical appearance, then they will never know their beauty and appreciate their difference.

People who want to change their bodies and physical appearance usually do so if they are unhappy. In most cases, psychologically it is always influenced by something. In the context of South Africa, people were accepted and discriminated on the colour of their skin. In a report written by Thomas (2020), he explained that skin colour and other physical appearances was used to distinguish the enslaved from the free to justify oppression. People of colour were made to believe that they were inferior and unaccepted based on the colour of their skin. Therefore, even though people may feel like changing the colour of their skin is a personal choice, it cannot be denied that the history of SA has influenced them to feel unappreciated or unhappy of the colour of their skin.

2.6 Post-Apartheid South Africa

With the different ways in which racial and ethnic tensions of the past continues to manifest and affect society today, the question whether or not South Africa, since becoming a democratic country, is a united country or is the country still divided along racial lines remains.

Stats SA (2018/19) shows that 59.4% of the population believes that discrimination based on race is still evident in the country. On the other hand, 40.2% of the population said that discrimination based on nationality is also evident. 32.3% of the population agreed that discrimination based on poverty or wealth status is existent, followed by ethnic/tribal groups at 28.9% and language or dialect at 28.7%. From the list of different types of discrimination presented, the top 5 types were race, ethnicity, poverty and wealth status, ethnic/tribal groups, and language or dialect. Based on these statistics presented, discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and nationality is still a problem in the country. Though laws are not implemented to justify discrimination, it is still experienced through people's actions, attitudes, and behaviour. The past has deeply ingrained itself on people, that many years after the end of apartheid, people are still finding it difficult to live with or accept each other. This is the reason why racial and ethnic discrimination still exist and why the country is still divided.

Birch (2013:06) affirms that "racial discrimination and tensions along racial lines are still apparent." Cleophas (2020) is also in agreement that 26years after apartheid, South Africa is still divided along racial lines. Vorster (2017:75) adds that SA is back at living in the historical pattern that classified the people into "us" and "them". He argues that racial classification is still used as the foundation to determine the rights and privileges of people. It's an obstacle that stands in the gap of acknowledging the people as South Africans, instead of white, black, Indians and coloureds. Racial discrimination and racial classification that still lingers in the country today shows that

people are not just living with the effects of the past, but that these tensions have not fully been resolved and some have not healed from the pain and hurt that was caused. To move forward as a country, SA will need to work on intentionally resolving the tensions and focus on reconciliation. This will take more than just one person, a speech, or statistics to move forward. It will require the government and citizens to work hand in hand to build a reconciled country that will benefit everyone.

2.6.1 The Governments Response

Since becoming a democratic country, the ANC has been in political power. With much faith being placed on them to bring change, the government has made efforts to bring the country together. But some believe that what they have done, or currently doing is not enough.

On the 19th of February 2016, about 25 000 followers of the ANC marched to the Union buildings expressing their concerns of racism in the country. There were many speakers that spoke against this ill and ANC leaders were praised for such an initiative. In that same year, Jacob Zuma proposed for the 21st of March to be a day remembering racism and injustices. The ANC then put together a plan that would focus on fighting the rise of racial and ethnic intolerance in the country. The 2016 - 2021 National Action Plan to fight the rise of racial and ethnic intolerance in the country was hope for such issues to be alleviated (Hengari, 2016:3). In March 2017, people voted in favour of making decisions to eliminate racism and to criminalise racists and xenophobic acts (Siphika, 2019:102). In the 2018 SONA, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized the importance for following Nelson Mandela's principles on unity and social justice when he said:

This year gives us an opportunity to reaffirm our vision of a non-racial society - to build a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, black and white. Let us work with even greater purpose to unite our people - African, coloured, Indian and white - to build a new nation in which all have equal rights and opportunities (Sall 2018:3).

Governments response through speeches, votes, and action plans to combat the rise of racial and ethnic tensions indicates the government's awareness that this is still a challenge today, and action needs to be taken to resolve these problems. However, research done by Hengari (2016:3) has shown that in all the initiatives taken to address this problem, the response of the government has been contradicting. Especially when it comes to concerns of xenophobic attacks. Hengari (2016:3) uses the term "double-speak" to describe their contradicting responses.

Matsinhe (2011:85) records the responses towards foreigners from leaders Malusi Gigaba, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister Buthelezi. Gigaba stated, "South Africa has problems, but

we don't send our people to other countries." On the other hand, Minister Buthelezi, in a speech at the parliament referred to migrants as 'illegal aliens.' He was concerned that the RDP housing projects and the aim to create jobs for citizens will be taken by the 'illegal aliens.' Buthelezi was also against migrants being self-employed. He therefore sought for help from the association of informal business to assist with the removal of migrant owned businesses. Julius Malema, leader of the EFF came across as one who is against racial and ethnic conflict when he said, "We don't want votes from people who are xenophobic. We must love one another as Africans because showing love to someone from Mozambique, Guinea, Egypt and Nigeria is self-love" (Matsinhe, 2011:85). However, Malema's response contradicts his response to white South Africans, Jews, and Asians. He is known as someone who encourages racial divisions. Adding to the response on xenophobia, Jacob Zuma stated, "while we strongly condemn the attacks, we are aware of, and are sympathetic to some of the issues that have been raised by affected South African citizens" (Matsinhe, 2011:85). His statement affirms that xenophobia is not justified, but the needs and concerns of citizens are noticed. This raises the question; why has the government not done anything to try to meet the needs of the citizens if they are aware? Hengari (2016:3) explains that in times of crisis, the message that the government has been giving creates doubt for both the victim and perpetrators. He asserts that what is more, is that the government has been waiting for violence to erupt before addressing or solving the problems. The government, knowing that citizens are frustrated and dissatisfied by many things should have led them into doing something to change the situation.

In dealing with the violence, government has sought for help from the police services. But this has left foreigners feeling even more insecure and unsafe. Seeking for help from the police services has not done justice. Instead, it has contributed to xenophobic violence. Matsinhe (2011:78-79) pointed out that citizens and non-citizens are treated differently police officers. Non-citizens are often denied help or in exchange offered a bribe. At times, the police officers would even respond with violence. An example is the event that happened in the year 2000 when police officers released dogs to attack Mozambican youth. Police officers are also known to pass insults to non-citizens like: 'Makwerekwere go home'; 'Go back where you came from'; 'What are you doing here in South Africa?'; 'We don't want you here'; 'We're tired of you'; 'You're taking our jobs.' Such statements point to the negative view that some police officers have on foreigners (Matsinhe, 2011:78-79).

As a way of dealing with the issue of foreigners in the country, Political parties reasoned that the best way to deal with it is by controlling the movement of people to the country. In September 2018 the DA presented that "immigration would be one of its key campaign issues, arguing that borders needed to be more tightly controlled." Cyril Ramaphosa echoed this in an ANC rally by

promising a “crackdown on undocumented migrants.” Such statements affirms that the reason for xenophobic violence is the increase in immigration. This is true in the sense that yes globalisation has given people the opportunity to seek for a better life in other countries. However, it is important to note that South Africa, with or without globalisation and migration still has issues that citizens are angry about, and the government has not been effective in dealing with those issues (Matsinhe, 2011:78-79).

The researcher argues that although foreigners may have contributed to the challenges of the country, the governments ineffectiveness in addressing the ongoing challenges of the country will cause citizens to continue to respond in the way they have been and this will continue to negatively impact and divide the country.

2.6.2 The Peoples Response

Violence has throughout history been used as a tool to fight and maintain political power. Today it is being used as a tool to get the government to respond to this and other service delivery issues. Violence has become the people’s response to the government’s failure to address and solve issues. Recently, violence is initiated by young blacks, mainly students who believe that the promise of a free and rainbow nation was only an illusion (Mavunga, 2019:90). This gave rise to a new “black consciousness movement.” Unlike the movement led by Steve Biko in the 1970s, this is a movement that is led by a “new generation of young black people” who, according to Theuns, (2017:22-23) “did not experience apartheid or the constitutional settlement of 1994.” Instead, they are “looking at history through their parent’s eyes and are experiencing the pain, suffering and disadvantage anew” (Theuns, 2017:22-23). The argument is that even though they are born in a democratic society, they are living and experiencing the effects of apartheid. The above is mostly experienced in universities and colleges, where students feel unfairly treated due to their status or skin colour.

In addressing white privilege and black disadvantages, different groupings were organised such as: #Feesmustfall, #Rhodesmustfall, OpenStellenbosch, ReformPuk and Black First, Land First. These students have even demanded for the whites to return back the land that they had stolen. They believe that it has become acceptable for whites to remain racist because they are still in power. Whereas blacks cannot be racist because they do not have power (Theuns, 2017:23). Contributing to their fight for equal treatment, Theuns (2017:23) asserts that some of the black students don’t see a reason for whites to participate in the fight for equal rights. Due to whites having been involved in the history of racism and apartheid, they should not participate in any debates because they do not understand the pain that blacks had and is still experiencing.

With many different groupings been organised to end racial inequality, young people feel disappointed in the government's response. Due to an ineffective response from the government, these movements have turned to violent acts. Students believe that through violence their concerns will be heard. In an article written by Mavunga with regards to the issue of #Feesmustfall, a vice-chancellor expressed his fear of lives being lost due to the increase in violence: "What really worries immensely with escalation of violence is... the day is not far off when a parent will have to fetch their son or daughter in a body bag..." But one of the EFF leaders expressed that students will continue to respond in violence until they are heard (2019:90). Malabela, a leader of the #Feesmustfall movement explained in an interview that "students saw violence as the only way they could get the government and university authorities to listen to their demands..." (Mavunga, 2019:90).

Violence has also been the response of citizens who have become frustrated with the economic problems of the country such as poverty and unemployment. Consider the outbreaks of the 2008 xenophobic attacks that occurred in Alexandra. "It quickly spread nationwide, becoming the largest, deadliest, and most destructive violent outbreak" (Matsinhe, 2011:50). And over the years, these xenophobic outbreaks have increased. Many are blaming the governments misrule and mismanagement of these problems. A quote from Nyingi (2017) expresses the emotional anger felt within man that results into violence, "A hungry man is an angry man and since anger is emotional and overpowers reason, the smallest provocation can unfortunately result in violence". In this case, with the increase in poverty and limited employment, the rise in migration has been the provoking point for violence. Cleophas (2020) points out that there has been an increase "in civil unrest in almost all spheres of society as people have lost all hope in government". People are protesting and fighting every day for the government to respond and change the situations of the country. Violence has become the norm, with citizens' disappointment in the government, racial and ethnic tensions are still rife and real, and violence has intensified, what does the future of south Africa look like? And what will be the best way for the country to move forward?

2.6.3 The Future for South Africa

If South Africa continues in the part that it's on, then the racial and ethnic tensions will never be resolved. Instead, it will intensify and manifest into other forms of conflict. SA needs a solution, and it needs it now! Considering that the history of this country plays a crucial role on the present, Birch (2013) points out that if we want to move forward "everything needs to be unpacked and interrogated to understand the 'why's' and 'how's', not just taken at surface value." Vorster (2017:76) believes that non-racialism in SA will be successful if all identities are treated equally. He further explains that to build a non-racial SA, South Africans will have to develop a common

'frame of mind' that will bridge the gap between 'us' and 'them.' When the gap has been bridged then only will SA have escaped a continent divided by races and ethnicities. He also asserts that the government needs to abolish the system of classifying people according to race. "All South Africans are to be seen and defined as South Africans – irrespective of colour, creed or culture" (2017:76-77).

Berat (2014:221) is of the opinion that for the country to move forward and maintain a brighter future, the country needs to be steered in the direction of good social and economic development, and good governance. The issues that citizens are faced with will have to be addressed in a way that solves problems and benefits the people. All races and ethnicities need to be groomed in a way that encourages them to see the importance of uniting and working together, rather than a hindrance to a united nation. To Pillay (2017:16), the divide between races and ethnicities will continue to manifest itself if the people are not intentional in building communities of unity and racial reconciliation.

The researcher believes that intentional building of unity and reconciliation is what's needed to move forward as a country. Unity and racial reconciliation should be the aim of the government and its people to move forward and make the country a better place. If the government, together with the people are intentional about this, then only will they see the need to un-pack and interrogate the past, treat each other equally, and steer the country in a way that it can benefit everyone socially and economically. The government has put in place plans and have gone as far as delivering speeches on achieving this, but they have not been intentional. Being intentional in achieving unity and reconciliation would mean being purposeful and deliberate on working towards achieving something specific. When we are intentional, our focus will be on what we want to achieve rather than on things that are intensifying the problems. In this case, working towards unity and racial reconciliation will benefit the country more than what jobs or an economic rise can do. The country needs to be united and take a stand to care for the needs of all its citizens. For as long as the country is divided then only one group will benefit while the other does not.

2.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the problems of racial and ethnic tensions of the past and how it affects societies and communities today. Many years into democracy the country is still torn by racial and ethnic tensions. Though apartheid is being blamed for the continuation of these tensions, this chapter has observed that before the legalisation of apartheid, racial and ethnic tensions existed. The only way the country can move forward and become a reconciled country is to deal with the issues of the past, its root causes, and become intentional in building a reconciled country. Attempts have been made to resolve the issues, but it has not been efficient. The problems remain

persistent. The Christian church in South Africa has an important role to play in our racial and ethnically divided societies. The church needs to be the prophetic voice that God has called us to be and partner with Him in the proclamation of reconciliation that is found in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 3 RACIAL AND ETHNIC TENSIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA, AND ITS RESPONSE

3.1 Introduction

Looking at what has been presented in chapter 2, it appears that the country is still living in racial and ethnic segregation instead of pursuing reconciliation. Because the church mirrors society, this is a problem that is also experienced within the Christian church. Considering this, this chapter will specifically focus on the Christian church⁴⁸ in South Africa and its response to racial and ethnic tensions within the church during and after apartheid.

The chapter will encompass different views of some of the churches and leaders in response to the racial and ethnic problems experienced and will seek, to analyse whether the church today is visible in the continued struggles of the country. While during apartheid some of the churches and Christian leaders condoned the apartheid system, yet others are credited for their strong stance and struggle against the system. Today, it is questionable whether the church is visible in the struggles of the country, or have they become silent.

The church is challenged with the task of pursuing unity in the church, but also; the role they are called to play in the continued struggles of the country. Although apartheid has ended, it does not mean that the problems of the country have ended, and the work of the church is over. The aim and purpose of this chapter is to understand the role of the church in a country that continues to live in the effects of the past, and to challenge the church to pursue reconciliation and embrace racial and ethnic diversity for the sake of its missional task in the world.

3.2 An Overview of the Church during Apartheid

With apartheid understood as a system that has destroyed the lives of many, it is difficult to understand how Christian Churches and leaders would be part of such a history. The sad reality is that, when the history of the church in South Africa is studied, apartheid and the influence of the church during that era cannot be avoided. In this section of the chapter, an analysis will be done on the response to racial segregation from of some of the church denominations, Christian

⁴⁸ By church, the researcher is referring to the universal church. The aim of this research is not to address one specific church or denomination but to address the universal church and its response to racial and ethnic problems. In analysing the response of the church during and after apartheid, specific church denominations will be mentioned (e.g., the Dutch Reformed Church), not because it is the focus of this research, but because of its contribution and visibility during apartheid. The practical suggestions that are presented in this research is applicable to the universal church.

leaders and ministers, and ecumenical movements. In essence, those that defended apartheid, those that were against apartheid, and those that developed a quiet diplomacy approach. It will thereafter follow with an analysis on the response from some of the ecumenical movements.

3.2.1 Churches and Ministers that Defended Apartheid

As observed in chapter 2, theology played a crucial role in the painful history of South Africa. Using reformed theology, some of the reformed theologians formulated arguments from the Bible to prove their points and validate apartheid theology. This theology became familiar to the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) (In Afrikaans, Dutch Reformed Church translates, *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, and abbreviated *NGK*" (Mafuta, 2016:164).

In the 1920s, approaches made by the DRC (NGK) with regards to race relations were already being discussed and by 1935, all that was needed was a theological basis within a neo-Calvinist framework to justify racial segregation (Dubow, 1992:217). In search of a theological basis for segregation, Kuyper's theology became influential.

Abram Kuyper, who according to Spangenberg (2020:03), was an "influential Dutch theologian, politician, news-paper editor and academician". His theological convictions became influential in South Africa as Afrikaans-speaking theological students studied at the Free University of Amsterdam (a university founded by him) and wrote theses on his theology. The influence of Kuyper's theology led some of the Reformed theologians in SA to develop their own branch of Calvinism which was labelled 'Afrikaner-Calvinism' or 'Boer-Calvinism'. This contributed to the negative outlook that the colonisers developed towards South African indigenous people. This was characterised in their belief in the superiority of the Christian religion, the belief in Europeans being civilised humans compared to the indigenous people, and that Europeans had the task of converting indigenous people to becoming Christians in the hope that they would become better humans (Spangenberg, 2020:03-04). Two Reformed theologians who were also influenced by Kuyper's theology were J.D du Toit (Totius), a member of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA)⁴⁹ (In Afrikaans, *Gereformeerde Kerk*, also known as the sister church of the DRC/NGK) and Professor E.P Groenewald who was a member of the DRC (Spangenberg, 2020:04).

⁴⁹ Although the RCSA displayed elements of apartheid, some of its members opposed the system. Manavhela explains that this was due to the church being more conservative compared to the other Reformed churches. Unlike some of the other churches, they were free to make their own theological decisions without the influence of the government (2012:58). However, the RCSA has had close ties with Kuyper's theology (Spangenberg 2020:04), which may explain how du Toit and some of its members became influenced by Kuyper's theology.

It was after the influence of Kuyper's theology that came in a collection of writings entitled *Koers in die Krisis* (Direction in the Crisis), which was published in three parts between 1935 and 1941, that the first biblical 'proofs' in support of racial segregation were supplied by W.J. van de Merwe in 1942. However, aside from van de Merwe and others, Dubow has pointed out that the most crucial intervention came in the form of JD. du Toit's keynote address on "*The Religious Basis of our Race Policy.*" Dubow comments that the address which came from a renowned theologian and poet and was delivered at such a high profile meant that this was a "seminal moment in the creation of the 'apartheid bible'" (1992:217). In his approach, du Toit combined both exegesis and Afrikaaner history and philosophy (Dubow, 1992:217). He proved his arguments for racial segregation from Genesis to Revelations. Using verses like Acts 17:26, he agreed that all of humanity was created by one blood, but also argued that God is the divider and creator of divisions. "As the "great divider", God separates light and darkness, the dry land from the waters, the living creatures according to their kind", and later; God is seen as the divider in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel when He scatters the nations and confuses their language. Therefore, what God has divided, man should not seek to unify (Vosloo, 2017:127). According to Spangenberg, "Totius was convinced that his theological views were in line not only with Kuyper's but also with Calvin's" (2020:04). In the course of his address, du Toit was found citing a number of different authorities like Rev J. G. Strydom, but most of his inspiration and ideas came from Abram Kuyper⁵⁰ (Dubow, 1992:218).

Rev. JG. Strydom also believed that although all of humanity are made one in Christ, it is God who willed separate nations. In fact, in a booklet titled "*The race question and the future of whites in South Africa*", which was published in 1942, Strydom concludes that a white man's survival is based on racial segregation. This is a booklet that Totius recommended for every household to have (Vosloo, 2017:129).

Prof. EP. Groenewald, a New Testament scholar from the university of Pretoria, also held the view that racial and ethnic divisions derived from God. He does not deny that the Bible teaches about the unity of man, but he also argues that Bible passages like Genesis 10 and 11 and Acts 17:26, shows that God was deliberate in creating divisions (Vosloo, 2017:131-132). However, contrary to Totius, Groenewald did not refer to Calvin or Kuyper, but he did refer to similar biblical passages and verses used by Totius to argue a case for separation and apartheid (Spangenberg, 2020:05). Spangenberg comments on Groenewald's interpretation of scripture by asserting that

⁵⁰ Abram Kuyper was not the founder of Afrikaner Nationalism, but his theological influence greatly influenced the use of Scripture by some of the Reformed theologians, to defend apartheid.

Groenewald did not reflect a proper contextual and historical-critical reading on the scriptures he used to communicate the ideas of separation and apartheid. According to Spangenberg, Groenewald “read the Bible with preconceived ideas concerning the relationship between white people and black people” (2020:05). It was teachings as such, that became part of the DRC (NGK) reports and gave their members courage and boldness to support the legalisation of apartheid. In fact, Spangenberg pointed out that the Biblical texts that were used by Groenewald, became important to the DRC as they used it as proof for any criticism that they received for their beliefs (2020:05).

Amongst the Afrikaans-speaking churches⁵¹, the DRC (NGK)⁵² was the largest⁵³ and the most influential at the time of apartheid⁵⁴ (De Gruchy, 2005:67) (Mafuta 2016:164). Deeply immersed in racial segregation, the DRC encouraged the apartheid government that racial laws should be implemented and applied all around the country. Not only in churches, but including schools, residential areas, and the prohibition of interracial marriages. The church went as far as declaring, “It is the conviction of the majority of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and the majority of the DRC members that the only way of ensuring continued survival of the nation is by observing the principles of racial separation” (Mafuta, 2016:167).

While racial segregation and apartheid theology received much support from some of the DRC (NGK) ministers and members, as well as some reformed theologians; there were still others who strongly contested against the bible being used to defend this evil.

Rev. Ben Marais was one of the first critics who challenged the teachings of racial segregation being biblical. He does not deny humanities racial and ethnic differences, but rejects the claims that God willed divisions amongst the nations. In response to the biblical justification of apartheid, Marais used the Christian Doctrine view of brotherhood, which teaches that “God is the father of all people, and they are all equal before God.” Marais views against the justification of racial segregation being biblical can be summarised in the argument that “Scripture does not emphasise

⁵¹ Other Afrikaans-speaking churches were the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK) – founded in 1853, and the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) – founded in 1859.

⁵³ The DRC had approximately 1.5 million white members (De Gruchy, 2005:67).

⁵⁴ Though the Dutch may have been the most influential Christians, it is important to note that the Dutch were not the first people to bring Christianity to South Africa. Since the ascension of Christ, Christianity continued to expand in the northern parts of Africa and slowly made its way to South Africa. Christian missionaries made their arrival to the country in the 1500s or even earlier.

racial apartheid, but the apartheid of sin” (Vosloo, 2017:135). At the DRC (NGK) synod in 1949, he specifically argued against the exposition of biblical text’s used in Groenewald’s reports, and he also argued against the view that “the history of the Afrikaaners runs parallel to the history of Israel” (Spangenberg, 2020:05). Marais received support from Professor Pistorius as he also argued against the interpretation of scripture by Groenewald. His views were published in an article titled “*Ons apartheidsbeleid en die Skrif*” (Our apartheid policy and Scripture) (Spangenberg, 2020:06).

BB. Keet, another Reformed theologian, also spoke against apartheid by emphasizing the relationship between blacks and whites as brothers in Christ (Isichei 1995:306). In his opening address at the Federal Council in 1953 he shared his opposing views on racial segregation by stating:

Personally, I believe that our brethren who want to maintain apartheid on biblical grounds are labouring under this misunderstanding. They confuse apartheid, which is an attitude of life, with a diversity which includes unity. Christian unity, I know, will include diversity but it must never be seen as separation; and apartheid is separation (Masuku, 2014:153).

Keet was also against Groenewald’s report that had to be ratified at the DRC (NGK) synod in 1949, but due to not being a representative of any congregation, he was unable to express his views at the synod (Spangenberg, 2020:06). However, soon after the synod he published four articles in which he critically engaged with Groenewald’s views. Keet was also one who studied at the Free University of Amsterdam, but his stance against segregation and apartheid shows that “he was a man of great wisdom and one who did not let his emotions see the better of him” (Spangenberg, 2020:06).

Marias, Pistorius and Keet went as far as publishing books to not only inform the DRC (NGK), but the broader public of their views and to exhort them to not go into the path of Afrikaaner Nationalism. Alongside Marias, Pistorius, and Keet, there were still other theologians and ministers who also opposed views on racial segregation, however; they did not have much power against Afrikaaner Nationalism. Spangenberg describes their powerlessness as “voices crying in the wilderness” (2020:06). Masuku observes that the reason why the theologians who challenged the views of apartheid theology were powerless, was because they were in a minority (2014:153). In the same way that most white votes were needed to pass apartheid laws, more theologians and ministers were needed to also oppose the apartheid laws.

3.2.2 Churches and Ministers who were against Apartheid

While majority of the support for racial segregation came from ministers and members belonging to the DRC (NGK), majority of the members and ministers belonging to the English-speaking churches⁵⁵ opposed and stood against apartheid (De Gruchy, 2005:84). These churches included the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodists, and the Congregational churches. They were all independent and had their own traditions, but according to De Gruchy, “these churches have been deeply involved in the contemporary search for unity in the church, and for many years have sought ways and means to express this given unity in Christ in concrete terms” (2005:84-85).

The English-speaking churches were united in their fight to end apartheid and racial discrimination. After apartheid was legalised, the churches were not afraid but courageously protested against every unjust law that was made. Their plea to end racial injustices within the church and country was seen in resolutions, deputations, programmes, and published pastoral letters that expressed their concerns of racial injustices (De Gruchy, 2005:86). However, amid these churches’ stance against apartheid, Mafuta’s (2016:58) research has found that there were some English missionaries belonging to the English-speaking churches who condoned racial injustices.

According to Mafuta (2016:58), some of the missionaries from English-speaking churches believed that they were racially superior to the people whom they were preaching the gospel to. Looking at their English background, they considered their cultural values as more important than that of the Africans. In fact, some of them looked upon the Africans as heathens and viewed their culture as something from Satan that needed to be rooted out. Mafuta (2016:58-59) further explains that instead of Christianising the Africans, missionaries focused more on Europeanizing them. In this sense, they acted as “carriers of the social, cultural, economic and political forces of the society of which they were part, in this case imperial Britain”.

This way of reaching out to the Africans left some of them feeling confused about their identity. It also showed no seriousness from some of the English missionaries to intentionally share the gospel. Another explanation is that English missionaries came to believe that racial segregation was natural, and a practice accepted in society. For some, it was even viewed as a necessity to protect blacks from being exposed to sins within an urban setting (Mafuta, 2016:63). There were some missionaries who were torn between obeying the government and fighting for social justice,

⁵⁵ By this the researcher is referring to churches of British origin who had general commonalities including their opposed views towards apartheid.

but missionary organisations such as the London Missionary Society (LMS) maintained their missional identity and fought for social justice (Isichei, 1995:100).

Nevertheless, while most of the leaders and ministers of the DRC (NGK) supported apartheid, most of the English-Speaking Church leaders and ministers were in support of ending racial injustices. In September 1948, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa challenged legislations that were aimed at limiting the representation of Africans in the parliament. Their prayer was “that white South Africans may be saved from the contempt in the eyes of the world which such actions is bound to produce” (De Gruchy, 1986:54). In that same period the Methodist Church of Southern Africa released a statement declaring their stance on racism:

No person of any race should be deprived of constitutional rights or privileges merely on the grounds of race and morally binding contracts protecting such rights or privileges should be regarded on a high level of a pledged word (De Gruchy, 1986:54).

Adding to this, the Congregational Assembly wrote, “It is our sincere conviction that the Government’s policy of apartheid has no sanction in the New Testament Scriptures....” (De Gruchy, 1986:54). The Anglican Church of South Africa was also one of the most outspoken churches against apartheid. They declared, “discrimination between men on the grounds of race alone is inconsistent with the principles of the Christian religion” (De Gruchy, 1986:55). Anglican missionary, Father Trevor Huddleston, expressed his stance on racial segregation in his 1956 published books as he shares the experiences of his black parishioners. His critical role in the fight against racial inequality is expressed by Smith as “a thorn in the flesh of the present regime for the last forty years or more” (Masuka, 2014:156). Alongside Huddleston, there were many other Anglican missionaries who condemned apartheid and because of their opposing views, they were forced to leave the country.

Although there were some missionaries who were caught between preaching the gospel and honouring the government, the English-speaking churches did not fail at speaking against apartheid on behalf of the people. They were indeed the prophetic voice for the people and wanted nothing more than to see the people of the country and the church united amidst their differences.

3.2.3 Churches that developed a neutral stance and a “quiet diplomacy” approach

On the other hand, there were still some churches and ministers who developed a neutral stance and a quiet diplomacy approach. Masuku asserts that those who developed a neutral stance were from the Pentecostal or Evangelical movements (2014:157). Reason for this was that the church was more concerned with preaching the gospel and winning souls for Christ, rather than fighting

for social justice. So instead of fighting the government, they accepted the racial patterns and served the people in their racially segregated congregations (Masuku, 2014:157-158).

The Roman Catholics and the Lutherans were also not very vocal on their condemnation of apartheid. As further observed in research done by Masuku (2014) and De Gruchy (2005), the Roman Catholics and the Lutheran adopted the “quiet diplomacy” approach. The reason for the Roman Catholics approach was because the apartheid government and the DRC (NGK) was anti-Roman Catholic. One of the ways in which this was evident, was when the Roman Catholics were not invited to attend the Church Leaders Conference held by the DRC in 1953, and indicating their quiet diplomacy approach was their absence from the Cottesloe Consultation (Masuku, 2014:158). De Gruchy (2005:96) explains that for some time the Roman Catholics were prohibited from public worship and was only permitted in 1837 to ordain their first Bishop. However, as time passed, the Roman Catholics became vocal on the condemnation of apartheid, but they did this with caution to avoid further obstacles and oppression. In 1952 and 1957 they issued statements with regards to apartheid. Masuku (2014:158) argues that these statements were contradicting to their views on racial segregation. In one statement they condemned apartheid, but in another they recommended that it be abolished through a slow process. This cautious approach could explain why they recommended for the system to be abolished through a slow process and did not strongly go against the grain like other churches. De Gruchy (2005:97) argues that being cautious in their approach did not mean that the Roman Catholics were for apartheid. For some time, they were silent, but later with caution, they became clear and bold in their stance against apartheid. “While the Roman Catholic Church remained sensitive to its peculiar position in the country, it did not let this prevent it from speaking prophetically to the situation” (De Gruchy 2005:97).

Other churches such as the DRC (NGK) daughter churches (the Black Reformed Churches) also adopted the quiet diplomacy approach. Reasons for this was mainly their dependence on their mother church for financial support. It is for this reason that they could not speak against the evil system that was supported by their mother (Masuka, 2014:159).

The African Initiated churches,⁵⁶ although was against apartheid, their voices were not heard. Due to their voices not being heard, Masuka places them under the category of the “quiet diplomacy approach.” Instead of speaking against apartheid, they assisted black citizens with basic needs as they migrated to urban areas during the apartheid period (2014:160-161). Kuperus asserts

⁵⁶ It is important to note that the AIC was founded after blacks sought to start their own churches due to racial encounters with missionaries and mission churches.

that because the AIC was not confrontational in its stance on apartheid, they did not become a threat to the government (Kuperus, 2011:300). If they became vocal in their approach, then protesting would have emerged and threatened the government. In responding to this threat, the government would have possibly inflicted more oppression upon the blacks. So, adopting a quiet diplomacy approach seemed like the best option. Another reason for the AIC's silence as presented by Masuka was due to "the stigma that was attached to them and their religion by missionary Christianity and the 'Christian' aligned apartheid state" (2014:162).

3.2.4 Responses from some of the Ecumenical Movements and Initiatives to Combat Racism

3.2.1.1 The South African Council of Churches (SACC)

Founded in 1968, the SACC will always be honoured by many for its fights against the apartheid regime. The bold stance it took against apartheid was based on its belief that such a practice is contrary to the gospel. This is seen in a statement declaring that "apartheid was an unjust political policy and contrary to the biblical message of reconciliation" (Kuperus, 2011:289-290). It is important to note that not only does this statement point out that the act of apartheid is contrary to the gospel, but that it is also contrary to the message of reconciliation. This illustrates that the work of the SACC to combat racism was through the message of reconciliation.

On many occasions, especially between 1968 and 1982, the SACC held meetings to discuss how racism can be combatted (Manavhela, 2012:62). Kuperus (2011:290) sheds light on the great role that the SACC played during the 1970s and 1980s by expressing that due to its critical and prophetic role in opposing the government and assist in the needs of the oppressed, the SACC became influential in ecumenical arenas such as the World Council of Churches and the South African-based liberation struggle. In fact, some would even argue that the SACC was the most visible during South Africa's struggle for freedom. What was significant about the SACC was that it not only challenged the government but was a legitimate voice for the people. In this way it provided practical assistance for the oppressed.⁵⁷

The SACC sought to help oppressed people in South Africa through a number of development and community projects. Alongside that, they intervened in emergency-aid situations, cared for the families of political prisoners and provided scholarship programmes for black students from rural communities (De Gruchy, 2005:114). One of the most influential ways the church sought to combat racism, as observed by De Gruchy (2005:114), was through bringing churches,

⁵⁷ <https://sacc.org.za/history/>.

missionary societies, and other Christian organisations together. United they would be more effective in their mission to the world. Unity amongst the churches had been an important factor for the SACC especially in its fight against a segregated nation. The researcher contends that when the church is united in its witness and mission it can have a greater impact in the community and society. Not only will their work of spreading the gospel be more effective but, in a society, still torn by the past, the church is a great witness to what it means to live in love, forgiveness, and as a reconciled community.

Acting upon its desire to unite the churches in its witness, the SACC then established a commission challenging the churches “to consider what obedience to God requires of the church in her witness to her unity in Christ in South Africa” (De Gruchy, 2005:115). Following the commission was the “*Message to the People of South Africa*”. In the Message, the SACC sought to show how racial segregation was contrary to the gospel, and that through the work of the cross humanity have been reconciled to God and to each other. This Message made it clear that in Christ there are no barriers. Humanity has all been united and made one in the Christian faith (De Gruchy, 2005:115-117). Unfortunately, the Message continued to receive opposition and conflict from the government and white South African’s due to its apartheid laws and policies. In other words, how could the church be united when the law was to be segregated? The church would not be the church if it chose to obey the apartheid laws. Therefore, for the church to be the church, it was and still is today, challenged to demonstrate Gods reconciling work, irrespective of what is going on in society. As firmly stated by De Gruchy, “Christians are under obligation to live in accordance with the Christian understanding of man and of community, even if this be contrary to some of the customs and laws of this country” (2005:117).

After the launch of the Message and its challenge to separate development, “Apartheid and the Church” was launched. This was a report that focused on how apartheid affected the life and witness of the church:

...through external legislative controls and through ‘internal ideological captivity’, fear, prejudice, despair, conformism, legalism, authoritarianism, and wordiness. It showed how denominationalism, segregation, discrimination, and paternalism all undermine the witness of the church. It called upon the churches to move beyond ecclesiastical self-concern, pragmatic pietism, and clericalism, and to become faithful to the demands of the kingdom of God (De Gruchy 2005:121).

Acting upon this, the programme made recommendations such as: the equalization of salaries for ministers, the refusal of any racial classifications and the welcoming of all and anyone who wants

to be members (De Gruchy, 2005:121). However, Similar to the Message, the Apartheid and the Church did not achieve much, but De Gruchy points out that it reflected the thinking of its leaders, and all that could be hoped for was that the document will continue to challenge the churches to be faithful in its witness.

In reflecting on the work of the Message and Apartheid and the church, De Gruchy argues on the danger of placing confidence in commissions and reports for seeing change. The church should rather focus on what God is seeking to do. However, the commissions and reports presented by the churches are not invalid, “but it reminds us that simply because certain things have been said or written, does not necessarily mean that they have happened or will happen” (2005:121-122).

Despite not having much success and receiving opposition, the SACC remains one of the most visible entities in the churches struggle against apartheid. As time passed, the SACC became more diverse in its membership. This created an opportunity for the black community to be heard and for the white community to have a clearer understanding of what the black community was faced with (De Gruchy, 2005:123). What the church today can learn from the SACC is the importance of uniting for effectiveness in the mission of God. At the heart of the gospel is reconciliation and there is no better way to evangelise to a broken and divided nation than through the body of Christ that is actively living and demonstrating what it means to be a sinful and broken people that have been reconciled by the blood of Christ.

3.2.1.2 The World Council of Churches (WCC)

Being an ecumenical movement that represent churches around the world, the racial problem in South Africa became a concern to the WCC due to their convictions that such a practice was against the gospel. the WCC developed a strong stance against apartheid. This was made clear in a statement at the Evanston Assembly of the WCC IN 1954, “any form of segregation based on race, colour, or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel” (De Gruchy, 2005:124).

While the WCC showed concerns for the problem of racial and ethnic segregation, it had been observed amongst its leaders that not much was being done to fight against the rise in this problem. This led the WCC to formulating the “Programme to Combat Racism” (PCR). In analysing the PCR, Zalmanovich (2019:183-185) explains that the word “combat” in the title of this new programme refers to “a new commitment to act rather than to pontificate”. An explanation like this proves that while the church may have developed a strong stance against racial and ethnic discrimination, they had till then not actively acted on its views. De Gruchy explains that the formulating of the PCR affirms that “the WCC was no longer willing simply to talk about the evils of racism”, but to rather; “engage it head on” (2005:125). With the PCR in place, the WCC were now not only showing concern, but had made a new commitment to be actively involved in

the struggle against apartheid. It was no longer just word but these would be followed up with firm action.

In the time of the PCR, the WCC can be said to have been one of the most influential in the struggle against apartheid. In an article written by Barkat, "Churches combating racism in South Africa", he observes some of the ways in which the WCC has been involved (1982:297-303):

- It created awareness amongst the churches of the segregated system that was put in place to protect white privileges and power.
- It created support and solidarity for the racially oppressed community in a way that encouraged them to "not to accept the humiliating conditions of apartheid and racism".
- They enabled the leadership within the black churches through challenging their theological understanding of the gospel. They created awareness on how the white churches used the gospel to support segregation and how they (the black leaders) can apply the gospel to their situations and bring liberation to their people.
- It challenged its member churches to not invest financially in organizations that supported apartheid.
- The WCC was also challenged to re-examine their theological position and how the social and political problems were affecting the people.

Amongst the above actions taken by the WCC, one of the most controversial implementations of the PCR was the provision of special funds or grants to organizations in Africa that were also fighting against racial discrimination. The grants were utilized for humanitarian and educational purposes. Though these grants may have been beneficial to victims of racial discrimination, some opposed this act because some liberation movements acted in violence (Taggart, 2012:92). These opposed views went as far as identifying the WCC "as a terrorist organization under communist control" (De Gruchy, 2005:126-127). This was a negative impression created of the WCC because their intention was never to condone violence but to rather end racial discrimination. However, there was not much that they could do to prove themselves. Instead, they pursued their commitment to support the liberation movements and their struggle against racial discrimination. De Gruchy asserts that their actions appear to be a sign that the leaders of the WCC "had given up hope on the churches own struggle for change through working for justice and reconciliation" (2005:127). Which then gave the impression that they were now in support of those who were in war or conflict with the government and caused opposition from some of its members (De Gruchy, 2005:127), but despite the opposing views on the grants, churches were in full support in the rest of the work by the PCR. As stated by De Gruchy (2005:127-128), "the churches were unanimous in affirming the programme".

It is important to note that while the WCC funds were opposed by many of its church members, there definitely was a considerable number of changes that can be credited to its decision to fund liberation movements.⁵⁸ However, it is not in the purpose of this research to elaborate in detail the changers that occurred due to the WCC funds. What is of concern to this research is the impact it had on the church as well as the challenge it brought to bear on the church.

Firstly, as observed by De Gruchy, the WCC was tested in their fellowship and commitment. Although some of the white members and black members disagreed on some of the issues, it was a miracle that they still maintained fellowship. This could have been due to their stance against apartheid. Secondly, membership was not of utmost importance, but rather; on the commitment of their churches in the struggle against apartheid, and thirdly; the WCC awakened the church to see that non-violent actions were not mediating the change that was needed. In fact, some of the liberation movements who responded through violence achieved some success, including international support (2005:133-134).

Looking at the impact of the WCC funds upon the church, De Gruchy (2005:134) comments that “the real issue was not so much what the WCC was doing, but what the churches in South Africa were doing to prevent disaster.” In other words, the church is not called to follow the examples and actions taken by the WCC to combat racism, but rather; to commit to God and his people. What can be an example to follow from the WCC is their determination to continue in the struggle against racism. Barkat (1982:299) points out that the PCR “is a reflection of the churches' determination to struggle against racism and work toward a just society”. Determination can be seen as one of the strengths shown by the WCC.

In analysing the contribution made by the WCC in its struggle against apartheid, Barkat (1982:299) argues:

Its effectiveness cannot be measured by referring to concrete changers in the policies and attitudes of the South African regime which has become rather more oppressive. But if its success is measured by the determination of the churches within South Africa, and globally, to combat racism, then considerable progress has been made.

Although concrete changers were not seen in the apartheid policies at that time, the fact that the WCC were determined and committed in the struggle against racism is encouragement and a

⁵⁸ See De Gruchy, 2005 pg. 132

challenge to the churches today. That apartheid policies may have changed but the fight against racial and ethnic tensions are not over, and the church still has a big role as well as a huge platform to be the voice of the people and must continue to challenge the government both in words and action.

3.2.1.3 The Cottesloe Consultation

The Cottesloe Consultation was initiated by the WCC after the devastating events of the Sharpeville massacre. The consultations took place in December 1960, where eight churches who were members of the WCC gathered to discuss racial issues of the country and what Churches can do to combat this problem. It was at the end of the consultation that the Cottesloe Declaration⁵⁹ was released (Vosloo, 2017:139). Although there were hesitations from some of the churches to attend the consultation due to the DRC's strong stance for apartheid, the churches did eventually meet (Meiring, 2013:4-44).

It is no surprise that at this consultation the Afrikaans-speaking churches and the English-speaking churches were divided in their views on apartheid. But at the end of the consultation, both the Afrikaans and English-speaking churches signed the Cottesloe Declaration, and it was released.

While the declaration was a proposed solution to South Africa's racial problems, it was not positively accepted by everyone. In a New Year's (1961) speech presented by the Prime Minister Dr Verwoerd (cited by Meiring, 2013:44-45), he expressed his negative views on the declaration as follows:

Cottesloe, he said, was a reprehensible effort by foreigners to meddle in South African affairs. The WCC would never have a lasting impact on the way we think and act in South Africa. He added: "In fact, the churches have not spoken yet. The voice of the church still needs to be heard. That will happen when the synods speak, where both clergymen and lay people will have their say.

On the other hand, the English-Speaking Churches had a mild reaction, while the DRC raged a storm as they "voiced their strong protest against Cottesloe" (Meiring, 2013:45-46).

⁵⁹ A declaration that rejected racial discrimination.

With pressure from the Prime Ministers and some of the DRC members the Cottesloe was eventually rejected and the DRC's membership with the WCC came to an end. Even the black daughter churches could not fight for the Cottesloe statement because whatever decisions their mother made; they could not go against them (Meiring, 2013:46). However, Beyers Naude, another Reformed theologian, opposed the views of his fellow Afrikaners and went on to establish the Christian Institute with the aim of changing their minds (Manavhela, 2012:61). Naude's resignation from the DRC was not well received. But he continued his relationship with some of the leaders and challenged them on racial issues.

3.2.1.4 The Christian Institute (CI)

The CI was an ecumenical movement that promoted peace and unity within the church and society and aimed at challenging the DRC and the apartheid government on their stance for racial segregation. Like other ecumenical initiatives, the CI also used the gospel as its foundation as it pointed out that a separate development was a false gospel. Although the CI does not sum up the church's involvement in the struggle against apartheid, De Gruchy argues that the story of the church will not be complete if the work of the CI is not mentioned (2005:101).

The significance of the CI in its struggle against apartheid was that it acted upon a time when African political organisations were being oppressed, and challenged exploitive structures put in place for the poor (Walshe, 1977:477). In other words, the CI acted as a prophetic voice for those who could not speak due to being oppressed by the system. Perhaps, this can be made a challenge for churches today, to be the voice of the people and act on their behalf.

Considering that white people were viewed as the only ones who could contribute to and bring change in the country, the CI sought to encourage black consciousness⁶⁰ by making them aware of the vital role they play in bringing change in the country. They also sought to become diverse in their membership in hopes that a new generation of black leaders would emerge (Walshe, 1977:462). The CI also challenged the Afrikaans and other churches to be united in their witness to the society (De Gruchy, 2005:102). Alongside this, the CI initiated a Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (SPROCAS). Walshe explains that the purpose of this was to examine the different societal issues around the apartheid government. The results were nothing unexpected. It confirmed injustice and racial discrimination that even existed within the church

⁶⁰ This then gave rise to Liberation theology.

(1977:462:463). Like any other initiative that was against apartheid, SPROCAS also received opposition and negative responses from some of the Afrikaners, which then led to it phasing out.

The role that the CI played in SPROCAS did not limit them to study, but it moved from study to action and implementation. This, according to De Gruchy, was a turning point for the CI as they became more involved in the lives of the black community and their struggle (2005:106). In fact, leading up to the Soweto Uprising, the CI was fully committed to black initiatives. And because of its support towards black leaders in this event, the CI was banned. This affirms the difficult conditions under which it functioned, but this is no surprise considering that a lot of initiatives taken by churches to combat racism were not sustained. This was due to the harsh opposition it experienced from the state. In fact, it would have been a miracle if the CI continued till today.

So, what does this then mean for the church today? Does it mean that when opposition comes our way we cease to exist or give up our identity? In reflecting on the work of the CI, De Gruchy challenges the church with this, "... a faithful church will always find itself in a position of tension with society. At the same time, the church cannot escape being a social institution if it is to exist in the world ..." (2005:111). If the church is going to exist in the world, then it cannot give up its call to be an agent of change in the world. Which is why initiatives like the CI are so important because they challenge who the church is in society and what it can do to bring about change.

3.3 An Overview of the Church in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Looking back at the churches struggle against apartheid, although many of their programmes and initiatives to end apartheid phased out, they are still credited for being visible during the struggle. In chapter 2 of this research, an observation was made that even though apartheid has long ended, the country is still living with the effects of the past. This can be observed in some of the political, social, and economic challenges that have escalated and intensified over the years. What needs to now be analysed is whether the church is still visible in the continued struggles of this country, and has the church been effective in bringing social change. Moreover, how has apartheid affected the church and its mission, and what is the church doing to maintain the unity that it once fought for?

3.3.1 The Public Engagement and Prophetic Voice of the Church

In research done by Kuperus (2011:284) on the political role of the church in Post-apartheid South Africa, she observed that there has been a shift in the church's role and status. Unlike before, where the church and Christian organisations met on many occasions to discuss a way forward, the church is no longer prophetic. When comparing the prophetic voice of the church during apartheid and the church in post-apartheid South Africa, Masuku has found that the difference

between the churches is that: “while during apartheid the church was vocal against apartheid, she is silent today” (2014:163-164).

One of the reasons for the churches silence, as presented by Makofane and Botha (2019:90) is that after apartheid ended, the church then shifted its focus to the affairs of the church such as preaching and counselling and left the politicians to deal with the rest. This gives the impression that when South Africa became a democratic country the church assumed that the challenges and problems of the country were now over. After all, the nation did receive the freedom that they fought for, not realising that the country will continue to live with the effects of the past and that social, economic, and political issues would escalate and intensify.

Masuku (2014:164) adds that another reason for the churches silence is a result of individual religious leaders who have close relationships with people in government. It is interesting that at one point these leaders voiced themselves against the apartheid system, but now that they have occupied positions in the government, they have become silent and have taken the side of the government. During the xenophobic attacks that occurred in 2008, the church was not heard. This is unlike the church considering that when incidents such as this occurred during apartheid, the voice of the church was heard. It is not just ethnic and racial crimes that have manifested in the country. There are other criminal activities and corruption. Considering the above, Masuku challenges the Church to “be in a position to minister to all sectors of society including the state” (2014:164).

The DRC (NGK), who during apartheid was very vocal in their stance for the system has now become silent. During the 1990's, the DRC was very reluctant to embrace political change. But later, with the change in leadership, Kuperus points out that the DRC recommitted itself to the African Continent and South Africa's political transformation. They also acknowledged the need to engage with issues such as poverty and HIV/AIDS, crime, and violence (2011:287). Although this recommitment showed the DRC's concerns for and the engagement they wanted to have in the new SA, this recommitment is questionable considering that their public engagement later shifted.

There are numerous reasons for the shift in public engagements of the DRC (NGK). Firstly, divisions based on theological thought and congregation differentiation within the DRC could have contributed to the church's silence. These divisions came after the end of apartheid when the church was asked to reassess their nature and identity. As a result, the church became divided between “preserver of the flock” and “promoter of societal change” (Kuperus, 2011:286). These divisions could have weakened the church's public engagement. However, being committed to its role as “preserver of the flock” is more explanatory to the silence of the church and its shift in

public engagement. Secondly, unlike before, the DRC does not have any influence in the government which limits them from the political platform to speak, but this reason can also be related to other denominations and churches who have also become silent. In South Africa, the government has control over the church to a certain extent. The implications of this are when the country is in some sort of crises the first initiative has to come from the government while the church is left in the background. As a result, the Christian Church is left to follow state initiatives and co-exist with other religions (Makofane & Botha, 2019:91). In other words, the church has no place to voice its opinions and contribute to the challenges of the country from a biblical point of view, and thirdly; the DRC could have become silent due to their loss of credibility⁶¹ (Kuperus, 2011:285:286). Makofane and Botha agree with Kuperus that the Afrikaner church could have become silent due to their negative track record. They further add that whenever the DRC try to voice themselves or critique the government, they are often reminded of their past and how they once supported the apartheid government (2019:92). However, irrespective of the church`s track record, the government will always question the actions of those who will challenge their leadership. The question is whether the church is concerned enough to rise above this and continue to be the prophetic voice.

An observation of the SACC`s role in democratic South Africa shows that their role during the struggle against apartheid and now has not changed much. According to Kuperus, the SACC`s positions presented in many of their public policies, indicates their commitment to end unjust structures and expose the needs of the marginalized (2011:290). However, in further research done by Kuperus (2011:290), it is observed that the influence of the SACC in political affairs has diminished. During apartheid, the SACC supported the general aims of the ANC by endorsing the Freedom Charter and supporting the aims and goals of the liberation struggle. Its influence on the ANC had led its leaders to “reaffirm their commitment to 'liberation-oriented' Christianity in the 1980s and welcomed the use of church buildings and congregations within the prophetic Christian tradition to advance the cause of liberation” (Kuperus, 2011:290). Indeed, one wonders why the SACC has diminished in their influence on political affairs, but it is this diminished influence from an ecumenical movement such as the SACC and other churches and Christian leaders, that explains the current minimal influence in the social, political, and economic crisis of the country.

One of the weaknesses of the SACC was its dependence on international support. Since South Africa became a democratic country, Kuperus has observed that “interest and support has dropped considerably” (2011:291). Could this mean that the SACC in post-apartheid has lost

⁶¹ This came as a result of their support for racial segregation during apartheid.

focus of their mission, considering that during apartheid their mission was clearer and because apartheid was known worldwide it may have been easier to motivate international support? According to Kuperus, the SACC has not only weakened in their reach and public impact but also because of a “crisis of vision, mission, and mandate” (2011:291). Perhaps the SACC needs to reassess and re-examine their mission in post-apartheid South Africa. Even though apartheid has long ended, the country still faces many challenges and continues to need the voice and public engagement of the SACC.

On the other hand, Kuperus (2011:291-292) also observed that the SACC has found it difficult to keep up with the Pentecostal, charismatic, and evangelical churches who seem to be more willing to engage with political issues. This could have also contributed to the silence of the SACC. However, it is important to note that although the SACC has been silent in its prophetic engagement with political issues and no longer has the support of the ANC like it once did, it has remained true in its commitment to a just and equal South Africa.

The ZCC and other AICs has not changed much compared to the SACC and the NGK. Public engagement remains absent, but its strength as pointed out by Kuperus, is its influence on society from behind the scenes. The ZCC has indirectly contributed to the strengthening of democracy through the cultivation of social capital, they have sought to create trust and cooperation among their members and provided care for members. They have also acted as agents of community development and encouraged lifestyle changes such as abstaining from alcohol and drugs and advocate working hard (2011:300-301). The initiatives of the ZCC emphasise that they are more concerned in helping the people affected by the political and social issues, instead of publicly addressing and engaging with the government on those issues. While they are credited for their work in providing care and support for the people, not taking a bold public stance against the challenges facing the country “contributes to the forwarding of exclusivity, authoritarianism, and patriarchy that hurt efforts at consolidating democracy. Alongside this, is that the credibility and significance of its local witness is being diminished” (Kuperus, 2011:301). Looking at the involvement of the ZCC, it can be ascertained that social and political transformation in the country needs more than just meeting the physical needs of the people or taking social action. While those are important gestures, what’s more important is for the church to be salt and light in a world that is broken and torn by the past.

No matter what the reasons may be for the church to have become silent, the point is they have been and, in the process, have become a discouragement to those looking to the church for answers. The Christian church needs to recommit themselves to God and his mission and the people of South Africa like never before. The Church needs to awaken itself to the challenges of

the country and be the prophetic voice that the church needs it to be. Mangayi (2014:137) rightly argues that the church has a prophetic voice to question the changes that has taken place in South Africa from the demise of apartheid to now. They have the responsibility to raise their voice against the continued problems of the country.

3.3.2 Disunity in the Church - A Continued Challenged

Since the end of apartheid, there has been a considerable effort in the church uniting and taking the initiative to combat racial segregation. Take for instance the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, though not founded by a Christian organisation, the leadership of the commission were of Christian faith. While there may have been Christian influence in the TRC, there are different arguments as to whether the TRC was founded upon scripture or not. But despite this, the TRC did have an impact on Africa and the Church.

In its mission to reconcile enemies through confronting the past and admitting to crimes caused, countries like Nigeria, Ghana and Rwanda sought to follow in the approach of South Africa (Turaki, 2006:875). On the other hand, writing on the story of the Church in South Africa, Roy (2017:214-215). observes some of the trends where churches sought to reconcile. Committing to the goal of unity, the three daughter churches of the DRC united and are now known as the Uniting Reformed Church. Alongside them were the various branches of the AFM who came together, the white Baptist and the black Baptist Convention committed to having discussions on how they can unite, and the Presbyterian church of Southern Africa also made decisions to unite.

At the implementation of the TRC, it fulfilled in its mission, and it was what South African’s needed to move forward. As firmly stated by Alard (2010:15), “it reconciled people in the sense that for the first time the truth and about the brutality of apartheid had been revealed in public and understood to be a grave sin against humanity.” The TRC like any other initiative taken by the church in the past to end apartheid, also received opposition. However, it continued to act as mediator between the one who inflicted pain and the one who was affected by the pain. And yes, they did to a certain extent unearth the pains of the past. Begging the question whether the country and specifically, the church has been reconciled.

Commenting on the commitments made by some of the churches to work on being reconciled, Roy asserts that it would be too soon to draw conclusions on the unity of the church considering that while there were unions, there were also new and separate ecclesiastical bodies. This is seen in the decline of membership from the mainline churches. Some moved to other denominations and others claimed to not be religious (2017:215). The easiest or most obvious answers for these declines would be that of racial discords, but the truth is, it is not always that race and ethnic differences cause divisions. There are other issues that can cause divisions within churches. In

further research done by Roy, he has found that one of the major issues dividing the churches, specifically the Protestant, was that of homosexuality (2017:217).

Disunity amongst the different races, cultures and languages has proven to be a continued problem that still affects the church today. Although there have been some attempts made in the church uniting them, there are still some who are struggling to rid the traditions of the apartheid theology. According to Vorster, the Reformed Tradition in South Africa are known to still be struggling with issues of the past. They claim to have been united and made one, but they are still very much divided in their worship services according to race and language. Vorster further states that this division “reflects the inequality of the South African society” and argues that “the churches demonstrate more division than unity” (2018:4).

Continuing in the traditions of apartheid and disunity is that of the African church. Which is an unfortunate situation considering that it was black people who suffered more under the oppressed system. If ever there should be a group of people determined to embrace unity, it should have been the African church, but instead, tribal, and ethnic problems continue to surface. Pohor explains that this can be traced back to missionary work. When missionaries worked with tribal and ethnic groups, they formed churches that was specifically designed for that group of people (2006:316). This then resulted in churches having their own doctrines and understanding of church government. This, according to Pohor (2006:316) has reinforced differences within the church.

The Reformed Traditions of South Africa and the African church are just two examples of how the church continues to live in the effects of the past. Although disunity in the church is not something new, the conditions in which we live in have intensified it. Differences cannot be avoided but the church cannot allow it to distort its mission and image in the world. De Gruchy asserts that “in some ways divisions created by race and culture have to be transcended in the church so that its identity as the reconciled and reconciling community can be demonstrated” (2005:50). Commenting on the prayer of unity that Jesus prayed for the Church, Kosse’ asserts that Jesus prayed this prayer because “he knew that unity lends credibility to the message of the church and is part of its mission” (Jn 17:21) (Kosse’, 2006:1288). If the church wants to be effective in its mission, then it needs to re-evaluate and re-examine its identity in the world. In a Lausanne Occasional Paper that was presented on “Reconciliation as the Mission of God”, it challenges the churches to recommit themselves to God’s reconciling mission, by firmly stating the following:

This troubled situation calls for prayer, discernment, and repentance, and a critical re-examination of the very meaning of mission, evangelism, discipleship and even church in relation to God’s reconciling mission. This is particularly

urgent given cases where vast areas of revivals and church planting have become vast killing fields (such as Rwanda 1994), with Christians slaughtering neighbours and even other Christians (LOP. 2004:3).

The issue of disunity and divisions within the church has long been a problematic, but with the escalated and intensified problems that have resulted in violence and killings the country is currently facing, the church can no longer just talk about the problems but needs to be actively involved in society and in what God is doing in the world.

3.3.3 The Role of the Church in the Future of the Country

An observation has been made by the researcher that while the people in South Africa desire to live in harmony and unity with each other, the pains of the past has not left. With the increased challenges in the country, people have become angry with the government and are still blaming the apartheid government for what is going on in the country. This anger has led to protesting, lootings, and strikes. The country cannot continue in the way it is right now. SA has been through a lot and there is no doubt that the future is still bright. It is with this in mind that the Church is challenged to immerse itself in society by becoming the missional people whom God has called it to be.

Mangayi has observed that the church has failed to connect faith and activism to address the issues facing the country. As a result, they have conformed to the practices of society instead of transforming it (2014:136). And for transformation in society to take place, Makofane and Botha argues that transformation of Christianity needs to take place. By this they are not referring to more doctrine or confessions, but a shift in focus. For the church to focus on the different categories of people that are being affected by the challenges of the country - the “still destitute, the still poor and the still denied” (2019:94). If the church shifted its focus to the people that are suffering under the challenges the country is faced with, then they will be placing themselves in a position to address and respond to those needs. The church has the ability to address the needs of the people in a different manner to that of the government, considering that they know the truth and will address the issues in light of who God is and what He is doing.

Harold points out that the church in society is an “alternative community”. By this he affirms that the church is a community of people that is meant to bring change in society (2018:23). However, change can only come through practice. As seen in the implementation of the PCR, words are not enough to bring change, practice is. When the church can put into practice what they believe, they will visibly display who they are as children of God. As further stated by Harold, “for the church, Christian practice is not seen as something we do, but rather who we are, a community of reconciliation, compassion, and love (2018:23). Through the church’s practical engagement

and unity, it embodies the presence of God and is certain to have more impact on society than the government. In fact, the continued challenges in the country should be an open door and an opportunity for the church to be who it is called to be and preach the gospel.

What needs to encourage the church to continue in its role in society is the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is still changing lives. From the beginning, to now, there is proof that the message of Jesus Christ has been influencing the people of South Africa. In further research done by Roy on the story of the Church in South Africa, he has observed that despite the many conflicts and storms the country has faced, the country has come thus far because of the influence of the message of Christ working in people's lives (2017:221). It is certain that God is still working in the country and in the hearts of the people and because he is still working there is hope for the future of the country. God is calling the church to partner with him in what he is doing in the country. The church needs to recommit itself to God and His mission.

3.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has analysed racial and ethnic tensions within the church during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. The churches responses towards the apartheid system can be categorised into three sections: for apartheid, against apartheid, and a neutral stance.

Firstly, for those that were for apartheid, this chapter has shown how theology was used to defend the system. The DRC was the most influential and vocal in support of racial segregation. Teachings that developed to prove that racial segregation was biblical, became important to them. It gave them courage and boldness to continue in the fight for racial segregation and they even went as far as including the teachings in some of their reports. However, there were still some ministers, members, and theologians from within the reformed circle that contested against the Bible being used to defend apartheid. It is unfortunate that they did not have much influence. Their downfall was that they were in the minority compared to those that defended the system. The strength of those that supported the system was that they had more supporters. Hence, with most of the votes given for apartheid, apartheid was legalised.

Secondly, for those that were against apartheid, they were united in their faith and was vocal and visible in the fight for unity within and outside the church. Their concern and plea to end racial segregation was expressed in resolutions, deputations, programmes, and published pastoral letters. However, their opposition came from English missionaries who were amongst them that supported the apartheid system. Nevertheless, their strength was in their unity and bold stance to fight against the system. This chapter has shown that the English-speaking churches were visible and vocal in the fight against apartheid.

Thirdly, for those that developed a neutral stance, there were a number of reasons for their approach. For those belonging to the Pentecostal and Evangelical movements, their focus was on preaching the gospel rather than fighting the government for social justice. They, therefore, accepted the racially divided patterns and ministered to the people in their divided groups. The Roman Catholics developed a quiet diplomacy approach because the government was anti-Roman Catholic. However, they later became vocal but did it with caution to avoid any obstacles or oppression from the government. On the other hand, the DRC daughter churches was not vocal due to their dependence on their mother church for financial support. And the AIC, who should have been the most vocal, avoided fighting the government in fear that if they did then oppression would have intensified. So instead, they helped with those that was affected by the system.

For the ones who were against apartheid, this chapter has proved that although the initiatives taken to end apartheid phased out, their voices and actions, together with some of the ecumenical movements were heard and visible during the churches struggle against the system. Further observation shows that the church in post-apartheid is not as visible and prophetic. Their witness in society and influence in the government has diminished.

Although a considerable effort has been made to reconcile and unite, both in society and the church, the chapter went on to show that this effort has not been consistent. Racial segregation is still a problem in the church. As a result, disunity in the church affects the witness of the church.

This chapter concludes that the church still has a missional role to play in society and the future of the country. In a country that is still divided and living with the pains of the past, the Church as God's people have the task of being agents of reconciliation. For the church to fully commit itself to God and his mission, the church must re-examine its role and mission.

CHAPTER 4 THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY FROM A *MISSIO DEI* PERSPECTIVE

4.1 Introduction

Having discussed the problem and extent of racial and ethnic challenges in the previous chapters, this chapter will now focus on what the Bible teaches about race and ethnicity. The aim and purpose of this chapter is to establish a biblical and theological understanding of race and ethnicity from a missional perspective in hopes that, the church will see the importance of embracing racial and ethnic diversity, and thus enhance its missional task.

To accomplish this, the researcher will begin with a brief discussion on the image in which man was created and the sinful nature of man. This discussion will expose the reader to the identity of man and help understand his value and worth. The chapter will then delve into how sin has affected the identity of man, thus becoming the root cause of how man behaves and acts. It will go on to look at God's salvation plan to redeem humanity. Which plan will be traced from Genesis to Revelations. Note that the chapter does not attempt to reference every single verse or narrative on God's salvation plan, but the verses and narratives chosen will be those that will show the place that race and ethnicity holds in God's plan of salvation and how the work of Christ extends to anyone who will place faith in him.

In the Old Testament, the focus will be on Gods universal mission extending to all nations through a particular means. In the New Testament, the focus will be on the sending of the disciples to the ends of the earth and how the church through its new identity in Christ as a people reconciled to God and united in Christ are called to honour God by living in unity and being witnesses of the Gospel through its unity. In both the Old and New Testament, the reader will be drawn to Gods multi-ethnic and multicultural mission as he redeems for himself a diverse community of people that will worship him here on earth and in the heavens.

4.2 The Image of God

Genesis 1:26-27 tells of how God creates man,

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

The question is what makes man superior compared to other living creatures, considering that they were both created out of dust? When closely looking at the creation story, one sees that all the living creatures including man were created on the same day. Moreover, just like other creations they were created of dust and commanded to reproduce the earth (Gen 1:24, 28; 2:7,19). In everything that God created he began with the words “let the” or “let there be”. However, when it comes to the creation of man he begins with the words “let us”. On the other hand, everything that was created before man was created “according to his own kind”, but for man, it is specified that he was created in the “image of God, in our likeness” (Gen 1:26; 5:1-3). This contrast alone, between the previous creation and the creation of man, expresses the significance of man (Sailhammer, 1990:37). Sailhammer (1990:37) points out that the most obvious response to this is that God intended to portray man as a “special creature, marked out from the rest of God’s work” but most importantly, to show that “man is like God”.

4.2.1 Being Created in the Image of God

There are different arguments, interpretations, and explanations on what it means to be made in the image of God.⁶² Some, interpret this to mean that man and God are equal (Merril, 2003:443) while others, argue that man physically looks like God (Fisher, 2019). Fisher (2019) argues that this interpretation is impossible, and claims that humans were made to only live and act like God. Merrill addresses these arguments by pointing out two things: “(1) that humans share with God such qualities as personality, will and sensibility, but that (2) they share these not in an essential matter but only in a derivative way” (2003:443). Merrill further clarifies this by firmly stating, “... humanity’s resemblance to God is analogous but not ontologically identical. To be like God is to be patterned after him but at the same time, to be qualitatively inferior to him” (2003:443). To both Fisher and Merrill, the argument is that humans are only image bearers who only resemble the actual image.

The words image and likeness does not have many occurrences in both the OT and the NT.⁶³ In the OT, references to this can be found in Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1, 5:3, and 9:6. The Hebrew word for image (*selem/tselem*) and for likeness (*demut/d’moot*) in these verses speaks of something similar but not identical to what it is made to represent⁶⁴ (Grudem 1999:189). It is an “image” of

⁶² These views can be summed in three different views: substantive, relational, and functional. Refer to Erickson 2002, pg. 521-527.

⁶³ 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9; Acts 17:28; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:19; Eph 4:23-24; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15.

⁶⁴ *Selem* and *demut* “commonly appear throughout the OT and describe images and idols designed to represent the deities of pagan worship or even Yahweh himself on occasions of apostate Israelite

something it represents. When God created man, He created man in his likeness but not identical – he created an image, a representation of himself. The Hebrew word “shadow” (*tselem*) which comes out of the word *tselem* expresses this better. A shadow does not look like the physical person but behaves and acts like it. This emphasizes a “mirrored image of who and what we are” (Fisher, 2017). Humanity may not look like God but was created to live and act like him.

According to Grudem (1999:190) this made sense to the original readers. The Hebrew translation for image and likeness would simply mean “that man was like God and would in many ways represent God”. Like God, man was created with the same attributes and characteristics (Grudem, 1999:190). Kidner, comments on the words image and likeness by stating that these words are “characteristically bold” because it communicates “the central truth about humanity”. He further explains that “image is man’s indelible constitution as a rational and morally responsible being, and the ‘likeness’ is that spiritual accord with the will of God...” (1967:50-51). Man is created with a conscience and a soul – the ability to think, know, act, and feel. These are all qualities of God, and if God created man in His image, it; therefore, explains man as being a reflection, imitation, or representation of God. Man was also created with the ability to have fellowship with God. It is only through fellowship with God that man is in the likeness of God. However, this likeness was destroyed at the fall (Gen 3). Which means that man is no longer like God. Whoever has a relationship with God, are now children of God and belong to him, and it is only when Christ appears that man will be fully like God (1Jn 3:2).

4.2.2 The Implications of being Created in the Image of God

Being created in the image of God gives meaning and purpose to man’s life. It is in the image of God that man finds his identity, value, and worth. As firmly stated by Erickson (2002:518-519), “the image of God is what makes humans human.” It is only in the image of God that humanity understands the importance of being in relationship with God and with each other. Apart from this, they will never know their individual value and worth, and that of the other persons. This is the beauty of the creation of man; that irrespective of race, colour, tribe, caste, nationality, or gender; all of humanity are made in the image of God. This establishes that from the beginning of creation, when God created man, that “all basis for racism, tribalism, sexism, caste, social classism, and nationalism” was immaterial (Greenway, 1999:33).

cultic activity (Num 33:52; 2 Kings 11:18; Ps 73:20; Is 40:18; Ezek 7:20; Amos 5:26)” (Merrill 2003:442).

The image of God in man is universal and present in all of humanity. This means that all of humanity is loved, valued, worthy, and belongs to God. This is a challenge to the way humans treat and relate to each other. All of humanity is created with the same attributes of God which gives us the ability to be in a relationship with God and each other. If humans viewed each other from this perspective, then only will every human be treated with dignity and respect. It is within this understanding that humans are created in the image of God, that dominion can be exercised. Erickson (2002:536) firmly states that “everyone has a right to exercise dominion, a right that ends only at the point of encroaching upon another’s right to exercise dominion”. If the powers that God has blessed humanity with are used within the parameter of what God intended, then only will man glorify God. The dominion over all creatures given to man was a result of being created in the image of God. It is unfortunate that due to man’s sinful nature, this dominion is being exploited and “proves the unfitness of fallen beings to govern” (Kidner, 1967:52).

4.3 The Sinful Nature of Man

In defining sin from a biblical perspective, Doriani (1997) explained that sin is characterised by three things: “disobedience to or breach of law, violation of relationships with people, and rebellion against God”. Doriani (1997) further explained that sin includes “a failure to do what is right” and “involves a condition in which the heart is corrupted and inclined toward evil” (Doriani, 1997). Being more specific on what sin is, Norman (2012) stated that sin “is idolatry, rebellion, missing the mark, straying from the path, treachery, lust, ungodliness, and wickedness. Sin disregards, commits wilful error, brings guilt, and lacks integrity”. In summary, sin rejects anything that pleases God and attracts a lifestyle that is contrary to what honours and pleases God.

When sin entered the world, the image in which man was created in became distorted. This meant that man is no longer pure, holy, and righteous like God. The way we live, behave, treat others, our relationships, what we believe, and value are all negatively influenced by sin. We want to do good but because sin is rooted inside of us, we tend to please our desires. In theological doctrinal terms, man is “totally depraved.”⁶⁵ Man, in his entire being is corrupted by sin because sin is rooted in his heart (Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 8:7). He is dead to his sins and transgressions (Eph 2:5). This explains why man is incapable to love God, love others, and live righteously, but would rather choose to please his own desires.

⁶⁵ As a result of sin, man is incapable in himself to love God or please Him. Instead, he lives to please his own desires.

The gravity of sin is seen in the OT laws whereby sacrifices and rituals were required for the cleansing of sins (Lev. 4; 5:1–13; 6:24–30; 8:14–17; 16:3–22; 5:14–19; 6:1–7; 7:1–6). In some cases, the OT law required for the person who committed a sin or broken the law to be removed from the land (Deu 13:5; c.f. 1 Cor 5:13). Sin is an offense to God, which is why the OT law required a sacrifice for atonement, “in many of which a victim gives its life blood for an atonement” (Doriani, 1997). In the NT, Christ became the sacrifice, making it possible for the forgiveness and redemption of sins. Sin is deeply rooted in the heart of man and apart from the grace of God found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, man is incapable of doing good and living righteously.

4.3.1 The Universal Impact of Sin

Sin is something that all of humanity have inherited. Not only did sin affect Adam and Eve, but it affected all of humanity. As stated by Paul, “there is no one righteous, not even one...” (Rom 3:10). Reason being is, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Everyone is included in the universal effects of sin – both non-believers and believers (Eph 2:3; Gal 3:22; 1 Jn 5:19). Therefore, every man born after the fall, was and is born with sin. This is a truth that for many, such as the African Traditional Religions, do not understand or believe.

In the ATR, many believe that “man is not born in sin.” They believe that sin does not come from within man, but from outside of man. As a result, it affects the community and family, not God (Vosloo, n.d:10). Turaki (2012:57) argues that although this is what the ATR believe, the biblical understanding of sin can easily be explained because within the ATR, kinship values and genealogy or lineage is very important. They believe that all of who they are; how they behave, what they value and believe, what they do, and how they live have all been inherited from their ancestors. So, to say something like “sin is inherited from our parents Adam and Eve”, will not sound strange to them. However, sin can only be understood and accepted in comparison with Gods holiness.

Not only has the image of God in man been distorted due to sin, but man’s image of who God is has also been distorted. Man, no longer view God as holy and just; the one who hates sin and loves holiness. This tainted image of who God is affects humanities behaviour and ways of living. Turaki (2012:33) firmly states that “because God is just and utterly opposed to sin, he expects us to have the same attitude”, but with a distorted image of who God is humanity will never know the truth about Him and how they ought to live. Due to this tainted image of God; we do not fear God, we don’t live in a way He desires for us to live, and we interpret or limit his character to benefit our desires.

4.3.2 The Root Cause of all Racial and Ethnic Tensions

The problem with sin is that it has created pride within man. There is a deep need to satisfy one's own desires. It was pride that led to Satan's downfall (Eze 28:17, Isa 14:13-14), and when he tempted Adam and Eve, he tempted them on the "same spirit of self" (Turaki, 2012:79).

He persuaded Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit (which God commanded them to not eat), assuring them that if they did then they will become like God knowing good and evil. When Eve saw that the fruit was good for gaining wisdom, she went against God's will and command and ate of the fruit and as promised, their eyes were opened. According to Turaki (2012:80), their eyes were opened to "sin-consciousness" and "self-consciousness." They realised that they had disobeyed God, they were sinners, and they no longer reflected the image of God. They gained wisdom, but not the wisdom which God offers (Ja 3:17). Instead, they gained wisdom from Satan which is characterised by pride. Eve's contrary response to God's command, based on "self-centeredness" is what caused a barrier between them and God. Before Adam and Eve's disobedience towards God, they were in perfect union but after the fall, the union between God and man had broken. Not that God had changed, as stated by Erickson (2002:620), but it was the sin of Adam and Eve that caused the separation.

Not only has man's relationship with God been affected, but man's relationship with other humans has also been affected. The fact that Adam did not want to take the blame for disobeying God and instead, blamed Eve for their sin (Gen 3:11-12), shows that he was self-centred. He did not want to be at fault; and the first sin committed after the fall, murder; was also based on self-centeredness (Gen 4:8).

Erickson (2002:635-637) explains that sin has made man increasingly self-centred and self-seeking. We desire to have what others have and we don't want to be at fault. When we don't get what we want and things don't go our way, then we become angry and war rages within us. Which is why James stated that fights and quarrels, killing and covetousness comes from our desires that rage within us (Ja 4:1-2). Erickson (2000:636) further argues that because our aim is self-satisfaction, we cannot empathize or love others. Our opinions, views, and feelings matter more than others, and because we feel threatened by others, we cannot take them into consideration. Therefore, "suspicions, conflicts, bitterness, and even hatred" arise from within us. This shows the extent of how sin has affected humanity and how deeply rooted it is within us. Because sin is inherited, the sin of pride and self-centeredness continues to manifest and cause conflicts and divisions within humanity. These manifestations of conflicts and divisions are seen in many different forms.

In the context of South Africa, the evil practices of racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and tribalism are all rooted in the sin of pride. The problem is not that we are all different in race and ethnicity or belong to a certain tribe. In fact, there is so much beauty in our differences because all of humanity are God's special design. The problem, as observed by Pohor (2006:316) is when we move beyond our differences and embrace a racial, ethnocentric, and tribalistic mindset. It is pride that has led man to think of himself as different to others, causing him to look down on others and to not see them as his equal (Higgins, 2018). Pride has led to man creating boundaries and hierarchies that separates us from each other which is in total opposite to how God desires for all of humanity to live. Sin has impacted the world and affected humanity so much that people no longer desire to conform to the standards of God but rather; the patterns of the world (Rom 12:2).

As a result of sin and its effect on people's lives, the world is evil and this evil is seen every day in our actions. It is therefore important to know that in addressing racial and ethnic tensions, we need to understand that our actions are influenced by our sinful nature and the cultures we grew up in. Even though the way we view, understand, interpret, and apply things differently leaves room for conflict and misunderstandings; it is important to note that sin is the root cause of all evils. Humanity is sinful and fallen by nature, which means that culture and religion which is created by man is also sinful and fallen, hence leading into social sins (Turaki, 2012:173). However, the good news is that God through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus has made a way for our relationship with Him and others to be restored. The image in man that was once distorted is restored in Christ, including our view of who God is. In Christ we learn the truths about Him and how we ought to live; and in Christ, the Holy Spirit enables us to live righteously and obey the commands of God, including that of loving others. It is only by accepting these truths that South Africa and other parts of the African continent can be healed from the past and embrace a united country.

4.4 The Global Intention of God's Mission in the OT

In this section of the research, the focus will be on the global intention of God's mission in the OT. The global intention of Gods mission is that although he choose one nation, his salvation plan had all other nations in mind. He calls one nation into covenant to himself, he blesses them, and then commands them to be a blessing to the other nations. Here the researcher will show that every aspect of Gods covenants with his chosen people (Ex 19:4-6) was for the purpose of the entire world, that through God's relationship and their obedience to him, nations will come to know who the true God is amongst the gods. It was for the very purpose of redeeming humanity that God choose Israel.

4.4.1 Israel - the Chosen Nation

In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, God's judgment is seen three times: firstly; when God banished man from the garden (3:23-24), secondly; when the earth was destroyed by the flood (chp 6-9), and third; the dispersion at Babel (11:1-9) (Baldwin, 1986:28). In Genesis 12, God shows up with a salvation plan to restore humanity back to himself. This plan begins with the call of Abram and then extends to the entire nation of Israel. According to Barker, "this is the outgrowth and extension of the Lord's covenant with Abraham and his descendants 600 years earlier" (2008:115).

The call of Abram (Gen 12:1-3), which proceeds after the dispersion at Babel (11:1-9), came "as God's gift of salvation in the midst of judgment ... and marks a new beginning as well as a return to God's original plan of blessing 'all mankind'" (Sailhammer, 1990:111). Introducing a new phase in history and calling Abram into a relationship with him and blessing him, was God's gracious plan to reverse humanity's failures (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:28-29). Through the call of Abram, humanity will be restored, and a new creation will be born. This new beginning in God's salvation plan is developed in other ways in the Book of Genesis⁶⁶ (Sailhammer, 1990:111-112).

The call of Abram consisted of firstly, a command. The command was for Abram to go into a land that God will show him (12:1c). This command required him to leave his country, his people, and his father's household (12:1b). These three things are of value to the individual, for according to the ancient world, this is what provided security for an individual (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:29). Secondly, the call of Abram consisted of promises. This, according to Köstenberger and O'Brien, seems more significant than the command. "The focus of intention is on what God will do in and through Abram, thereby fulfilling his intentions for his creation" (2001:29). The promise given to Abram is that he will become a great nation and his name will be great. He will be blessed and through him nations will also be blessed (12:2-3). God called Abram because Abram knew God and was obedient to him.

As the descendants of Abram became the nation of Israel, God chose Israel as his witnesses in the world and made a covenant with them (Ex 19:5-6). By conforming to the law of the covenant, Israel will be "a distinct nation among the pagan nations of the world," representing God and his character amongst the nations (Grisanti, 1998:40). In the covenant that God established with his

⁶⁶ 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:5, 18; 17:6-8; 22:17-18; 25:11; 26:2-4; 27:27-29; 49:28.

people, he mentions three things which assert who Israel is to God and whom they are called to be in the world and as God's chosen people:

Firstly, a treasured possession: This is "an expression that was used in the Old Testament of private property held by royalty" (Eccles 2:8; 1 Chr 29:3) (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:33). A similar phrase is used in 1 Peter 2:9 and Titus 2:14, referring to "Christians" who are God's chosen people belonging to Him (Barker 2008:115). By God referring to Israel as his treasured possession, he is making the point that Israel is his special people. That out of all the nations, Israel will be the chosen nation and God will rule over her (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:33).

Secondly, a kingdom of priest: Ndjerareou explains the role of a priest as one who "has access to God and acts as an intermediary between the people and God (Ex 13-27) (2006:109). Barker points out that a priest, had to be "wholly consecrated to his service" (2008:115). This then would mean that Israel, in its priestly role; would have to acknowledge God as their king (Barker, 2008:115), and as they are being led and taught in the ways of the Lord, they will be a "light to the nations" (Ndjerareou, 2006:109) – "a channel of God's grace to the nations" (Barker, 2008:116). They are called to minister to other nations on behalf of God and act as mediator between God and other nations (Davis, 2003:105).

Thirdly, a holy nation: As God's elect nation, Israel is called "to serve the world by being separate." This can have a similar meaning to Israel's role as kingdom of priests because "a priest served his society by being distinct from it" (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:34). The phrase a holy nation, is also found in 1 Peter 2:9. A Christian can only do the will of God if they are "set apart" (Barker, 2008:116). Most importantly, Israel is called to be holy because God is holy (Ndjerareou, 2006:109). This is a challenge people to live holy and separate as God's chosen people.

Based on these three points, Israel as God's missionary people, are called to be witnesses to other nations by being living examples of the "righteous kingdom of God" (Greenway, 1999:35). This is affirmed in Deuteronomy 4:5-8 which explains how Israel, by obeying the decrees and the laws of the Lord, will become a witness to other nations. Due to the instructions given to Israel on how to live amongst the nations, Israel's missionary call has been understood as witnessing to the nations through experiencing the blessings of God and living according to them rather than being active, evangelistic missionaries, going out to the nations and preaching (Davis, 2003:106). In fact, Köstenberger and O'Brien have even pointed out that "there is no suggestion in the Old

Testament that Israel should have engaged in cross-cultural or foreign mission” (2001:35). This shows that Israel’s mission to the nations was centripetal⁶⁷ instead of centrifugal.⁶⁸

However, in the Psalms such as chapters 57; 119; 126; 146; 67; and 96, Israel’s mission seems to be more centrifugal rather than centripetal as Israel is called to sing, speak, tell, pray and proclaim the salvation of the Lord. Although praising precedes preaching, they are both actions in witnessing (Davis, 2003:116). Steyn (1990:115) is of the view that Israel’s mission was both centrifugal and centripetal. He not only refers to the Psalms to affirm this, but in looking at Abram’s call he asserts that “Israel knowing God’s blessing and the nations receiving blessing from them affirms the centrifugal and centripetal aspects of her mission.” Israel was called to live according to Gods blessings, but to also pass these blessings to other nations.

Witnessing to the nations meant living a life that reflected the message to be preached, but this would only come through an intimate and personal relationship with God. Israel could only live a holy life through knowing God. By living out the message they were to witness, Israel would have a greater impact on the nations. However, Israel’s missionary call is questionable considering that instead of worshipping the true God, they turned to pagan religions (Dt 32:15-18) and lived a lifestyle of selfishness and greed (Jer 34) (Steyn 1990:114) (Greenway, 1999:35). Steyn (1990:114) has observed that when Israel ignored their mandate and the purpose of God choosing them, they lost sight of their call to stewardship and instead, turned to other gods. It is for this very reason that God judges the nations in Ezekiel 16:44-52.

4.4.2 The Universal Mission of Israel

The promise given to Abram of being blessed to be a blessing, stresses “God’s concern for all peoples” (Davis, 2003:103-105). This also affirms God’s commitment to his people. He has a purpose and a goal, and it is “nothing less than blessing the nations of humanity.” God’s address to the failures of humanity is through mission, and His mission is “universal in its ultimate goal and scope” (Wright, 2011:12). Assohoto and Ngewa clarifies that the blessings that God blessed Abram with, was not meant for him to keep to himself but it was to bless others too (2006:29). When God chose Abram, he had all other nations, tribes, and people in mind. The nations that were dispersed at Babel were all included in the promise given to Abram. Therefore, it is important to note that although God was particularistic in his method, the promise that was given to Abram was universalistic. This, according to Peters; is important to grasp, “or else the God of the Old

⁶⁷ “Drawing the nations by modelling what it meant to be a God-centered people” (Steyn, 1990:155).

⁶⁸ “Going to the nations and witnessing” (Steyn, 1990:155).

Testament Himself becomes a particularists.” If this was true, then God would “cease to be Elohim, the God of creation and the God of all the nations” (1972:89).

It is easy to assume that Israel was chosen because of being superior to other nations. However, Israel was not chosen because they were superior to other nations or that other nations were rejected by God (Wright, 2011:12). In fact, Deuteronomy 10:14 and Exodus 19:4-6 is a reminder that the God of Israel is the same God that is Lord and owner of all the world. In explaining the purpose of Israel’s election, Wright goes as further as stating that “if we might paraphrase John, in a way he probably would have accepted, “God so loved the world that he chose Israel.” The point that Wright makes is that Israel was chosen for the benefit of all nations (2011:12). “...Israel was blessed so that they could then be a blessing among the nations. This is echoed in Psalms 67:1-2 – Israel is blessed so that the ways of the Lord and salvation is made known among the nations. In Psalms 47, the Psalmist celebrates the Lord’s kingship over the whole earth, and according to verse 9; the people share in the promises of Abraham (Köstenberger & O’Brien, 2001:51).

The OT redemption plan centres around the very fact that “Israel’s election was not a rejection of other nations but was explicitly for the sake of all nations.” It is in this way that God’s universal mission through a particular means is a recurrent theme in the Old Testament (Wright, 2011:9). Israel was chosen to be a channel that would pass on the blessings of Abram to all other nations. Therefore, “the story of Abram is really a story of God’s mission to the world” (Davis, 2003:103-105). Ultimately, the blessing of all the nations will come through the birth of Christ (Gal 4:4-5). The salvation offered through Christ will not be for one nation but will be “passed on by and through one nation” (Asohoto & Negewa, 2006:29). From the election of Israel, there is a challenge today for Christians to take up the responsibility of sharing the gospel with people of every nation, tribe, and language. It has always been the mission of God to reach all nations with the gospel, and this too should be the heart of the mission of the church.

4.4.3 The Inclusivity of ‘All Nations’

In the history of Israel and the message of God, there is an inclusivity of all nations. In Exodus 12:38, the author records that when the Israelites journeyed from Rameses, “Many other people went up with them.”⁶⁹ Benitez asserts that the reason for finding a need to record this piece of information, is to show that from the beginning, salvation was possible not only for the Israelites but for people different from them (2009:314). Other examples of inclusivity can be seen in the

⁶⁹ The NLT records it as, “A rabble of non-Israelites went with them” (Bible 2016:100).

narrative where Joshua spared Rahab and her family (Josh 6:25), when David accepted foreigners into his kingdom (2 Sam 11:3; 15:19-23), and Moabitess who plays an important role in God's salvation plan (Ruth 4:13-22)⁷⁰ (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:35).

The OT has a frequency of instructions and provisions given to Israel on the treatment and attitude towards foreigners (Deut 10:14–19; Exod 22:21; 12:48; Num 9:14). In fact, Davis has found that this warning is presented more than thirty-six times in the OT. This emphasises God's ownership and concern for all the nations (2003:106-107). In Deuteronomy 19, instructions of Holy Living are presented. While holiness required the people to reverence the Lord and refrain from things displeasing to the Lord, holiness is also seen as hospitality which needs to be practised in "the social, economic and political areas of life" (Chingota, 2006:160). Alongside the commands of respect for parents and the elderly, care for the poor and those with disabilities; is the command to not mistreat foreigners but to love them as you love yourself (33-34).

In the prophetic books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the inclusion of nations is seen in the "eschatological expectation" of the ingathering of the nations. Israel's history can be defined by disobedience.⁷¹ Despite God's commands, they continuously disobeyed him. However, instead of casting them away (Jer 31:37), there is a promise that Israel will be restored with the regathering of the tribes and the reunion of the north and south. This is affirmed in Jeremiah's new covenant with Israel and Judah (Jer 31:31), and the prophet Ezekiel saw a time when Yahweh will restore his people and reunite Israel making them one nation (34:12-13, 15; 37:15-23) (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:36).

Isaiah 66 also sees an "eschatological time when the "nations" will hear the gospel". As the glory of God is proclaimed in the distant lands, people from all these lands will be brought to the house

⁷⁰ For the most part of Israel's history, the Moabites were one of their enemies. It was from this Moabite nation that Ruth emerged. Her ethnicity was not an issue, but because of her godly and biblical love and the faith she adopted from her mother-in-law, she not only became Israel, but she also became the grandmother to King David. Similar Abraham who was justified by faith, Ruth was also justified by faith, not her nationality (Benitez 2009:316).

⁷¹ Israel's disobedience is seen in their worship towards other gods. Although there were inclusion of other ethnic groups and people in the history of Israel, their history also shows that there were exclusions and some limits towards foreigners. In Nehemiah 13:23-27 and Ezra 9-10, intermarriage with foreigners is forbidden. However, the only reason why Israel was told to not marry foreigners, was because God did not want them to worship their gods and adopt their worldviews. "It is not a nationality issue – it is a spiritual one" (Bible 2016:711).

of the Lord and some will be made worship leaders. The eschatological vision is that people from all ethnic groups will know and worship the true God (Davis, 2003:113-115). This vision affirms God as the one who saves people. His goal is for people to know him and worship him, and his mission has no boundaries. It includes people from every ethnicity, tribe, nation and language (Davis, 2003:113-115).

From Isaiah 42 – 53, inclusivity of all nations is seen in the global mission of the prophet and the Messiah. The servant song in Isaiah 42:1 and vs 4 speaks of God's chosen servant who will bring justice to the nations. This verse is another reminder of the universal scope of salvation. The message of the servant will reach the most distant countries and islands. "He is a light for the Gentiles" (42:6) (Nsiku, 2006:838). This verse speaks of the expectation of the return of Christ, when he will rule, and justice will prevail throughout the world. Davis asserts that the point of this verse is that when Christ returns, the millennial kingdom will not only be experienced by Israel, but all peoples and nations will experience the righteousness and justice of the Saviour (Davis, 2003:113).

The inclusion of all peoples and nations is also seen in Isaiah 49:6 in the words, "... I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth". In verses 7, 22 and 23, the prophet calls on the nations to acknowledge the Lord and worship him. As a result of the prophets witness to the nations; Israel will be gathered to Jerusalem, the nation will be rebuilt, and the holy city will be restored. When Israel is redeemed, other nations will come to her and worship the Lord and acknowledge that there is no other God besides Yahweh (55:3-5; 45:14; 49:23) (Köstenberger & O'Brien, 2001:48). In Isaiah 43:10 and 44:8, Israel is commissioned as God's witness to other nations. Isaiah 53 describes the sufferings of the servant who will redeem Israel. As a result of his sufferings, the people are challenged to take the good news to the world. "... Israel is called upon to build a bigger tabernacle, or tent of dwelling, to make room for all the new additions to the family" (54:1-3) (Davis, 2003:111-112).

When God created the world, he created it with differences and distinctions. He created night and day; the sky, dry land, and the sea; he created seed-bearing plants and all living creatures according to their kind, and when he created humanity – he created them both male and female (Gen 1:1-30). Amid all the difference and distinctions, God looked at all that he had created and deemed it "very good" (Gen 1:31a). The prophets Isaiah (14:1) and Ezekiel (47:22) both saw a time when the Israelites and aliens will be united despite their differences. The new kingdom will embody people of different features and distinctions (Matthew, 2001:55). This confirms Gods plan of salvation to reach "all peoples". The world was created with difference and in heaven there will

be people included despite their differences. This will come through Abram who was called to be a blessing to “all nations.”

4.4.4 Jonah – A prophet sent to the nations

The mission of God can be traced in all of the prophetic books, but the difference with mission in the book of Jonah is that Jonah is sent geographically to a non-Israelite nation as God’s messenger (Ott & Strauss, 2010:19). This is significant for a biblical understanding of missions and is preparation for the missionary mandate that is presented in the NT (Verkuyl, 2009:45). While the book of Jonah may be a wonderful illustration of God’s blessings reaching all nations (Shields, 1998:28) and his “sovereignty, power, and compassion for all tribes and nations” (Jusu, 2016:1300); Jonah responds in a way that is contrast towards God’s heart. He is reluctant and resistant towards his missionary mandate to preach the gospel to the non-Israelites.

Jusu comments that Jonah’s response represents the Israelites and most people today. His response is characterised by self-centredness. He loved his own people and had no love or concern for the people of other nations (2016:1300). As a result, he tries to run away from God (1:3), but God, having chosen Jonah as the prophet to go to Nineveh sends a fish to swallow him (2:1). Jonah eventually goes to Nineveh and preach to the nation. The people hear the message and respond in repentance (3:1-9). When God sees the people’s response, he holds back on the destruction that Jonah preached about (3:10). This is a demonstration of His compassion and love that extends even to the Gentiles (Ott & Strauss, 2010:19).

However, when Jonah preached to the people, he did not preach with compassion and concern for the people. He preached with the expectation that the people – his enemies, will be destroyed. This is affirmed in his response of anger when God holds back from destroying the nation (4:1). The Lord then responds in a way that shows Jonah “he was out of harmony with the purposes of the Lord” (Shields, 1998:28). God’s concern for the people is seen in a question that he asks Jonah, “And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh...? (4:11). Commenting on this question, Baldwin points out that God was not asking Jonah permission to practice his compassion over the people. Instead, this question was to bring Jonah into repentance for not wanting God to extend his compassion and grace to others (1993:589). This question, explains Köstenberger and O’Brien, shows “the Lord’s willingness to save Nineveh” (4:2) and “shows that his *hesed* (‘covenant love’) cannot be predicted or confined to Israel.” This compassion and grace that Israel had experienced on many occasions, is the same compassion and grace that he extends to the people at Nineveh (2001:44-45). However, despite Israel’s relationship with the Lord, they failed to repent and as a result, experienced judgment (Amos 3:2; 9:10) (Baldwin, 1993:581). Ott and Strauss echo the same explanation as Köstenberger and O’Brien by pointing

out that Jonah's response is of a typical Israelite, "who has become a consumer instead of mediator of God's blessings." It is in the intention of God to extend compassion and grace to anyone who would repent and turn to him, but Jonah's intentions contrasted with God's (2010:19).

The book of Jonah is about God's salvation reaching to all peoples, nations and tribes. It is His intention that people of pagan worship in all people groups will hear the gospel, repent, and turn to him. Israel, being preoccupied with her selfish desires, is uncomfortable to go to other nations and present the message of the Lord (Verkuyl, 2009:46). According to shields, Jonah's "understanding of the purposes of God excluded the salvation of the Ninevites." In fact, the book teaches the total opposite (Shields, 1998:29). Verkuyl asserts that Jonah's mission to the Ninevites describes "a lazy and unfaithful Church which does not heed its Lords command." His ethnocentric mindset restricted him from fully obeying Gods commands and if the church, like Jonah, will have an ethnocentric mindset; then they too will not fully obey God's command to go out into the world and preach the message of salvation (2009:46). This is a challenge to the church today, that in its mission to share the good news and evangelise, the intention should be to include people from every nation, tribe and race; because the love of God shows no partiality, and His grace is enough to cover the entire world.

As seen in chapter 2 of this research, tribalism has been and is still a thorny issue in Africa. People still tend to reject people not from their group. However, the book of Jonah teaches us that God is glorified when people from all ethnic and tribal groups are embraced. If caring for others is a priority, then taking the message to people of all ethnic and tribal groups will be the focus (Jusu, 2016:1300). At times, it is the pains and the hurts of the past that is a stumbling block to extend grace to others, but Christians need to understand that in the eyes of God, there is no one deserving of his grace yet he freely offers it to everyone who would believe in him. His grace extends to those who in the past contributed to the pain and hurt that people are living with today.

The message of Jonah is fulfilled in the NT with the birth and message of Christ as well as the sending of the apostles to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. In Matthew 12:39-41, Jesus identifies himself as "... something greater than Jonah ...". Piper comments on this by stating, Jesus "is greater not only because his resurrection is greater than surviving a fish's belly but also because he stands in harmony with the mercy of God and extends it now to all the nations" (2003:175). The NT shows how the work and message of Christ was not meant for the Jews only, but it extended to the Gentiles too. It was not only a message preached but the disciples, apostles, and the early church were challenged to put it into practice.

4.5 The Global Intention of God's Mission in the NT

In this section of the chapter, the researcher will focus on the universal intention of God's mission in the NT. The researcher will begin by looking at Christ's universal and inclusive mission and work in all four Gospels, followed by the universal work and mission of the early church and some theological principles from Paul's theology as he addressed the issues of racial and ethnic tensions within the church, and will end with John's revelation of the heavenly gathering of the saints. This chapter will only include some of the verses and narrative's that the researcher believes will add value and achieve the purpose of this chapter.

Mission in the NT continues to have a universal and inclusive focus. In the Old Testament, there are promises and an expectation that "God would one day be worshipped by people from all the nations of the world," and in the New Testament, "these promises form the explicit foundation of missionary vision" (Piper, 2003:167). This is evident throughout the mission and message of Christ as he intentionally reaches out to both Jews and Gentiles because his work on the cross had the whole world in mind (Jn 3:16). This is also affirmed in the commission given to the disciples and the early church to make disciples of 'all nations' and to preach the gospel to 'the ends of the earth.'⁷²

Through the work of the cross, everyone has a place in the Kingdom of God. As stated by Greenway, "the calling and destiny of Israel are now fulfilled in Jesus whose arms are open to all nations, peoples, and races. He is a door into the kingdom, and no one who comes to him will be turned away" (1999:43). This is also affirmed in Ephesians 19:22 when Paul stated that the Gentiles are no longer foreigners and aliens, "but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household..." The eschatological hope is that people of every nation, tribe, and tongue will be gathered in the new heavens. The mission of God moves out from Jerusalem and beyond the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 10:6) (Ott & Strauss, 2010:40), and the church is commissioned to follow in the footsteps of Christ and to be his missionary agents in the world extending his grace, love, forgiveness, and the message of reconciliation to all peoples, all nations, and all tribes.

⁷² Matt 28:18-19, Mk 16:15-18, Lk 24:44-48, Jn 20:21-23, Acts 1:8.

4.5.1 The Ministry of Jesus in the Gospels

4.5.1.1 Matthew

In the book of Matthew, Christ royalty and kingship are portrayed (Peters, 1972:37). Christ is the fulfilment of Old Testament visions and prophecies, and his Lordship is universal, extending to all nations. What is significant about the book of Matthew is the inclusivity of non-Israelites in the genealogy of Jesus (chp 1). The idea for beginning with a genealogy is to present the arrival of the royal Messiah. Jewish genealogies indicated a person's position in society. For this reason, Matthew begins with a genealogy to indicate the position of the royal Messiah (Osborne, 2010:68).

Part of the names listed in the genealogy are the names of five women: Tamar, Rahab (5a), Ruth (5b), the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) (6b), and Mary the mother of Jesus (16b). It is unusual for women to be listed in Jewish genealogies but there can be several explanations for this. The first explanation that is presented by Osborne is the illegitimacy and sexual sin of the first four women which foreshadows the illegitimacy of Mary's illegitimate pregnancy. If this is true, then the reason to include these four women would be to express Christ's power to forgive the sins of humanity (2010:63). A second explanation that is also presented by Osborne is on the emphasis that the first four women were foreigners and Gentiles.⁷³ This stresses Matthew's mission to the Gentiles, encouraging the Jews to participate in the fulfilling of the Abrahamic covenant by taking the gospel to all nations (2010:64 & 70). Davis holds the same sentiments as Osborne but adds that the reason for including ethnic people in the genealogy was to show Jesus's outside status (Matt 4:15-16; Isa 9:1) and to emphasise the inclusion of all nations to especially those who felt excluded by the Jews (2010:71).

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact that foreign women were included in the genealogy of Jesus speaks of God's providence over all of humanity. That in his providence, God "saw fit to include women who were foreigners and sinners in the royal lineage of Jesus so as to show that he is God not only of righteous Jews but of all humanity and that he has come to bring salvation to the whole world of humanity" (Osborne, 2010:64). Benitez firmly points out that the stories and the biblical theology that comes from the inclusion of the ethnic people within the people of God "is not a novelty in the NT." Despite their past and ethnicity, God saw it worthy for non-Israelites to have a place within the history of God's salvation (2009:321).

⁷³ "Tamar the Canaanite or from Aram, Rahab from Jericho, Ruth the Moabites, and Bathsheba the wife of a Hittite" (Osborne 2010:63).

This, however, can stand in contrast to Jesus encounter that he had with a Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28). In this encounter, the Canaanite woman comes running to Jesus for help. In his first response to the woman, Jesus is silent (vs 23). In his second response, he responds to his disciple's request by alluding that his mission is not to the Gentiles⁷⁴ (vs 24). In his third response, Jesus responds directly to the woman but "bluntly compares her to a dog"⁷⁵ (vs 26) (Turner 2008:386). Benitez comments on Jesus' response by asserting that to the reader, Jesus comes across as a typical and unkind ethnocentric Jew (2009:321-325).

Despite Jesus's confusing responses, the encounter between Jesus and this woman ends with Jesus finding favour in her and commending her for her great faith. Benitez is of the view that the primary focus of this encounter is not so much about the miracle but rather, the dialogue that goes on between Jesus and the women. Benitez is of this view because he believes that Jesus responded to the woman in the way he did to teach his disciples a fundamental lesson: "the God of the does not see geographic or ethnic borders as we do, just as his justice does not "see faces" nor "fears certain faces" (Dt 1:17)" (2009:321-325). In fact, Turner asserts that the inclusion of the Gentile woman in the genealogy was to prepare the reader for this encounter (2008:286).

When Jesus responded by asserting that his mission was only to the Jews, he was not being ethnocentric as one would think but he was emphasising Israel's mission that must be taken seriously. In Romans 1:16 Paul also uses the words, "first for the Jew, then to the Gentile." This is also an emphasis of Israel's central position in God's mission. This is explained by Ott and Strauss as the continuation of the OT vision of blessings that will come through Israel and extend to other nations. However, the mission to the Gentile will only fully be launched after Christ work on the cross is complete. In other words, Gentile's mission is seen as something in the future, whereby those outside of Israel will be included in God's people (Jn 10:16). The ministry of Jesus continues to focus on Israel but also envisions mission to other nations. The positive responses of faith from the Gentiles indicates this future vision (Ott & Strauss, 2010:33-34).

In Matthew's universal view of mission, Gentile mission does not replace Jewish mission but the same grace and mercy that God extends to the Jews, he also extends to the Gentiles and through faith they are also objects of God's divine grace (Osborne, 2010:603). With the coming of Christ,

⁷⁴ This response can also be found in Matthew 9:35-38 and 10:5-6, and Mark 7:26-27.

⁷⁵ In the Biblical days, dogs were considered as dirty animals and was associated with feelings of rejection and a symbol of impurity. If a Gentile was compared to a dog, then it was because they did not live according to the Torah and was considered impure (Benitez 2009:321-325).

the Jewish mission does not end but expands to other nations through the universal mission of the disciples and the early church. According to Osborne, “this passage is a turning point from a Jewish based mission to the universal mission to all the nations, Jews and Gentiles,” and when Jesus responded with reluctance, he was exposing the reluctance of his disciples to take the gospel to other nations (2010:598). With this encounter, Jesus challenges his disciples’ ethnocentric thinking and behaviour and shows them that for the gospel to reach all nations they must transcend all cultural and national barriers (Benitez, 2009:321-325).

Jesus universal mission ends with the great commission to “...go and make disciples of all nations...” (28:19). Three verbs are mentioned in this command: to baptise – referring to the public declaration of one’s faith in Christ, to teach – teaching people to obey all that Christ commanded, and to go – this is a command to move out into other nations and be witnesses of Christ. Notice that the commission is to not just make disciples but to make disciples of every nation. This is an emphasis of Christ redeeming work that extends to all peoples and all nations (Ott & Strauss, 2010:36-37). Ott & Strauss asserts that the commission must be looked at considering the completed redemption work of Christ, for apart from this it is impossible to have a universal focus in mission. God’s redemption plan was particular with a universal intention (2010:36-37). The commission can also be read considering the genealogy in chapter 1 that shows although God choose Israel as his witnesses, non-Israelites were also part of his salvation plan. What is important to note about the commission is that it is rooted in a command given by the resurrected Christ. This affirms his authority and charge to make disciples but also gives assurance of his guiding presence that goes before the disciples and furthers his mission till the day of consummation (Köstenberger & O’Brien, 2001:107).

4.5.1.2 Mark

Marks understanding of Christ mission is portrayed as one who came to serve by doing the fathers will. Christ mission can be summed in the words, “For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (10:45). It is Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross that will become a ransom payment for the sins of the world (Strauss, 2014:458). Notice that Christ death will not be a ransom for only the Jews, but it will be a ransom for the whole “world”.

From the beginning of the Gospel of Mark (1:1) the identity of Christ as the suffering servant is revealed. However, only characters of the spiritual realm acknowledge who the Messiah is.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Mark 1:11; cf. 9:7; 1:24, 34; 3:11-12; 5:7.

Finally, in chapter 8 Peter is seen as the first actual human to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah (vs 29) but still, his knowledge is incomplete (vs 32-33). Surprisingly, when Jesus is on the cross, a Centurion⁷⁷ acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah when he states, “Surely this man was the Son of God” (15:39d) (Strauss, 2014:734). Strauss points out that this piece of information with regards to the Gentiles confession cannot be overlooked because, although Peter and the other disciples acknowledged Jesus Messianic identity, they were still spiritually blind to his teachings with regards to him being the suffering, Messiah.⁷⁸ When the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (15:38), it was not an Israelite or one of the disciples but a pagan Gentile who recognized the true identity of the Messiah. Stein (2014:706). also finds it ironic that the Jewish leaders mocked Jesus, “but a hated Roman soldier makes the greatest human confession in the entire Gospel” (2008:719). Strauss further asserts that “Mark hints here that the salvation accomplished by Jesus is indeed “good news” (1:1, 14-15) not only for Israel, but for the whole world. (cf. 13:10).”

Although the salvation of the Gentiles is not central to the gospel of Mark, it is hinted throughout the book (7:24-37; 8:1-9; 13:10) (Strauss, 2014:712-713). Mark’s gospel: therefore, ends with the commission to “go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (16:15-16). Cole (2006:1200) explains that the emphasis of this commission to “all” the world and creation means that there are no exceptions. The disciples are commanded to take the Gospel of Jesus death and resurrection to everyone. The salvation offered by Christ is by grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone. It is therefore impossible for one to claim a theology of salvation and yet consider another human as inferior, knowing very well that he did nothing in his own strength and power to obtain salvation (Burns, 2004:38). As pointed out by Manokaran (2008:24), in the kingdom of God there is no ethnocentrism and a social hierarchy. At the Tower of Babel, the nations are scattered and at Pentecost, the nations are regathered.⁷⁹ Central to this regathering is the work of the cross. For at the cross, “superiority, cultural or otherwise, that holds other human beings, regardless of where they are in life and what they believe, as inherently inferior” has been demolished (Burns, 2004:39). It is because of the work of the cross and its power to change

⁷⁷ The meaning of “Centurion” in the Greek is the “transliteration of the Latin term and refers to a Roman officer in charge of a hundred men” (Stein 2008:718).

⁷⁸ Mark 8:32; 9:32; 10:37-38; 4:13; 6:52; 8:17-18, 21.

⁷⁹ This is further discussed below.

humanity, that the church is challenged to take the gospel to all peoples. When Christ suffered on the cross, he had all the nations in mind.

4.5.1.3 Luke

In the book of Luke, the priesthood and saviourhood of Christ is portrayed. This universal portrait of Christ is evident from the beginning of Adam, leading up to Christ death and resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins which the disciples are commissioned to preach to all nations (24:45-49) (Peters, 1972:37). Luke shows concern for Gentile inclusion and the crossing of cultural and ethnic barriers to preach the gospel of forgiveness to all nations.⁸⁰ An example of this is the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37).

This parable begins with a question that a lawyer asks Jesus with regards to eternal life. Jesus refers the lawyer to the OT law. The lawyer responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 which is the command to love God and love neighbour (vs 27). According to the response of Jesus, if the lawyer obeys this command, then he will live (vs 28). Jesus' response does not justify eternal life that comes through good works. Bock (1996:1024) argues that he is speaking of having eternal life through a relationship of devotion – “a devotion that places God at the centre of one's spiritual life and responds to others in love.” In fact, Garland (2011:447) argues that the lawyer's question is pointless considering that humanity does not do anything to inherit eternal life. Garland affirms that Jesus' response is an emphasis on a relationship with God. Jesus' response also speaks of putting into practice what we know. As rightly stated by Bock, “knowledge of what God requires is not enough. Such knowledge needs to be put into practice. Love that comes from the heart responds with the hands” (1996:1027).

Wanting to justify himself, the lawyer asks the question, “And who is my neighbour” (vs 29). According to Valdes', because the lawyer focuses on the second part of the command, which is to love your neighbour, alludes that he perceived his neighbour as his fellow Jewish countrymen and to him, he was already obedient to this command (2010:280). However, when Jesus responds to this question using the parable of the Good Samaritan, it reveals to the lawyer that he has a wrong perspective of who his neighbour is. The lawyer's perspective of neighbour was limited to loving his own kind. If the command could be reversed it would say, “if we do not show love to all humanity, we can hardly claim to have loved God” (Garland, 2011:447). Love for others reflects a relationship with and love for God (1 Jn 3:14, 18; 4:8, 10-12, 20-21).

⁸⁰ <https://obu.edu/stories/blog/2020/06/what-does-the-bible-say-about-race.php>.

There has been a long history of animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans⁸¹ (Hays, 2003:166) and this could have been the reason the lawyer's love for his neighbour was limited to his own kind. The parable of the Samaritan is about someone's concern to save the life of another who is different to them. This destroys "the Jewish stereotype of the Samaritan as enemy" (Garland, 2010:447). With a history of racial and ethnic conflicts in South Africa and other parts of the continent, loving the neighbour can be difficult. The parable of the Samaritan is a reminder that loving the neighbour is not determined by race and ethnicity but rather, love for God. "Love acts, even costly action. Love goes an extra mile to ensure that our neighbour's life is out of danger" (Jusu, 2016:1494). It is love that compels a person to cross the barriers of race and ethnicity and take the gospel to "all nations."

4.5.1.4 John

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is the eternal Son of God and is equal to the Father. He is the Word who has brought light and life to the world. It is through Christ that God relates with humanity, and His activity of love and relationship is universal. God has the entire world in his heart and his purposes⁸² (Peters, 1972:38). One of the narratives in John shows the inclusivity of all peoples in the purposes and plans of God is in Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman (4:1-42). This narrative shows how Jesus a Jew, crosses all barriers for the sake of the gospel.

Jusu asserts that this narrative is an example of what leads to conflict in Africa. He observes four reasons why Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman could have sparked controversy. Firstly, Jesus was a Jew and the lady belonged to the Samaritan tribe. They also had different perspectives on where to worship. Secondly, conservative Jewish men avoided conversations with woman outside their families, but here was Jesus talking to a woman he was not related to. Thirdly, is the difference of Jesus being a teacher and the woman was one who probably could not read; and fourthly, it has to do with social position. Jesus was a righteous man, but the lady was a prostitute (2016:1534). These reasons can explain why the Samaritan woman was surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink. Despite these barriers, Jesus looks beyond them and focuses on what's most important, which is to believe in God (vs 21, 26). Klink comments that Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan had little to do with the Samaritan but more to do with Gods

⁸¹ The Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim while the Jews believed that worship must be conducted in Jerusalem. As a result, the Jews destroyed Mount Gerizim. On the other hand, the Samaritans scriptures only consisted of the Pentateuch, while the Jewish scriptures included the writings and the prophets (Kostenberger 2004:141). This was the underlining animosity that existed between the Jews and Samaritans.

⁸² Jn 3:16; 3:17; 1:29; 4:42; 6:33; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; 16:8.

plan. God was seeking for true worshippers and true worshippers are the ones who will believe in his son, Jesus the saviour of the world (2011:252). Jesus challenges the church to look to what's most important and unite for that cause instead of allowing differences to be a barrier to what God has called the church to do (2016:1534).

Another lesson to be learnt from this narrative is that of hospitality. Although the Jews were enemies of the Samaritans, the lady did not reject Jesus but instead; she listens, takes upon the rebuke, and ask questions. At this point she is portrayed as the host and Jesus as the guest mainly because, Jesus was in her region. However, from the beginning of this conversation, Jesus is the host, and she is the guest because; Jesus has come to offer a meal and a drink that will last for eternity (Klink III, 2011:253). This understanding shows that no matter the region, the local church is under the hospitality of God. As a result, the local church embraces people of all nations, ethnicities, race, language, and tribe, and extends the hospitality that God extends to the local church. The local church dines with the foreigner, ultimately pointing to God as the one who offers food that last for eternity (Klink III, 2011:253).

As a result of this encounter with the Samaritan, many other Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus. It is important to note that in terms of location, the Samaritans were placed in a middle position of the Jews and the Gentiles. This middle position, according to Köstenberger, meant that in the witness of the early church to Jerusalem, Judea, and the ends of the earth; the Samaritans were also included (Acts 1:8, 8) (2004:141). The sequence of inclusion in the book of John is seen in Jesus' witness to Nicodemus the Jew (chp 3), followed by the Samaritan woman (chp 4), and then his approach to the Gentiles (12:20-22; 4:45-53) (Köstenberger, 2004:141). Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus on what it means to be born again highlights God's universal plan in one verse: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (3:16).

One of the ways in which Jesus desired for the church to be a witness to the nations was through unity. This is seen in the prayer that he prayed before his crucifixion (Jn 17). In his prayer for all believers, he prays "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (vs 21). This verse according to Klink III, expresses the mission of the church being a unity that is grounded in the unity of God. The unity of the church is not the end goal, but it is compared to or resembles the unity between the Father and the Son (2016:723). The unity that Jesus prayed for is connected to what Jesus came to do in the world. This prayer is restated in verse 23 but in this verse, it is not just connected to what Christ has come to do, but it also speaks of God's love for the people and for Christ (Barker, 2008:1659). This is an emphasis of love being the driving force of God

reconciling man to himself through his son (Klink III, 2016:723). Jesus' intention for the church to be one and live in unity was so that the world would believe and know that he was sent by the Father and that the Father loves the world (Davis, 2010:72-75).

By the time Jesus did this prayer the disciples were already exposed to divisions and this prayer was used to encourage unity within the church. Barker (2008:1658) argues that in this prayer Jesus rebuke's divisions within the church and Harvey (2004:367), alludes to unity being essential for the survival of the church. In as much as unity is essential for the Church and its witness, it is important to understand that if not united with God the church will cease to exist in unity. This is why Klink III clarifies that the unity that Jesus prayed for was not unity within the church itself, but the church being united and made one with God through the work of Christ. Therefore, unity within the church reflects the church's oneness with God. If it is not united with God, the church will cease to be united in its own unifying initiatives (2016:728).

It is important for the Church to understand where its unity is derived from because in its unity it acts as a witness and as a testimony of God in his love, reconciling and uniting humanity to himself. In other words, the church is an extension of what Christ has come to do in the world through the Father (Klink, 2016:728). In a world and society that is divided, visible oneness and unity is important for the sake of the churches witness. Unity and oneness are more effective and convincing of Jesus mission in the world, his relationship with the Father, and the Father's love for the entire world.

4.5.2 The Scope of Mission and Unity in the Early Church

Mission is central to the theology of Acts and the followers of Christ are seen as missionary communities who go out into the world and witness to the saving work of Christ (Schnabel, 2012:1084). The church was birth at Pentecost (Acts 2) and it was only after the filling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that the disciples embarked on Christ mission and became his witnesses. This was a fulfilment of the command given in Luke's gospel (24:49) and then echoed in Acts 1:4, to "not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my father has promised." The Holy Spirit equips Christ followers to cross cultural and ethnic barriers (Davis, 2010:77). This emphasises that apart from the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the disciples would have never moved out from Jerusalem, into all the world spreading the gospel. This is also an affirmation that the mission of the church is God's mission. Acting through the Holy Spirit it is God "who initiates, motivates, empowers, and completes the progress of the gospel" to the ends of the earth and creates a new and diverse community of the kingdom of God (Ott & Strauss, 2010:42).

It is important to note that the church that birth at Pentecost was not multi-ethnic, it consisted of mainly Jewish Christians. This was so because the Gentile mission at this point, had not yet begun

(Manokaran, 2008:109). As the Jerusalem church went out and spread the gospel, they became inclusive of the unlearned and ignorant (Acts 15:5, 11:2), the poor and the wealthy (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37), the Jews, the Greeks, and the Gentiles (Acts 6:1, 5). This inclusivity, apart from the outpouring of the Spirit can be difficult to understand because although the Jerusalem church was not united in their race, their unity was founded in Pentecost (Padilla, 2010:163-164). Their unity originated from the one Lord and one Spirit. At the Tower of Babel God confused the tongues of the people to scatter them but at Pentecost he multiplied the tongues, uniting people from all nations (2:4-7) (Davis, 2010:77-78). The miracle at Pentecost demonstrates three things: firstly; that the curse of Babel has been overcome, secondly; the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant has begun and thirdly; that the Gentiles [or anyone] no longer had to learn the language of the Jews, but that the gospel will be taught to them [and everyone else] in their own native language (Ott & Strauss, 2010:44). These three points confirm God's plan of a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual kingdom.

The unity of the Jerusalem church was characterised by their devotion to the life and practice of the church. They devoted themselves to the apostle's teachings, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). Larkin comments that these four elements that the church was committed to was an outpouring of the Spirit. The Spirit did not only empower them to become witnesses to the ends of the earth, but the Spirit also enabled them to be devoted to the life and practice of the Church (1995:61). From what is learnt of their enthusiasm is that the church had a zeal to learn, and the apostles were passionate to teach. They had a friendly partnership, acknowledging their need for each other. The breaking of bread together was a reminder of their oneness in Jesus and a reminder of his sacrifice on the cross. It was because of Christ's sacrifice that they were now one with each other and with Christ. Their unity led them to a lifestyle of praying together (Kisau, 2006:1303-1304). As a result of their unity and devotion, others were encouraged and were filled with awe⁸³ (2:43).

As the disciples embarked on Christ's mission, they became exactly whom Christ commanded them to be "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The OT eschatological vision saw the nations coming to Jerusalem, but in this command the mission movement depicts the gospel moving from Jerusalem to the nations (Ott & Strauss, 2010:42). Commentators like Ott and Strauss (2010:42) have even suggested an outline

⁸³ It is important to note that as the church became diverse, unity became a challenge. This is further discussed in Paul's theology on race as he addresses the disunity that was being experienced in the early church.

for the book of Acts based on the geographic spread of the gospel: Acts 1-7; the gospel in Jerusalem, Acts 8-9; the gospel in Judea and Samaria, Acts 10-28; the ends of the earth. The researcher concludes then that the entire narrative in Acts is about the gospel gradually spreading from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Some examples of the witness of the early church can be seen in Philip's witness to an Ethiopian eunuch while he was in Gaza (8:26-38). He then went to Azotus and thereafter settled in Caesarea (8:39-40; 21:8-9). Saul, who later became Paul was on his way to Damascus when he was ministered to by Ananias (chp 9). Peter led Cornelius, a Roman centurion to faith in Christ (10:1-11:18). Still there were others scattered from Jerusalem as a result of persecution (8:1-3); travelled through Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch and became witnesses to "only the Jews" (11:19) while others; witnessed to both Greeks and Jews (11:21) (Shields 1998:59-66). There is no explanation from Luke why some Jews only witnessed to the Jews, but McGavran's argument asserts that the early church promoted "one-race congregations" for the purpose of numerical church growth (1974:23). McGavran's argument is that churches who practice the homogenous unit principle will be more effective with church growth compared to those that were diverse. Padilla, however; argues that there is no proof from scripture that the Jews was deliberate in preaching to the Jews only because of strategic considerations. If some of the Jews limited their witness only to the Jews, then the only explanation is the inherited prejudices that the Jews needed to learn how to overcome. Their inherited prejudices made it difficult for them to take the gospel to other nations and ethnic groups "that it took place only with the aid of visions and commands (Acts 8:26ff, 10:1-16) or under the pressure of persecution" (2010:165-166). Other than this, Luke's record does not assert to the Jews promoting "one-race congregations" or the practice of the "homogenous unit principle". If they allowed their inherited prejudices to persist, then their witness would continue to be limited to their own kind. There is no doubt that the inherited prejudices of the Jews did become a stumbling block in their witness to the Gentiles. This is seen in their belief that Gentiles needed to adopt their traditional practices to be saved (Acts 15:1-33; Gal 2:11-14).

However, as the gospel was being preached by other Jews in Antioch and many placed their faith in Christ, a church was established (11:22-24). Barnabas and Paul together worked in Antioch before embarking on a missionary trip to Cyprus (13:4-14:25). As a result of their work, several churches were established there as well (13:13-14:25). The church in Antioch compared to the church that was birth in Jerusalem was a multicultural, multilingual, and multi-ethnic church (Manokaran, 2008:110). According to Davis, their unity was seen in social solidarity and racial reconciliation. They were the first who "intentionally welcomed and enfolded both Jews and Gentiles into their fellowship" (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1) (2010:80). The city was known for its ethnic

strife, violence, fear, and hatred, but amid this the church had an inclusive ministry that identified with the vision that Jesus had for the church. Davis further notes that this was possible because of the diverse leadership team that Paul and Barnabas conducted. Considering the conflicts and challenges that the city was faced with, to experience such unity in the church, meant that the church got to experience what it means to be true follows of Christ (Davis, 2010:80-81). This led the people to calling the disciples “Christians” (11:26).

On Paul's second missionary trip, he visited the Galatian churches and witnessed in Phrygia and Galatia. He also witnessed in Europe (16:6-10). Through this missionary trip, churches were established in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth (16:6-18:18). On Paul's third missionary trip he travelled through Phrygia and Galatia to Ephesus, then through Macedonia and Greece, Troas to Melitus and thereafter; back to Caesarea to Jerusalem (20:1-21:19), and there he was arrested. After his trial (21:17-26:32) he was dispatched to Rome and while being confined to home arrest, he continued to preach the Gospel (28:30-31). The gospel was being preached to the ends of the earth, to people of all nations and despite opposition and persecution, people were being saved and churches were established (Shields, 1998:59-66).

The missionary movement in Acts is a fulfilment of the command given to Abram, that through him all nations will be blessed. It is also a continuation of the ministry and work of Jesus as seen in the Gospels. Essential to the gospel proclamation was salvation found in Christ Jesus. As the disciples went out to even beyond the regions of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria preaching, there were many who believed but still some who did not. Out of the individuals that were saved, communities of believers were being formed. These communities were made up of both Jews and Gentiles. God was intentional about reaching out to both Jews and Gentiles. Although this purpose was only made clear in the meeting of the Areopagus in Athens (17:27), Petersen points out that this purpose was implied throughout the Book of Acts – that God's purpose was to engage with both Jews and Gentiles on the same basis and to have a relationship with them (2009:54). It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that salvation was made possible for both Jews and Gentiles.

The gospel message that was being proclaimed by the early church was not superior to any ethnic group or traditional practices. It was inclusive of everyone. Schnabel observes that through the mission work of the early church, divided communities were being united (2012:1085). Their mission work addressed and welcome all, despite their ethnic and traditional differences. Part of preaching the gospel was preaching about the barriers between people that have been demolished through Christ's death and resurrection and teaching them what it means to be incorporated into God's new people. Although the early church did show evidence of unity and

inclusion, disunity based on culture and ethnic differences was still a major challenge and in Paul's letters the churches he is found addressing these issues.

4.5.3 Race, Ethnicity and Pauline Theology

Paul's letters are written to the young churches specifically addressing a dysfunction or a challenge that the church is facing. As he addresses these issues, he lays bare his heart and concern for the church. His concern and message for the church is that as God's people who are called to partner with him in his mission and be his witnesses, they are to live as kingdom communities. According to Davis (2010:50), when the church lives as a kingdom community they will have a better impact in the world – "the gospel will both be embodied and progress to the ends of the earth." Considering that the church is a visible structure of people who have placed faith in Christ (Schnabel, 2012:1094), it is important that it reflects its new identity in Christ.

One of the issues that Paul addressed in his letters is the issue of disunity. His intention was that the church must live according to who they are in Christ. In his letter to the Romans, he directed this message to a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles with regards to the weak and the strong brothers (14-15). The discussion is on "table fellowship" and the problem observed is that believers who had differing views of the others. For this reason, Paul urged the believers with different views to reshape their thinking and attitudes (Thielman, 2018:636), and to "accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters" (14: 1). On the other hand, Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, addresses a congregation that was "full of jealousy and selfish ambition" (Williams, 2010:57). Their divisions were caused by who follows who (1 Cor 1:12-4:13). Paul's plea to the church was to overcome divisions by referring to the gospel and looking to Christ. His approach to this matter was to point the church to the gospel and to Christ because he knew that if the church focused on Christ, then unity would be embraced (Gardner, 2018:89). A further example of conflict within the church is observed when believers took each other to court (6:1-11). Paul's theology in this is that as God's people, they should resolve their differences within the church. They were to not seek first the counsel or judgment from outside the community of believers. Instead, they should seek first the wisdom and guidance of God to fairly deal with matters within the body. Gardner points out that when the church resorts to a worldly court system they are not reflecting who they are called to be. They are to "reflect their God-given status in their love for each other and in using their grace-gift of wisdom in a godly way to resolve any legal problems between members" (2018:245).

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, sin is described as "the source of hostility and division among human beings" (Williams, 2010:59). The church is encouraged to walk by the Spirit and not live according to the flesh (5:16). The word "flesh" is used throughout Paul's letters in different ways

but the phrase “works of flesh” in 5:19 “refers to sinful desires that manifest themselves by sinful actions” (Williams, 2010:59). It is because of the freedom that a believer has in Christ that Paul now urges the church to discard living according to the desires of the flesh. His theology asserts that if a believer uses his freedom to indulge in his sinful nature, then he will not be able to serve God by loving his fellow brothers. Instead, they will “keep on biting and devouring each other” (5:13-15). Commenting on Paul’s theology in this discussion, Schreiner firmly states that “true freedom expresses itself in serving and loving others, not in satisfying selfish desires.” The way a person lives, demonstrates how he or she is living according to the Spirit or the flesh (2010:331 & 340). One of the characteristics of living in the Spirit is living a life of humility. This is what Paul echoes in his letter to the Philippian congregation. He exhorts the church to imitate the life of Christ by being humble (chp 2). Fellowship with Christ will result in the desire to live in unity and humility with others (Abate, 2006:1442-1443). It is only through fellowship with Christ that man will know what it means to live in peace, unity, and love with each other.

To overcome the challenges alluded to in previous chapters on racial and ethnic issues, the church must embrace its new identity in Christ, as one who have been reconciled with God and as a result, is united with other believers in Christ.

4.5.3.1 Reconciled to God

Paul’s theology on reconciliation is expressed in his letter to the church in Ephesus where he exhorts the believers to no longer live like the time when they were without Christ – “separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world” (2:12). His encouragement to the church is to live according to who they are now in Christ, as “people who have been brought near to God through Christ” (2:13). Paul’s theology in these verses demonstrates that the Gentiles, through the work of Christ, have now been reconciled to God. Arnold refers to Christ reconciling work as “extraordinary news”. It is because of the work of Christ, believing Gentiles, “now experience a closeness to God and a reversal of their plight because of their participation in the benefits of the death of the Messiah” (2010:156).

One of the benefits of being reconciled to God is that humanity will enjoy peace in Christ and so in peace amongst the people. Christ became their peace and broke down the dividing wall of hostility and has reconciled Jews and Gentiles, creating in himself “one new man” – a reconciled body of Christ (2:14-18) (Davis, 2010:83-85). Before Christ, animosity and hostility existed between the Jews and the Gentiles, but through the blood of Christ, animosity and hostility has been demolished. As stated by Sarma (2021:93), “True peace and reconciliation in the body of

Christ takes place as we recognize and submit to Jesus who became our peace. That is, God himself provided a remedy for racial divides and hostility.”

In Arnolds study of Pauls exhortation on reconciliation, he argues the importance to clarify that oneness with God and with others is not a universal experience. It is only experienced by those who have placed faith in Christ. In other words, those who do not believe in the work of Christ are still isolated and separated from God and each other. This teaching also affirms that God’s reconciling mission has no boundaries. It extends to anyone who believes in Christ’s death and resurrection (2010:156-165). Sarma agrees with this argument as she points out the use of plural pronouns in Paul’s exhortation to the church in Ephesus (chp 2), pronouns such as: us, our, we. The use of these words according to Sarma, “stresses the fact that Gods gracious offer of salvation in Christ is the same for the Jews and the Gentiles” (2021:91). This teaching is further alluded to in versus 18-22 of Ephesians 2 and is affirmed in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15, and in Ephesians 3:6, Paul reminds the church that everyone who believes in Christ is equal before the Lord and are members of the kingdom of God.

“Justification by faith” is another theological term used by Paul in his clarification of the equal standing of believers before God (Gal 3:26). In Hays study on race in Pauline theology, he has observed that the misunderstanding of justification led the church in Galatia to a social stratification which contradicted Christian teachings of unity in Christ. This was due to the negative influence of “Christian-Jewish missionaries” who sought to correct the teachings of Paul. In responding to their negative influence, Paul teaches the doctrine of justification in hope that the equal standing of all believers will be made clear and understood by the church (2003:182-183). One of the points that he uses in defence of his argument is the inclusion of all nations in the Abrahamic covenant (Gal 3:8). This point assumes that Paul’s opponents were either citing Moses or arguing that Abraham was justified based on the law (Ngewa, 2006:1420). Paul argues that Abraham was not justified because of the law but rather; on his faith that was placed in the promise of God that through him “all nations” will be blessed. As a result of Abraham’s faith and the fulfilment of Gods promise through the work of Christ, anyone “who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Gal 3:9).

Cultural norms seem to have been the reason for disunity in the church at Galatia. Teaching on the doctrine of justification Paul challenges the church to overcome these cultural norms and embrace the truth of the equal standing of all (who have placed faith in Christ) before God. The teaching of Justification affirms that inheritance of the kingdom of God is not based on race, ethnicity, or culture, but on faith in Christ alone. According to Padilla, “in Jesus Christ a new reality has come into being – a unity based on faith in him, in which membership is in no way dependent

upon race, social status, or sex.” Whoever has placed faith in Christ has equal membership in the new community of Christ. In Christ, the differences that once separated people is no longer valued (2010:160-161) and in the words of Hays, “justification gives all believers equal status before God and unites them together as one people of God” (2003:187).

The reconciling work of Christ not only reconciled man to God but also broke down the barriers, “eliminated the points of hostility” and reconciled man to one another (Hays, 2003:190). Thus, Paul’s vision behind the teachings of being reconciled to God and having been justified by faith was to challenge the church to embrace this truth and live within it. According to Davis, “it was to be a very visible reality, lived out in the local church where saved people of diverse backgrounds now worshiped God together as one, loving and caring for each other” (2010:83-85). Reconciliation to God should flow into the visible practice of unity within the body of Christ. The researcher agrees with Arnold is when he argues that it is through the work of Christ that the church has the potential of being perfectly united. The blood of Christ reconciled believers to God and became the source of peace for the Church to live in unity (2010:177-178).

4.5.3.2 United in Christ

In Ephesians 4, Paul’s expression of unity in the church is seen in the church being incorporated into one body. In the first three chapters of his letter to the Ephesians he focuses on the identity and call of the church because of the work of Christ which have brought them near to God. These were new Christians and Paul, through his teaching makes the church aware of their new identity in Christ and then appeal to the church to live according to their new identity.

To Paul, oneness in Christ is an essential part of the gospel, which is why his prayer for the church in Rome was that God will give them a spirit of unity (Rom 15:5). This oneness came because of the position of the church in Christ. The position of the church in Christ has already made the church “one”. A person who has placed faith in Christ shares in the DNA of Gods unity and love because in Christ the church is one body (Sarma, 2021:117-119). This means that even if disunity exist in the church, the oneness of the church remains. The church is therefore, not called to strive for oneness but to rather; “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). Christians, irrespective of all physical appearances are equal because they have been joined together and united by the Holy Spirit, making us all “not just friends or fellow worshipers in the same religion, but brothers and sisters in the same family) (Hays, 2018). The oneness that all believers share in Christ asserts that physical appearances have lost its value. What is important is that the work of Christ that has reconciled man to God has also brought man into a new community founded in Christ and has given man a new identity (Padilla, 2010:161).

The church cannot strive for oneness because in Christ the church has already been called to one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph 4:4-6); but by making every effort to keep the unity, the church through the empowering of the Holy Spirit⁸⁴ will live according to who God has already called them to be – “an attractive, yet countercultural, family of people very different from one another who love each other deeply and display the presence of the God who is near” (Arnold, 2010:177).

In Ephesians 4:2, Paul gives a list of virtues that characterise the new identity of the church: humility, gentleness, patients, love. God has not only called individuals to himself, but his call is for all believers to be in community to other believers. It is virtues such as humility and love that makes it possible for unity and peace to be embraced in Christian community. Opposite to this is pride and arrogance, which are virtues that will destroy the peace and unity that God desires for the church to live in (Arnold, 2010:227). For this reason, Paul exhorts the church to “get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice” and to “be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Notice that in Paul’s teachings on unity, he does not encourage the church to segregate to maintain peace (Padilla, 2010:178-179) but he exhorts the church to rid themselves of their old ways and to live according to the new ways found in Christ. Paul is aware that racial prejudices and divisions belong to the old nature of man but in Christ, these attitudes must be abandoned (Hays, 2003:189). Thielman rightly points out that if man embraces the truth of who he is in Christ, then it means that he can now guard himself from participating in idol worship and resist the urge to dominate others. He can respond to life and its challenges differently by trusting in God’s promise, that through the death of Christ he has been made right before God. Thielman further asserts that by embracing these truths, humanity can seek to live a life of righteousness amid a sinful world (2018:296-297).

Therefore, Christ as the head of the church, and the new identity of the church that is found in Christ means that the church can now be one unified body of Christ. This unified body is a new community that has been formed in Christ. The church is not built on different foundations but on one foundation: Jesus Christ. If the church is built on Christ as the foundation, then the church is one and it is the passion and heart of Christ that the church will reflect this oneness. When Christ returns, the unity of the church will be consummated; but while the church waits for the return of

⁸⁴ One of the ways in which unity in the church is disrupted is through the attacks of the enemy. Because unity honours God, satan will do anything in his power to disrupt and undermine the design of the church (Arnold 2010:175). In chapter 5, one of the points of discussion will be on the practical implication of prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit to maintain peace and unity in the church.

Christ, the church is called on to transcend culture, tribe, race, and ethnicity, and visibly live out its oneness in Christ.

4.5.4 The Heavenly Gathering of the Saints

In Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:9-10, John sees a vision where the redeemed of every people, nation, tribe, and language stands before God (c.f. 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15). This vision speaks of the blood of Christ that purchased for himself a people from every nation, tribe, and tongue that will worship him for eternity. What John sees is a multi-ethnic and multicultural group of people gathered around the throne of God (Hays, 2003:193). According to Fanning, the gospel has a multicultural and multi-ethnic impact (2020:223). Davis points out that this vision affirms that the ethnic element or physical appearance of individuals will not be destroyed (2010:90). Instead; it will be celebrated in Gods new community of people. Like Pauline theology where Paul desired to see the church live in unity without obliterating the distinctions of people, John sees a time when all peoples with different distinctions will be gathered in one diverse, yet unified assembly of God (Piper, 2003:184).

This vision also establishes that what God intended from the beginning of human history will be made permanent in the new heavens and the new earth (Fanning, 2020:223). Piper explains that the diversity that God willed to be visible here on earth was not a temporary situation. Diversity will be preserved and have a permanent place in heaven (2003:197-198).

The people of God in the Book of Revelation are portrayed as multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual. This in an important fact to note, for the Book of Revelation brings to climax and consummation Gods plan of a multi-ethnic and multicultural people that is united in its fellowship and worship to him (Hays, 2003:198-199). Diversity is so close to the heart of God that the gift and goodness of each culture is celebrated as the people gather to worship the Lamb (Davis, 2010:92). Fanning explains that “this is the soteriological and missiological significance of the heavenly beings’ song of praise” (Rev 5:9) (2020:223).

The vision of John’s multi-ethnic and multicultural church is a challenge to the missionary task of the church today. That is to cross the barriers of cultural and ethnic divides and intentionally take the gospel to all peoples. Davis states that if the redeemed people of God that gather around the throne to worship are converts of all nations, tribes, and languages; then the church must go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, tribes, and languages (2010:90-91). This is also a reminder of the cross-cultural commission that Jesus gave to his followers, to make disciples of all nations. The Church is called to share the message of forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ to all nations. As witnesses of God, they are to model a multi-ethnic vision that John saw (Fanning, 2020:275).

4.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented God's missional plan of salvation that holds no boundaries, extending to "all people". It is observed that from the beginning of history God had all the nations in mind and his missional and soteriological purpose was to redeem for himself a diverse community of people that will turn to him and worship him. God is seen on a mission redeeming the people that were scattered at Babel. His missional plan is seen as multicultural, multiracial, multi-ethnic, and multilingual.

In the New Testament, Christ is portrayed as a cross-cultural missionary who is willing to cross the barriers of culture and ethnicity to engage with both Jews and Gentiles. In his commission to the disciples, he commissions them to make disciples of all nations. Through the enabling of the Holy Spirit the disciples and the early church crossed barriers and went to the ends of the earth preaching the gospel. The cities in which Paul ministered were diverse and as the church grew, maintaining unity in the church became a challenge. Paul's theology proclaims that through the work of Christ the church is reconciled to God and anyone who places faith in Christ is united and made one in Christ. This is the new identity of the church. The church is challenged to live according to its new identity in Christ. In this way it can enhance its witness and mission in the world.

In both the Old and New Testament, the mission of God is seen embracing ethnic diversity. At the dispersion God willed diversity and in the new heavens, John saw a vision in which the redeemed of every, tribe, nation, and language will gather around the throne and worship God. God is glorified in ethnic diversity, and he wills for the church to embrace ethnic diversity and to live in unity. Considering God's multi-ethnic missional plan, the church is called to be a visible expression of God's reconciling work through Christ and live as one body, united in Christ.

CHAPTER 5 RECOMMEND BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL STEPS THAT THE CHURCH CAN TAKE TO ENHANCE ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE MISSION OF GOD

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present practical steps that the church can take to embrace racial and ethnic diversity and thus enhance its mission in the world. To accomplish this purpose the researcher will present practical steps that are based on conclusions and observations made in previous chapters and will also refer to other literature to support the implications presented.

The practical steps presented will assist the church to become who God has called it to be in a divided society to effectively serve him in the mandate they have been given to be his witnesses to all peoples and nations.

5.2 Biblical and Practical Steps that the Church can take to Embrace Ethnic Diversity

The practical steps presented are specifically related to the role the church must play in the ongoing social and political issues in the country and how the church can embrace ethnic diversity and live in oneness as it witnesses to a world that is still divided by racial and ethnic rivalries. In responding to the challenges of the country and embracing ethnic diversity the church must:

5.2.1 Act Publicly in the Social and Political Issues of the Country

In its analysis of the church visibility in the continued struggles of South Africa and if they have been effective in bringing social change, chapter 3 has argued that a shift has taken place in the role and status of the church. While the church was visible and prophetic in its voice for social change and justice during apartheid, the church now seems to have become silent. While during apartheid the church put together programmes and initiatives to challenge the apartheid government, the church today seems to have disengaged itself from the social and political issues of the country.

There are a number of reasons that have been pointed out for the churches silence and disengagement,⁸⁵ but the recommendation is for the church to continue in its engagement with the struggles of the country by recommitting itself to God and his mission and by using its prophetic voice to question the continued struggles of the country. The church has the

⁸⁵ Refer to 3.4, an overview of the church in post-apartheid South Africa

responsibility to raise its voice against the increased evils that is witnessed and experienced in the country (Mangayi, 2014:137).

Writing on the role of the church as agents of reconciliation, justice, and unity in a disintegrated society, Raboshakga (2019:103) has also recommended for the public engagement of the church in society so that it promotes peace and justice. Raboshakga believes that when sectors such as the church, theological institutions, human rights movements, and judicial systems are at the forefront of the fight for peace and justice, then only will social justice advance and bear fruit. Boyo has also recommended for the churches ongoing participation in the social and political affairs in society. According to Boyo (2021:185), the public engagement of the church in society will be a sign of its commitment to the biblical mandate to be salt and light to the world.

From both Raboshakga's and Boyo's recommendations there is an emphasis on the importance of the church's role in public engagement. The importance of Christian involvement in public engagement is for the church to have Christian influence on government decisions in working towards social justice and reconciliation in communities. Thus Mangayi, calls the church to work in unity and harmony with powers and systems that have the same concerns (Mangayi, 2014:137). The only way that the church can have gospel-centred influence in the social and political transformation of the country is by working closely with the government, then only will the church be able to apply the gospel to the implications for change in the country.

However, from the findings presented in chapter 3, the church has become weak in its role in society and it's time for the church to improve and foster good governance in its role in society (Kuperus, 2011:305). Below are some recommendations made by researchers such as Raboshakga (2019:103), Kuperus (2011:305), Mangayi (2014:146), Masuku (2014:165), and Boyo (2021:185) on how the church can begin to act publicly in the social and political issues of the country:

- The church must, through theological analysis, continuously evaluate its role in social and political issues.
- The church must accommodate people of all races regardless of their status in society and learn to work as a collective in bringing about social change. If the church functions as a united body of Christ in its public engagement, then the church is guaranteed to have a better impact in society more so than the government.
- The church must learn to use their power in love which will help increase their impact in society.

- The church must maintain a critical and independent voice in its correspondence with the government.
- The Church must work at building a relationship with the government in a way that would allow the church to apply its prophetic mission in a non-bias way. It is only through having a relationship with the government that the church can have gospel-centred influence.
- The church must develop fundamental truths in its engagement with the government. These truths must be based upon scripture.
- The church must affirm the role of theology in its engagement with the government and apply, as well as make biblical judgements on social issues.
- The church must learn how to use its crucial assets that has been evident in the history of the country, such as faith, theology, and its witness to the poor and the marginalised; to advance social justice and reconciliation in the country.

One of the observations made in the church's involvement during apartheid was that although the initiatives taken by churches who were against the apartheid system to combat racial inequality phased out, their voices and actions were heard and visible. There is no doubt that their stance against the system contributed to South Africa's transition to democracy. What is needed from the church today, is an ongoing participation in the ongoing challenges of the country even if it may feel like nothing positive is happening. The church needs to re-commit itself in partnering with God in what he is doing in the country.

In encouraging Christians to pursue justice and commit to a greater cause, Piper uses the story of William Wilberforce. Wilberforce committed to fight for justice for African slaves using biblical doctrine. He believed that it was God who set before him two great objects, "the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of [moral]." On countless occasions he found himself in parliament being defeated. However, Wilberforce persevered in his fight and twenty years later, after writing down in his journal the two great objects that God had set before him, votes were cast, and the slave trade became illegal. Sixteen years after that, votes were cast again, and not only did slave trade become illegal, but slavery itself became illegal (Piper, 2011:112). The challenge for the church today, is to keep pursuing in its role and mission that God has called it to. The church and Christian mission has always been part of the history of South Africa and there is evidence of evangelistic work in Christian communities today. The church must persevere, and even though the fruits of their influence may not be evident now, it will eventually have impact in the future.

5.2.2 Plant and Develop Diverse Churches

Another observation made in chapter 3 is that disunity amongst different races and ethnic groups is not only prevalent in society, but also within the Christian church. Attempts have been made to cultivate unity within some of the churches, but research has shown that for some it has been difficult to rid themselves of past traditions. Disunity based on race and ethnicity is evident in church services that are specifically designed for different groups based on race or language. From what has been presented in chapter 4 of this research, planting or maintaining one-race congregations or practicing the homogenous-unit principle is not a biblical model for churches. When the people from the early church witnessed to their own kind or became resistant to worshipping with people from other ethnic groups, it was because of their inherited prejudices that they needed to overcome, not because it was a biblical model for church growth.⁸⁶ Paul's model for planting churches was to plant multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual churches in keeping in line with God's plan of a diverse kingdom. Despite differences, Paul addressed and welcomed both Jews and Gentiles into the body of Christ. This is the model that the church is called to follow today especially if they are to be agents of reconciliation in a divided society.

A diverse⁸⁷ church must reflect and embrace the diversity of its context. According to Davis (2010:94), whenever possible, congregations should strive to be diverse. This diversity should be driven by both demographics and what the Bible teaches, and considering how globalised the world has become, the local church should in fact be diverse by default. There are though, under certain circumstances where it may not be possible to have a multiracial or multi-ethnic church, such as rural areas where only one race resides or the lack of a common language. However, the argument remains, that even in such circumstances, the church should still function as a New Testament church (DeYoung *et al*, 2003:143). Hays (2003:205) argues that while there may be reasons for forming ethnic specific churches, this form of worship is contrary to what the Bible teaches. Churches that are ethnic specific reflect a disobedient attitude that is classified as sin and points to the fact that Christians identify themselves by their race, ethnicity, or culture, rather than the gospel.

In rural areas where there is only one race people, it is possible that there will be people of different ethnicities and cultures. Here in South Africa, there are a lot of African foreigners that reside in rural, and township areas. In a situation like this, the church should learn how to engage

⁸⁶ Refer to chapter 4 under the heading "the scope of mission and unity in the early church."

⁸⁷ By using the word diverse, the researcher is referring to the inclusion of people from every race, nation, tribe, and language.

and relate with all cultures and ethnic groups and welcome them into the church. In the case of a lack of common language, although it may be difficult, it is still possible for the church to work towards crossing that barrier and becoming multilingual.

A diverse church must reflect Gods plan of a diverse kingdom of peoples that will one day worship together in the heavens and point to the truth that God is creator of all races and ethnicities, and he created them all in his image (Davis, 2010:93-94). It may seem that worshipping separately along racial and ethnic lines will be much easier, but according to the Word of God, worshipping separately is not what God designed.⁸⁸ As seen in chapter four, in Paul's exhortations to the early church, he encouraged all people to worship together as one body of Christ that has been reconciled and united in Christ. In the book of Revelation, John saw a vision where peoples from every nation, tribe and language will worship around the throne of God in the new heaven. This asserts Gods plan of a multi-ethnic kingdom and sets an example of what the church here on earth should strive towards. Hays (2003:205) firmly points out that Gods plan of a people united across ethnic lines is clearly pointed out in the Bible, and when the church rejects to worship together, they are actually opposing Gods plan for his church. On the other hand, when the church is divided on the basis of race and ethnic differences, then it does not affirm that everyone who believes in the gospel are members of one body or children of God. DeYoung (2003:135) *et al* argues that the local church should be a place where it affirms the identity of a person as a new creation in Christ, especially in a society where racial and ethnic differences are trampled upon thus affecting the self-esteem of a person (2003:135).

A diverse church must reflect and embrace the truth of the gospel. As seen in the teachings of Paul, the gospel of Christ transcends disunity and has made the church one new community in Christ. Thus, intentionally planting and maintaining a diverse church reflects the new community that has been formed through the blood of Christ. As pointed out by Mokgatle (2016), if it is good news that brings people together, then it is the good news of Jesus Christ that should bring the people of God to worship together. Mokgatle (2016) further points out that although the gospel of Christ has broken down the walls of hostility, the walls of hostility can still exist in the hearts of people and the church, but if the gospel has truly transformed the depths of our hearts then there will be no room for segregation.

To become a multiracial and multi-ethnic church, the church must unite in faith. What is seen the practice of the first-century church is that they were united by faith. It was their faith that gradually

⁸⁸ Refer to chapter 4.

led them into bridging the gap between ethnic groups, and together they promoted social unity across cultures, traditions, class, and race. It was their unity in faith that led them into embracing Jesus' vision of a "house of prayer for all nations" (DeYoung *et al*, 2003:37). It was their radical transformation of becoming inclusive that gave them the name "Christian". In light of this, DeYoung *et al* argues that if the church today claims to believe in the same gospel as the early church, then the church today should exhibit the same vision of the first-century church (DeYoung *et al*, 2003:129). Being united by one faith should lead to being united despite physical, cultural, national, and linguistic differences.

A diverse church is the greatest form of witness to a divided society. Davis (2010:95) asserts that the pursuit of diversity within the church should be seen as the "overall ministry and message of a healthy biblical church as it seeks to glorify God in its community". According to DeYoung *et al* (2003:136), the witness of a multiracial congregation strengthens the possibility of change in society. Divided communities today, need a practical and visible expression of what it means to live in harmony with different people. A church that is multiracial and multi-ethnic can be that example. A church that gathers despite their differences because of the gospel of Christ, witnesses to the reconciling work of Christ and that through the power of the gospel it is possible for people from every race, nation, tribe, and language to socialise in peace and unity.⁸⁹

To plant and develop diverse churches, the following practical suggestions can be taken:

- Develop a Godly and Diverse Leadership Team: Having a diverse leadership team will have a great impact on the diversity of the church. Below are some of the ways in which having a diverse leadership team can ensure that the church has an inclusive ministry and is pursuing diversity within the church. The following points are taken from observations made by Yancey (2003:86-88):
 - A diverse leadership team is sensitive to the perspectives of different people groups when it comes to decision making,
 - it shows concern for every person in the congregation,
 - it models' and creates an atmosphere of acceptance of different peoples within the church,

⁸⁹ Note, a diverse church is not a united church. A diverse church can reflect the different people in its context but it won't necessarily live in unity. The biblical principle of living as one body and how it should be applied in the church will be discussed below in this chapter, as one of the biblical practical steps that the church can take to ensuring that unity is practically lived out in the church.

- encourages the church to make changes that will produce the fruit of diversity within the church,
 - it attracts groups of people that feel alienated from or like the minority in the community and,
 - it promotes an inclusive worship style.
- Develop a diverse worship strategy: the diversity of the church must reflect and be embraced in the worship service. Songs can be chosen and sung in different languages as well as in different music being incorporated within the service (Holmes, 2019). Cultures and ethnic groups can also be represented in their different clothing styles, and different Bible translations can be incorporated during the worship service (Reyes, 2022).
 - Get to know the different people within the church and the community: This is how communities and relationships are built. This is how different languages can be learnt and how one can understand and learn about different cultures and the needs of people (Holmes, 2019).
 - Have a vision that is multicultural: The vision of the church needs to be one that is focused on being an inclusive community. If being inclusive is not the vision of the church then pursuing a diverse community will be a challenge (Uriate, 2008:03).
 - Become inclusive: Be intentional about including different people in the life of the church. Everyone's voice must be heard, and gifts be used to build the community (Uriate 2008:04).
 - Be committed: It is difficult to live in harmony where there are differences but despite how difficult it gets, commit to staying and embracing a community that honours God (Uriate, 2008:04).
 - Intentionally share the gospel with all people and all nations: the Goodnews of Jesus is not limited to one people group. It is for everyone. Therefore, to partner with God in his mission, the church must cross all barriers and reach all peoples and nations with the gospel.

5.2.3 Practice the Biblical Principle of Loving thy Neighbour.

In chapter two, the researcher pointed out that some of the cultural beliefs and practices within the ATR's, such as loyalty to one's own tribe, has manifested into ethnic and tribal conflicts. The idea of 'loving thy neighbour is limited to one's own tribe.' In the story of the Samaritan discussed in chapter four, a similar perspective or understanding is observed. The lawyer's understanding of neighbour was limited to his own kind, and to him, he was already practicing the principle of 'loving thy neighbour'. However, the biblical principle of loving thy neighbour, is not limited to "your own kind" but extends to all of humanity and flows from a relationship with and love for God. This means that anyone who does not love God, cannot love his neighbour, and anyone who claims

to love God yet limit his love to his “own kind” is not practicing biblical love and this is a sin in the eyes of God.

The history of hostility that existed between the Jews and Samaritans may explain why the lawyers understanding of love for his neighbour was limited to his own people. This mirrors South Africa and other parts of Africa where people’s worldviews have been influenced by the long history of racial and ethnic tensions, that although we now live in a democratic country, loving others is still a struggle. Specifically, Christians and the Christian church, loving thy neighbour or others must not be just a sermon preached in church. According to Burns (2004:45), the dimensions of love taught in the Bible far exceeds the message of love that the world and sadly, the church is even taught. Love, that flows from the act of Christ on the cross, must be a practical step taken if we are to embrace racial and ethnic diversity and witness of the love of God to the world. Love must begin within the body of Christ as the church extends its loyalty and kindness to all of humanity, but this love must also flow out into the community and to non-Christians. The practical application of love is one of the ways that the Christian church enhances its mission work in the world.

Love that extends to your “own kind” may be easier because of culture, beliefs, and physical similarities. However, loving your “own kind” is no different to the way non-Christians love. They too, know how to love their “own kind”. The love that Christians are called to practically apply is a unique kind of love. It is sacrificial and extends to enemies, the unlovable, and to the ones that are different and belong to other groups (Agang, 2021:60). This is the kind of love that Christ demonstrated on the cross when he gave up his life for all of humanity. He did not wait for us to love him or to become righteous, but he gave up his life to demonstrate his love for us and he took our place so that through his death we may become righteous.

In a country where violence is a way to respond to its challenges, loving amid conflict witnesses to the reconciling message of the cross and witnesses to a peaceful way of responding to challenges. Commenting on Martin Luther King Jr’s. long battle, Burns, comments that his fight which was characterised by non-violence was “not because nonviolence was powerful in itself, but because it was a demonstration of being held by a power that transcended comfort, physical pain, slander, accusation, and retribution.” To this end, Burns points out that racial and ethnic conflict should not be seen as a threat to the church but should be seen as an opportunity to be God-like (2004:46-47). There are different ways that the church can practically implement the principle of love for others, but the idea is to love like Christ, to love sacrificially and to love “all of humanity”.

5.2.4 Practice the Biblical Principle of Forgiveness

Findings in chapter 2 has shown that one of the causes of ongoing violence and conflict is due to trauma and humiliation. Undealt-with trauma and humiliation can result in inflicting pain on others. It repeats itself and creates new cycles of pain for the next generation. This has been evident in the history of South African whereby the Boers who did not resolve the trauma and humiliation caused by the British, inflicted pain on people of colour. The pain that was inflicted on people of colour during apartheid is still evident today because people are still talking about their past pains and this shame and humiliation has led to lootings, protests, and even in killings of white farmers and African foreigners.

Undealt-with pain may not always result in the form of inflicted pain on others. For example, findings in this research⁹⁰ have shown that the generation of today, who have not lived during the time of apartheid are now angry with how their parents or grandparents were treated in the past. This anger can only be passed down to them because of the undealt pain of their parents and grandparents. Their anger is evident in how they create new movements, protesting, and also in the fight to return back the land.

Chapters two and three have noted the process of reconciliation as a big and important step that the government and the Christian church must take to move forward as a country. It is important to note that part of the reconciling process is forgiveness. Forgiveness can be explained as a two-way journey whereby the oppressor acknowledges the pain, he/she caused in the past, apologises and asks for forgiveness; and the oppressed accepts the apology and forgives the oppressor. Burns explains this in the context of America as he calls on “Blacks to forget and Whites to remember. Blacks are challenged to forget history and its atrocities, while Whites are called to acknowledge the psychological effects of history on both Blacks and Whites and begin to act for justice” (2004:50). The two-way stream of forgiveness suggests that the process of forgiveness can only have meaning when both the offender and the offended are willing to play a part. Apart from that, forgiveness is not possible. Moenga (2020:23-24) argues for the two-way stream by asserting that the process of forgiveness will have more weight when both parties play a part. He clarifies that he is not advocating for retributive justice,⁹¹ but for restorative justice.⁹² In the case of corruption where goods and funds are stolen and a person is willing to return those

⁹⁰ Refer to chapter 2.

⁹¹ Legal action taken against the one who has committed a crime.

⁹² Action that is taken with the intention of reconciliation.

goods and funds, speaks of the persons willingness to work towards restoring relationships. It is only when both parties are willing to participate in the process of forgiveness that it makes sense.

This researcher argues that true forgiveness will only make sense when looked at considering what the gospel teaches. While the two-way stream asserts that both parties must be involved in the process of forgiveness, the Biblical perspective and practice of forgiveness looks to the cross and what Jesus has done instead of him seeking for an apology from others. Burns explains that in biblical perspective, Jesus has set an example of forgiveness without an apology, while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8) (2004:49). The biblical perspective suggests that because of what Christ has done on the cross, forgiveness is possible even if the offender does not apologise.

It is important to note that extending forgiveness in light of what the gospel teaches, does not justify the actions of the one who has not apologised. Burns further points out that not only did this act of forgiveness come before an apology, but it also lays the foundation for one to apologise (2004:49). The same gospel that compels a person to forgive even without having an apology, is the same gospel that should compel one to apologise. The work of the cross ministers to both the oppressed and the oppressor and calls each person to respond biblically to his own actions.

Looking at how the pain of the past continues to manifest in forms of violence and conflict today, the researcher wants to address the practicality of forgiveness in light of the one who is living in pain. Specifically speaking of those who claim to be Christians and are still living with the pains of the past; claiming to be Christian yet harbouring grievances of the past against one another is “to forfeit God’s forgiveness” (Sarma, 2021:102). The biblical viewpoints to God being the only one who is Holy and just to deal with humanity according to their sins, but in his love, through the death of Christ and humanities faith placed in him, he chose to forgive humanity of all their sins. If the sins of humanity were an offense to God yet he chose to forgive, then who is man that he should hold an offense against another human?

Burns clarifies what he meant when he called on his black brothers in Christ to forget the past. He asserts that he is seeking his own heart and humbly calling on his brothers in Christ to forgive when offended. He further points out that while he teaches his children that they are black and shares with them the horrors of their history he also teaches them about forgiveness considering the truth of the gospel (2003:50). Perhaps this is a lesson that Christian homes and churches in South Africa need to apply.

Part of accepting and embracing the truth of the gospel is also placing oneself in a position where healing of the past takes place. Healing from past hurts and pains is an important step in the process of forgiveness and the gospel is powerful enough to heal one’s heart from those pains.

McNeil and Richardson (2004:105-107) have listed 7 practical points that can help in the healing process:

- We worship God and practice God's presence, confess, and celebrate our union with Christ.
- We ask God to help us recall memories or images of past relationships or experiences with people of another ethnicity or race.
- We invite Jesus into that memory and wait on him to show us how he acts in relation to the event or situation.
- We express the hurt, anger, frustration, hatred and/or fear that we felt toward any person or group that harmed us.
- Then we wait on Jesus for insight into the sinful ways we responded to the person's sin against us... confess them and ask for forgiveness.
- We pray then for the lifting of any influence of the evil one – Satan and the demonic – that came through the experience and place the cross between us. The cross becomes a holy boundary.
- Finally, we pray for God's strength to love in word and deed the person or group of people who wounded us, and we begin by praying God's best for that person or group.

It is only once a person has acknowledged the need for and importance of forgiveness and has healed from the memories of the past, that they can move on to the next step, which is to confront the offender and let them know that they have been forgiven.

In a country where so many people are hurting from the past, learning to forgive, or practicing forgiveness may be a difficult task. This is where people in power need to come into action. In Moenga's (2020:22-23) opinion, forgiveness begins with the leaders and then moves down to the citizens. He argues that without forgiveness it is impossible to talk about peace and reconciliation. Compared to political leaders, the church has a greater role to play because God has entrusted them with the Word and made them his witnesses in the world, thus the church must take on the spiritual role in spearheading the process of forgiveness. This does not mean that the political leaders play a spectator role, but the church together with the political leaders must work together in the process of forgiveness and work towards the benefit of the citizens (Moenga, 2020:22-23).

Thus, forgiveness is firstly; something that people need to acknowledge is important and is needed in the process of reconciliation in order for the country to move forward. Secondly, forgiveness can only make sense in light of the gospel. The work of Christ ministers to both parties in the process of forgiveness, but it's important to note that each person is responsible for his own actions and that forgiveness is possible even if there is no apology given. Thirdly, it is not wrong to educate the new generation of the past, but Christian homes and churches need to make sure

that the gospel of forgiveness is central to the teachings of the past. Fourth; part of forgiving is healing from the past and this healing is possible through the work of the gospel and when healing takes place then forgiving the other will be easier. And finally; both the church and political leaders have a role to play in the process of forgiveness. However, the church has a greater role because God has commissioned them as his witnesses. The church must preach the biblical application of forgiveness and must be willing themselves to practice it within the life of the church and with people in its community.

5.2.5 Live as “One Body”

Living as “one body” is different to developing a racially and ethnically diverse church. In fact, Burns argues that “to speak of racial harmony as racial diversity undermines the biblical realities of unity.” A racially diverse church may give the impression that unity is being practiced but this may not necessarily be true (2004:4).

By practically living as “one body”, the researcher is referring to Paul’s theology of the body of Christ being a visible expression of being reconciled to God and united in Christ. There is no doubt that this is a theology that is often preached and understood by many Christians, but practically living as one body can be a challenge especially with its history of racial and ethnic divides. Sarma calls the church to “move beyond theoretical understanding regarding the oneness of the body of Christ to practical application of this principle” (2021:99). This is an important aspect for the church because it not only witnesses to the possibility of peace and unity in divided communities or eliminate barriers of divides within the church; but it also witnesses to the oneness of Jesus and the Father. In fact, this is what was observed in the prayer that Jesus prayed, that through the unity of the church people will know that he was sent from the Father.

A church living in oneness has the following characteristics: Firstly; despite differences it is described by “the intermingling of all that is right, true, and biblical within various cultures for a fuller expression of the glory of God in the church and in the world” (Burns, 2004:35). This is a church that embraces culture by mixing different cultures together but is different to how the world practices culture because of their focus to glorify God. Not every part of culture is good, thus; only that which does not trample on the word of God is embraced. This is a church that does not only acknowledge the beauty of God that is displayed in the diversity of cultures, but it is visible in the life and practice of the church. Piper argues against ethnic and culturally segregated worship services by using the choir analogy. That is “more depth of beauty is felt from a choir that sings in parts than from a choir that sings only in unison.” Thus, unity amidst the differences in cultures “is more beautiful and more powerful than the unity of uniformity” (2011:196).

Secondly, A church can be ethnically diverse, but if love is absent then the church is not living in oneness and racial reconciliation is absent (Williams, 2010:134). The practicality of love will be evident in families associating with families of other races, not only within the walls of the church but even outside. Fellowship within the church and outside the church is inclusive of all races, and caring for one another in the forms of prayer, encouragement, and giving, is equally extended to a person of a different race as one would for his own kind.

Third; a church that is one, is constantly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to maintain unity within (Sarma, 2021:100). They understand that apart from their own efforts they will never be able to live in biblical unity and thus, seek the Holy Spirit for guidance, especially where there is disunity within the church.

Fourth; a church that is one does not equate itself to any cultural group or sees its country as any better or least than any other country (Hiebert, 2008:285). They embrace and live according to the truth that their identity is found in God, not in culture; and that all Christians are equal in the sight of God and have equally been given the mandate to witness to all peoples and nations. This truth will move the local church to being a universal church, where all Christians work together for the sake of world mission as equal members in the body of Christ. Their oneness is evident in partnering with others for the sake of reaching all nations with the gospel. Padilla points out that “when Christians fail to work as partners in mission, they also fail to manifest concretely the new reality that they proclaim in the gospel. Because there is one world, one church, and one gospel, the Christian mission cannot be anything other than mission in partnership” (2010:152-153). Without unity, it is impossible to fully participate in the mandate that Christ gave the church to reach all nations with the gospel.

5.2.6 In all things “Pray”

Prayer is an important practical step that must be taken seriously to embrace racial and ethnic diversity and live in oneness. Anything that is from God, and anything that is done to magnify the message of the cross, Satan will oppose. He will oppose anything that honours God (Burns, 2004:42). Therefore, the church is called to “pray”.

At the end of Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus, he calls on the church to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests... and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (6:18-20). Burns comments on Paul’s request to pray by asserting that he calls the church to warfare (2004:42). In the previous chapters he enlightened the church on who they are in Christ and how they are to live and respond because of who they are, and now in here in this chapter he calls on the church to put on the full armour of God as they fight against the devil’s schemes (vs 11), and part of the armour is to pray. Although there are many reasons for people

are hesitate in pursuit of racial reconciliation and unity, spiritually Satan does not want to see the church united and because the church has not yet realised this, they have not seen the need for and importance of practically fighting against the works of Satan through prayer (Burns, 2004:42-44). The church must at all times be engaged in prayer and be dependent on the Spirit. They must come before the Lord as they fight against the schemes of Satan, in pursue of unity and reconciliation in the church.

Prayer needs to also be used in a practical sense to focus on an individual's heart. While Satan may be the one that opposes anything that is from God or anything that is put in place to honour God, Satan cannot be blamed for the sins of humanity. As observed in chapter three, sin is the root cause of all racial and ethnic tensions. Racial and ethnic prejudices stem from a person's heart because sin has deeply affected the heart of man. This explains why he behaves and acts contrary to Godliness. Working towards unity begins with the individual, therefore prayer must focus on the individual's heart. Agang explains that as we come before the Lord and reflect on our own sinfulness, our hearts will be infused with the spirit of humility, and we will become aware of the fact that we cannot judge others. Prayer will help the individual to distinguish good from evil without regarding the status of a person (2021:61). Coming before the Lord in prayer and searching our own intentions and actions, will remove all negative assumptions that one perceives of the other.

Churches are called to pray for their leaders. If political and church leaders are at the forefront in the fight for racial reconciliation, then the church must see the need to be praying for their leaders. Leaders need guidance and wisdom that can only come from God. Boyo calls the church to specifically pray for and intercede on behalf of those in political authority, irrespective of their religious background. Although citizens may complain about their political leaders, one needs to realise that they have been appointed by God and have been given the responsibility of leading the country. Prayer is one of the ways in which the church can practically involve itself in the affairs of the country and through prayer the political authorities are brought to the feet of Christ (Boyo, 2021:188).

5.2.7 Faithfully Preach the Truth of the Gospel

Apart from the influence of the history of the Anglo-Boer war, a history of trauma and humiliation, and globalisation and migration; other influencing factors such as science and philosophy, tribal and ethnic cultural practices and beliefs, and the misinterpretation of the Bible have all contributed

in the history of racial and ethnic conflicts in South Africa and other parts of Africa.⁹³ Whatever an individual or nation`s reasons may be, it is clear that most have experienced one or more of the factors mentioned, and that has influenced the way people view and think of each other, contributing to how people treat each other. According to Turaki (2020:395), the way in which people view each other explains the history of how people have been treating each other.

To this end, the researcher argues that the biblical worldview rejects any form of racial and ethnic conflict. Therefore, one of the ways in which the church can embrace ethnicity and respond to the ongoing racial and ethnic conflicts that the country is faced with is through faithfully preaching the truth of the gospel. The church must faithfully preach the truth of the gospel so that people`s worldviews that are influenced by anything other than the Bible will be transformed by the gospel. Graham (2018) is correct when he states that “the only way to see all of life accurately is through the transforming lens of scripture”.

According to Claxton (2018), when forming a biblical worldview, not only should opposing views such as naturalistic evolution, relativistic ethics, sexual profligacy, or materialistic greed be analysed, but also, culture. Many people do not realize how culture impacts the way we think and live, but most of who we are is shaped by culture. Higgins (2018) firmly states that “we are creatures of our culture.” Christians need to understand that culture is man-made. This means that most of its practices, beliefs and traditions do not conform to the teachings of the Bible. Therefore, submitting to the teachings and practices of culture can easily lead to bigotry. To avoid this, one needs to evaluate if his practices and beliefs are in line with Scripture. If not, then it must be altered (Higgins, 2018).

In chapter 4, the theology of Paul has explained what it means to be a new creation in Christ. As a new man in Christ, we no longer live in our former ways, but we live in the new identity that we now have in Christ. This newness does not mean that the gospel removes man`s cultural identity, instead; Katembo (2020:83) explains that the gospel reshapes culture by removing cultural practices that are sinful and affirms and enriches the good elements of culture. For example, the African traditional practices of generosity, hospitality, and community are practices mentioned in the Bible that a Christian should put into practice, but beliefs and values in kinship matters or blood relations are contrary to the Bible and must be abolished.

⁹³ Refer to 2.4, the causes of racial and ethnic tensions.

Katembo (2020:81-82) points out that the problem of peace in the history of Africa which has shown in racial and ethnic conflicts, that has also manifested in divisions within the Christian church can only come to an end through the church faithfully preaching the truth of the gospel. In other words, no matter how many practical steps are put into place to alleviate divisions and conflicts, if people do not have a better and true understanding of the gospel and how it applies to our lives, then divisions and conflicts within the church and society will continue to prevail. Attempts at peace-making needs to be based on what the Bible teaches.

The church must faithfully preach the truth of the gospel so that people will have a better definition and deeper understanding of humanity that is beyond physical appearances (Turaki, 2020:393). Having a wrong worldview has manifested into the underlying notion of “us” and “them”⁹⁴ or “other”. Instead of viewing humanity based on its “divine and intrinsic quality of sameness”, humanity is viewed by its differences which leads to one group exploiting the other (Cheboi, 2019:187). When people are categorized and viewed by their physical differences, then embracing people of different races and ethnicities becomes a challenge and this is observed in the history of Africa. When this worldview is compared to that of the Biblical worldview, conflicts, divisions, and the exploiting of one group by another, for whatever the reason may be, is contrary to what the Bible teaches.

The image of God is universal which means that all of humanity, irrespective of race, ethnicity, language, or nationality; have been created in the image of God. This means that “all” of humanity should be treated equally and with dignity and respect. This deeper understanding of humanity will only be made aware through the faithful preaching of the gospel. The church must preach the truth of the gospel so that through the gospel people will recognize the dignity, worth, and value of humanity and will “accept the responsibility for protecting, affirming and defending them” (Turaki, 2020:394). The dignity and identity of man cannot be exploited. According to the Biblical view, it is a sin and an act that is rejected by God; but this truth can only be made aware through the faithful preaching of the truth of the gospel.

The church must faithfully preach the truth of the gospel so that people will be exposed to their sinful and fallen nature. While modern culture rejects the effects of sin, the Christian worldview considers the presence of sin that has horrifically affected God’s created order and acknowledges the need for a saviour to restore all of humanity (Norman, 2019).

⁹⁴ Refer to footnote 17 in chapter 2.

Although there are many leading factors giving rise to racial and ethnic conflicts, chapter four has presented sin as the root cause of this evil practice. Sin is deeply rooted in the heart of man and is externally expressed in the act of exclusion than embrace (Cheboi, 2019:193). Cheboi explains that the act to “either love or hate the “other” is a heart matter. It is an eternal problem that has affected the core of human beings...” (2019:193). Sin explains why humans find it difficult to love and embrace each other. It is because of the deep rootedness of sin in humanities heart that distinguishing between “us” and “them” and viewing ourselves as the “quintessential humans, civilized and superior” have become a natural thought and practice (Hiebert, 2008:288).

The church must faithfully preach the truth of the gospel so that people are exposed to the work of Christ that has brought an end to racial and ethnic divides. In Pauline’s theology it has been discussed that in some of Paul’s teachings and exhortations he was addressing the problem of divisions and ethnic conflict that was being experienced in the early church. In some of his teaching’s he exposed the church to the reconciling work of Christ that reconciled man to God and man to one another by breaking down the walls of hostility. His encouragement to the church was to embrace this truth and to be a visible reality of Christ reconciling work. Reconciliation and unity were made possible only through the blood of Christ. According to Piper, it is only through a deeply rooted grasp of what Christ has done on the cross that ethnic diversity and harmony can be embraced. Apart from knowing and understanding what Christ has done, everything else is powerless to sustain such diversity (2011:111).

Commenting specifically on the issue of tribalism, Sarma (2021:97) stated the following:

“This thinking is not only erroneous; it is also a mindless trampling of the precious blood of Christ that bought us and a rejection of the salvation God accomplished for us in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is elevating the blood of our relatives above the blood of Christ”.

Anything that is placed above the blood of Christ and the work he accomplished on the cross will become a barrier to the reconciliation and unity that Christ died for. Piper firmly states that “the bloodlines of Christ is deeper than the bloodlines of race” (2011:227). The blood of Christ was shed so that people would live in reconciliation and unity, especially the body of Christ. However, this truth can only become a reality in society and the church through the preaching of the gospel. The gospel of Christ is more powerful than ethnic divides, thus the church is challenged to faithfully preach Christ and what he has done on the cross to abolish these divides.

In a country and society that is still torn by racial and ethnic rivalries, the thinking of “us” and “them” is still real, not only in society but also in the church. If the church is going to be agents of

transformation, then the church must see the importance or need of people's worldviews being transformed by the gospel. Hays calls the church to "proclaim loudly and clearly that such thinking is explicitly contradicted by Scripture, which teaches that all peoples are equal" (2003:161) and DeYoung *et al*, encourages the church to have a theological view of oneness that is taught, embraced, and experienced; then only will the church become a community of healing and reconciliation in a broken world (2003:161). Having a secular worldview removes God and places self at the centre, but having a biblical worldview places God at the centre and removes any form of idol that may become a barrier to man fully worshipping God (Greenway, 1999:85). It is only through having a biblical worldview that people will know what it means to live with one another and how to treat each other with dignity and respect, and it's a biblical worldview that will enable the church to be who God has called them to be and live as a community of people that have been reconciled to God and united in Christ.

5.3 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented practical steps that the church can take to embrace racial and ethnic diversity and enhance its mission work in the world.

Firstly, it pointed out that the church still has a prophetic role to play in the political and social struggles of the country. To do this, it has been suggested that the church find ways to work closely with the government so that it can have a gospel-centred effect on the government.

Secondly the church must seek to plant and develop multi-racial and multi-ethnic churches. Although a diverse church does not mean that the church is united, it does have a great form of witness in a divided society. A church that can worship together despite its differences, witnesses to a divided community that it is possible to live in peace and fellowship with others despite differences.

Third; the biblical principle of love, calls for the actions of love to extend beyond race and ethnicity. It is to love sacrificially like Jesus loves the church. This means that love must be expressed amid conflict and pain. It does not wait for a person to change or is not limited to ones "own kind".

Fourth; forgiveness is an important action that must be taken for people to heal from the past and move forward. However, forgiveness can only be applied in light of what the gospel teaches. The gospel speaks to both the offender and the offended, but each person is responsible for his own actions. Forgiving the other is possible even if there is no apology given. The one who is hurting and still living with the pains of the past should learn to practically apply forgiveness to move forward.

Fifth; the church must learn to visibly express and live out its new identity as a reconciled body of Christ. This can practically be shown in the intermingling of cultures in the life of the church.

Sixth; praying has been highlighted as one of the most important practical steps that the church must put into practice for the sake of maintaining unity. While there are many reasons for racial and ethnic divides, Satan is also the reason for ethnic divides because he opposes anything that is from God. The church must fight against the schemes of Satan through prayer. Prayer also helps the individual to see how his or her own actions contributes to divides and prayer will enable the individual to move past barriers and work towards unity.

Lastly; the church is called on to faithfully preach the truth of the gospel with the aim of transforming worldviews through the gospel. It is evident that peoples' worldviews have been influenced by history, science, and cultural beliefs and practices. These worldviews are contrary to the biblical worldview and has given rise to racial and ethnic tensions. It is only through having a biblical worldview that people will understand how people with differences are to be treated.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary and conclusion of all that was discussed in this paper. The study aimed to strengthen the church in South Africa in its understanding of the biblical and theological principles of ethnic diversity from a missional perspective, thus enhance its missional role and task in reaching all nations with the gospel. In accomplishing the purpose, aim, and objectives of the research, the research was divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 gave an introduction and background to the research problem while chapters 2-5, attempted to answer the sub-questions that arose from the main research question. Below is a summary and conclusion of all the chapters in this research.

6.2 Chapter One

Chapter one focused on presenting the background of the research problem. It included the research methodology, the aim and objections, and the overall design of the research. The research problem presented in this chapter argues that the problem of race and ethnicity, which is still evident today, has not only affected communities and societies but the Church as well. Even so, the church still has an important role to play in the continued struggles of South Africa, however; disunity in the church affects the witness and mission of the church. Thus, the central theoretical argument of this study pointed out that the Church, will only understand the importance and purpose of uniting for the sake of the gospel once they understand the place that ethnicity holds in the mission of God. Thus, the main question that the research sought to answer was: *How can the understanding of biblical and theological principles of embracing ethnic diversity from a missio Dei perspective, enhance obedience to Christ, to make disciples of all nations?* In clarifying the main question arose sub-questions, that were answered in the chapters that followed.

6.3 Chapter Two

The question that chapter two sought to answer was: What are the causes and effects of racial and ethnic tensions in South Africa? The researcher aimed to describe the causes and effects and attempted to understand whether South Africa is a country that is still divided along racial and ethnic differences. In doing so, the chapter presented a short history of the country, apartheid, and the country's transition to democracy. It proceeded to describe the racial and ethnic tensions the country is faced with, followed by the causes of those tensions and how those tensions are

still affecting the country. The chapter concluded with a short analysis on the response from the government and citizens to the ongoing challenges that the country is faced with.

The chapter went on to discuss how physical appearances of people such as nationality, racial identity, or skin colour, is still a deciding factor on how people are treated. Many people, specifically people of colour have claimed or reported incidents of being unfairly treated due to the colour of their skin. On the other hand, since the end of apartheid, there has been an increase in xenophobic outbreaks and attacks. Although there are many reasons for these outbreaks, for some, apartheid is to be blamed - the isolation that citizens lived in during apartheid and the hostility that existed between them and the foreigner, makes it difficult to now accept foreigners or people that are different. This is similar to the challenge of tribalism, where people are also blaming it on apartheid - the apartheid regime segregated citizens along tribal and language groups to make conquering the land easier. While there may be some truth in saying that it was apartheid that intensified the ongoing racial and ethnic conflicts that the country is faced with today, these conflicts existed before apartheid was legalised.

Every form of conflict has a root cause, and from what has been discussed in this chapter, apartheid is not the root cause of racial and ethnic conflicts, although it did contribute to it by legalising racial segregation. Factors contributing to the rise in racial and ethnic conflict can be attributed to generational pain and trauma or shame and humiliation. Instead of dealing with the pains of the past, people are inflicting pain on others or are responding in violence and conflict. This has been evident from the time of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), where the British inflicted pain on the Boers, the Boers then inflicted pain on people of colour - which led to the legalisation of apartheid, and today; many citizens are hurting from what they experienced during apartheid and are now responding in violence and conflict which is evidenced by looting, protests, and strikes.

Other contributing factors are theologised politics, where the Bible was used to condone and justify racial segregation by translating it to mean that racial segregation is a willed act of God. It did not help that theories and teachings presented by Darwin and others also made people think that one race is better than the other and can therefore dominate, and that racial hierarchies bring order to the world. Another contributing factor is globalisation and migration. South Africa alone, is known to be a very diverse country, with mainly people from other parts of Africa who have migrated to the country for different reasons. Although globalisation can be seen as something positive, for many South African's it has had a negative impact. With unemployment already being a challenge in the country, many citizens believe that foreigners have come to take away their limited opportunities; but also hold the assumption that foreigners have come to take away their

land, they are fragmenting the cultures and traditions of South African citizens and have contributed to the increase in crime. The negative feelings that South Africans hold towards foreigners has therefore manifested in outbreaks of xenophobic attacks.

The rise in racial and ethnic conflicts continues to impact the development of the country. Unemployment and poverty have increased over the years and reasons for this is traced back to discrimination based on race and ethnic differences. The increase in xenophobic violence has threatened the vision of South Africa's foreign policy and has questioned its commitment to ubuntu. Due to the struggle of accepting others or judging people based on appearance, interracial relationships continue to experience discrimination from society. The continued discrimination that interracial couples are experiencing speaks of how people have been brainwashed by the past and have been influenced by the belief that one race is superior to the other. The unfair treatment of people based on the colour of their skin has led some, specifically women of colour to question their looks and have sought ways of changing their appearance by making their skin colour lighter.

This chapter then concluded that racial and ethnic conflict can be traced throughout the history of South Africa, leading up to today. In 1994, the country became a democratic country which meant that all segregation laws ended, and everyone was given equal rights and privileges. For many, this transition meant hope and assurance of a better future. However, the reality is that racial and ethnic tensions are still a struggle today and people continue to fight for equal rights and privileges. The problem of racism, xenophobia, tribalism, and ethnocentrism, remains a major concern and cause for disunity and the ongoing struggles of the country. Although people now have the right to vote and freely move around, the notion of "us" and "them" is still vastly evident.

On many occasions the democratic government addressed the country's` challenges and put in place plans to combat racial and ethnic conflicts and rebuild the nation, however; from what is evident in the country today, it is clear that the government has not been effective in its approach. The government's failure in actively and effectively addressing the challenges of the country has left many citizens feeling frustrated and angry. This has manifested in citizens responding in violence to get the governments attention. To move forward as a country and rebuild the nation, the government and the people need to work together. What is needed is the intentional building of reconciliation and unity. For as long as the people are divided, the needs of others will be overlooked, and the challenges of the country will continue to prevail.

6.4 Chapter Three

Chapter three analysed the visibility of the church during and after apartheid. The question that this chapter aimed to answer was: How has the problem of race and ethnicity affected the church

and its mission, and how has the church responded to this problem? In achieving the purpose of this chapter, the researcher analysed the response of some church denominations, Christian leaders and ministers, and ecumenical movements during the time of apartheid, and has presented a short overview of the Church and its response in post-apartheid South Africa. The aim of this chapter was to understand the continued role and missional task of the church in a country that is still divided by racial and ethnic conflicts.

The response to racial segregation from church denominations and ministers was analysed under the approaches of three groups: those that defended apartheid, those that were against apartheid, and those that developed a quiet diplomacy approach or a neutral stance. With regards to those that defended apartheid, most of the support came from some of the members and ministers of the DRC and some Reformed theologians. Their support contributed to the legalisation of apartheid. However, there were still others from within the reformed circle who spoke against the Bible being used to defend apartheid and went as far as exhorting people to not form part of the Afrikaaner Nationalism. It is unfortunate though, that those who spoke against the system did not have much power compared to those that defended the system, because those that defended the system was the majority.

Those that were against the system were mostly from the English-speaking churches. Though some English missionaries who belonged to the English-speaking churches condoned racial injustice, for those that were against the system, this chapter concluded that they were not afraid to express their concerns of racial injustices within the church and society. They were visible in their fight to end racial injustice and were committed to seeing people in the country and within the church united despite differences.

The third group that mostly belonged to the Pentecostal churches and evangelical movements developed a neutral stance or a quiet diplomacy approach. Amongst the many reasons for their approach, was their commitment to preaching the gospel. So, instead of challenging the government, they sought to serve people in their different congregations based on racial lines. There were still others who were cautious in their approach but later became vocal and visible in their stance against racial injustice, and others sought ways to assist those that were discriminated against under the system by providing shelter and food.

Ecumenical movements such as the SACC, the WCC, the Cottesloe Consultation, and the CI were all visible in the struggle against racial injustices and sought ways to end the system. Although they received much opposition and may not be visible or have not continued in the ongoing challenges of the country today, their visibility and commitment to fight against racial injustices during apartheid despite receiving opposition, can be a great encouragement and

challenge to the role and mission that the church today has in the continued struggles of the country.

This chapter has seen that while church denominations and ministers held different views with regards to racial injustice, those that spoke against it and sought ways to end the system were bold and visible in the struggle. Their voices were heard and there is no doubt that they did contribute to the end of apartheid. However, it has also been observed that while churches and ministers were visible in the struggle of racial injustice during the time of apartheid, the church today has lost its voice and has become silent. Since the end of apartheid, a considerable amount of effort was put into the church uniting despite differences, but for some; it has been difficult to rid itself from the traditions of the past. Racial and ethnic conflict has and still is a struggle amongst Christians today and this as a result, has affected the witness and mission of the church. This chapter concluded that the church is an alternative community – a community that is called to bring change. To bring change, the church is challenged to immerse itself in society and be the missional people that God has called them to be – a reconciled people of God, united through the blood of Christ.

6.5 Chapter Four

This chapter established biblical and theological principles of ethnic diversity from a missional perspective, with the aim of the church seeing the importance of embracing ethnic diversity and enhancing its missional task in the world. The question that the chapter aimed to answer was: What does the Bible teach about ethnicity and the mission of God? In responding to this question, the researcher began by arguing that the identity of man is not found in his racial, ethnic, or national background, but it is founded in the image of God. All of humanity is created in the image of God and it is in the image of God that man finds his worth, value, and identity. This means that all of humanity must be treated with respect, value, and dignity despite their differences. It was also argued that sin is the root cause of all racial and ethnic conflicts. Due to the sinful nature of man, man does not live, behave, and act in a godly way. Sin explains why man has the desire to dominate over other humans. The rest of the chapter focused on the biblical and theological study on the mission of God embracing ethnic diversity, throughout the Bible.

In looking at the purpose of God's mission, the chapter looked at how God chose Israel. It was not because they were a superior nation or that all other nations were rejected. Israel was chosen for the sake and purpose of all other nations. God established a relationship with Israel and through their unique relationship with God, they were called to witness through a lifestyle of holiness and a relationship with God.

God's universal mission that extends to all peoples and nations can be traced from the call of Abram. The promise of blessing given to Abram, that he will be blessed to be a blessing; expresses God's concern for all nations. The blessing that Abram was to receive was inclusive of all other nations and this inclusivity, God's redemption plan is evident throughout the Bible in different stories and narratives, showing that salvation was not only possible for Israel but for everyone who would believe in the true God.

Continuing in the theme of God's universal mission are the OT Prophets, who saw a time when all the tribes and nations will be gathered in the new heavens, affirming that the mission of God has no boundaries. While the call of Israel to be a light to the nations was more about living a lifestyle that would draw other nations to God, Jonah and other OT Prophets also saw of a time when the message of Christ will reach the distant countries and islands, and that Christ will become a light to even the Gentiles. This is affirmed in the NT through the work, mission, and message of Christ that not only extends to the Jews, but to the Gentiles too. The ministry of Jesus was inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles – the same grace and mercy that Christ extended to the Jews, he also extended to the Gentiles. The inclusive ministry of Christ is seen in the many different encounters that he has with different people. In those cross-cultural encounters Jesus teaches his disciples the importance of crossing ethnic and cultural barriers in reaching all peoples with the gospel, but he also challenges their ethnocentric mindset and thinking. The work of the cross alone speaks volumes of the oneness of all people that is found in the death and resurrection of Christ. Through the work of the cross, all racial, ethnic, and tribalistic pride was demolished, and everyone was made new and one in Christ. In all four gospels, the disciples are commissioned to make disciples of all nations. This is an emphasis on the redeeming work of Christ that holds no boundaries but extends to everyone who will place faith in him.

Continuing in the universal mission of Christ is the early Church. Through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the early church crossed ethnic and cultural barriers and became witnesses to the ends of the earth. Throughout the book of Acts there is evidence of the preaching and witnessing of the gospel cross-culturally. At the birth of the early church, the church was not multi-ethnic. It became multi-ethnic as the gospel was being preached to different people. However, the people still struggled with cultural and ethnic pride, which is one of the major issues that Paul addressed in his letters to the early church. Speaking on the new identity that the church has in Christ; Paul exhorts the church to live according to their new identity – as people reconciled to Christ and united in him.

The book of Revelation concludes with John's vision that sees the completion of God's universal mission seen throughout the Bible. In the new heavens, people of every nation, tribe, and

language will be gathered around the throne worshipping God together in one diverse, yet unified body of Christ. John's vision affirms God's plan of a multi-ethnic kingdom that was to be visibly expressed and embraced here on earth like it would be in heaven. In the new heavens, difference is not eliminated but it is embraced and celebrated as people gather and worship the one holy God who created humanity with differences.

This chapter argued and concluded that the mission of God has no boundaries, it is inclusive and extends to everyone who would place faith in him. The implications of God's multi-ethnic mission, challenges the church to intentionally cross all barriers to reach all nations with the gospel, but to visibly live as a reconciled and united body in Christ as they partner with God in what he is doing in the world. The visible unity that is displayed within the church enhances the witness and mission of the church in a society that is divided by differences. God is glorified when all peoples and nations are embraced.

6.6 Chapter Five

Chapter five focused on recommendations that can be made to the church to embrace unity and diversity and enhance its involvement in the mission of God. Its aim was to recommend practical biblical steps that the church can take to embrace ethnic diversity and thus enhance its involvement in the mission of God to reach all nations with the gospel. Based on the conclusions and observations that was made in the previous chapters, the following recommendations was presented:

- The church must actively be involved in the social and political concerns of the country. By being involved in society and working with the government, the church will have gospel-centered influence on initiatives taken to combat the ongoing challenges of the country. Communities and societies are looking to the church for answers; therefore, the church must re-examine its role and mission in society and work with the people and government to bring about change that is gospel centered.
- The church must seek to plant and develop churches that are diverse. Diverse churches reflect and embrace the diversity of its context, they reflect God's plan of a diverse kingdom, embraces the truth of the gospel, and becomes the greatest form of witness to communities that are divided. Diverse churches not only embody the definition of a healthy church, but it also strengthens the possibility of bringing effective change to societies. It speaks of the reconciling work in Christ and witnesses to the possibility of unity despite differences.
- The church must ensure that its leadership team is diverse and reflects the different people in the community. There is a great possibility in diversity being embraced in the church if

the leadership team of the church is diverse. When the leadership team reflects the different people in the community, the church will become attractive to a diverse audience. A diverse leadership team will be able strengthen the care and concern of the church for all people and encourage the church to have a ministry that is inclusive and in line with Gods design for the church.

- The church must practically apply the biblical principle of loving thy neighbour in a way that it extends to all people, instead of limiting it to one's own kind. This is a love that flows from a relationship with and love for God. This is a unique kind of love that is sacrificial and unconditional and must be evident, especially amid conflict and rivalries. Loving amidst pain, insults, rivalries, and conflicts is an opportunity to witness to Gods unconditional love that has the power to heal pain, restore souls, and unite people.
- The church must practice the biblical principle of forgiveness. Forgiveness is an important practical step that is needed in the process of reconciliation especially for those that are still hurting from the past. However, forgiveness can only make sense through the gospel. The church and the government are to play a role in the process of forgiveness, but the church plays a greater role because they are witnesses to the forgiving work of Christ and can apply gospel-centred truths to the process of forgiveness.
- The church must learn to practically live as the reconciled body of Christ that has been united in Christ. A church that practically lives out its unity in Christ is a church that willingly intermingles and embraces different cultures within the Church. Love extends to all people and is evident in the fellowship of individuals and families with different racial and ethnic groups outside the church. A church that is one will constantly depend on the Holy Spirit to maintain the unity of the church. They understand that apart from the work of the Spirit they will never live in the unity that Christ prayed for. A church that is one is not afraid to partner with others for the sake of the gospel and does not align itself to any cultural, ethnic, or racial group, but knows that its identity is founded in Christ.
- The church must fight against the schemes of the devil through prayer. Satan opposes anything that is from God and because unity is from God, Satan will do anything to destroy the unity of the church. Therefore, the church is called to always pray for the unity of the church.
- The church must faithfully preach the truth of the gospel because it has the power to transform people's worldviews that were tainted through the teachings and practices of the past. This tainted view has contributed to the ongoing challenges of racial and ethnic conflict. The gospel has the power to expose humanity to a deeper understanding of man that is beyond physical appearances. It also has the power to expose man to his sinful nature and will explain why humanity thinks and acts the way they do. The gospel must

be preached so that people will know the power of the work of Christ that can bring an end to all racial and ethnic pride.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

The focus of this study was on the problem of racial and ethnic conflict and the churches' response to this problem in the context of South Africa. In explaining the problem and extent of racial and ethnic conflicts, reference was made to other parts of Africa. However, a history of SA was presented and the analysis on the involvement and response of churches was narrowed to the churches in SA. For this reason, the researcher believes that this study reflects the context of SA but is not limited to one specific Church or church denomination. The study did not include any empirical data, limiting this research to a literature review.

6.8 Recommendations for further research

The following points are recommended areas for further research:

- The role and importance of forgiveness in the process of reconciliation and healing from past trauma and pain.
- Practical steps that the church can take to work with the government in bringing effective change to society, without compromising its faith and beliefs.
- The involvement and role of the church in helping South Africa regain its identity after damaging its reputation due to the increase in xenophobic attacks.
- Practical steps that can help embrace unity and reconciliation amongst black South Africans and foreigners from other parts of Africa.
- The missional role of the church in transforming tribalistic worldviews with the aim of reconciling and uniting tribal groups.

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ANNEXURES

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER FOR STUDY



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520 Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
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Senate Committee for Research Ethics

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16 November 2020

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Theology Research Ethics Committee (TREC)** on 16/11/2020, the Theology Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Embracing Ethnic Diversity: A missio Dei perspective founded in biblical and theological principles

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr IW Ferreira & Prof F Buys Student:

Govender, RL, 31692788

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	2	1	0	6	-	2	0	-	A	6
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status				

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single Study

Commencement date: 2020/12/01

Risk Category:

Low

Expiry date: 2021/11/30

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the TREC:*
 - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
 - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the TREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and TREC reserves the right to:*
 - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
 - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process; – withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the TREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *TREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via Rudy.Denton@nwu.ac.za.*

The TREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the TREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof Rudy Denton

Chairperson NWU Theology Research Ethics Committee

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