Towards a Reconciling Church in South Africa

by

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Duke Divinity School
Duke University

Date: 8/3/2017

Approved:

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in the Divinity School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This paper seeks to locate the church as a role player in the ongoing discussion around reconciliation within the South African context. Seeing as reconciliation is understood and applied in different ways by different sectors of society, the paper starts by establishing a Biblical understanding on the subject. This is done by identifying central New Testament texts which it sees as primarily occurring in the Pauline corpus (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Romans 5:8-11, Ephesians 2:13-16, and Colossians 1:15-23). The paper then turns to consider the possible contributions Pentecostal theology makes available to this discussion, focusing on eschatology, the empowerment of the Spirit, and social concern. The paper then contextualizes the conversation by considering the South African context, with focus given to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 1996. These thoughts are then brought together in a discussion on the Church, and how through the Spirit, it finds itself uniquely positioned as a witness to inclusivity and reconciliation. The Biblical understanding of reconciliation is affirmed, as is the centrality of the Church, but that this still needs to be realized in local congregational gatherings is noted. As the paper takes a Pentecostal approach to reconciliation, the inclusivity of the community that emerged from the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts is considered, and parallels drawn to similar occurrences in the origins of Pentecostalism.
It is therefore the premise of this paper that the Spirit empowers the Church, positioning it uniquely as an inclusive and reconciling community.
Dedication

To my gracious wife, Kirstin, and my two boys, Joel and Timothy, for being just who you are.
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Introduction

The subject of reconciliation has received much attention over the past few decades. In 1994, Priscilla Hayner, known for her expertise in transitional justice, published a paper looking at 15 different truth commissions that took place between 1974 and 1994.1 In her paper she notes how the 1993 United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador raised the profile of truth commissions around the world.2 Since then several more commissions have been convened, elevating the role of truth commissions in peacemaking and reconciliation. Prominent among them is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TARC) and its role in facilitating a peaceful transition from Apartheid into a new and inclusive democracy.3 It was at this commission that the term, “reconciliation” gained prominence as an integral part of truth commissions,4 shifting the focus from purely truth gathering entities to forums of

2 Hayner, 598.
reconciliation.\textsuperscript{5} Whether reconciliation was achieved remains a contentious issue; what is however noteworthy is the way the South African TARC contributed to a mostly bloodless transition in South Africa. It was during this transition that the profile of people such as the Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu became prominent, primarily because of their extraordinary ability to forgive and seek reconciliation.

Events such as this continue to elevate the role of truth commissions around the world, especially where peaceful non-judicial forums are considered more appropriate means of uncovering truth and moving people towards reconciliation. Institutions such as The International Center for Transitional Justice and United States Institute of Peace estimate that more than 30 truth commissions are now known to have operated around the world.\textsuperscript{6} It would therefore be expected that with forums such as these truth commissions, along with the wealth of literature being produced around the topic of reconciliation, that integrated communities and reconciliatory goodwill would be more common today. Although this has helped steer previously divided societies towards unity, the current situation in South Africa highlights the need for more to be done.

\textsuperscript{5} Tristan Anne Borer, “Reconciling South Africa or South Africans? Cautionary Notes from the T.R.C.,” \textit{African Studies Quarterly} 8 (2004): 21. Borer notes the now common practice of combining truth-telling with reconciliation and asks whether truth necessarily leads to reconciliation. The question is valid but falls outside of the parameters of this paper.

More than 20 years have passed since the TARC and the South African transition, and still the struggle for a unified and reconciled country continues. In 2016, the South African Human Rights Commission reported an 82% increase in racial complaints submitted to the commission.\(^7\) Although it is noted that this may be due to a growing awareness of rights among South African citizens,\(^8\) this is still cause for concern as it represents the ongoing challenge of molding the country into a unified whole. As will be discussed in chapter 3, although the TARC was celebrated for its success, questions of justice and reparation remained unanswered. The TARC was based on a truth-for-amnesty model whereby perpetrators received amnesty in exchange for full disclosure of their crimes.\(^9\) An arrangement such as this did give rise to questions of justice,\(^10\) but with the truth-for-amnesty agreement having been instituted as a political compromise during the transition from Apartheid, there was little that could be done about it.\(^11\) A further injustice has been identified in the historic systems of racialization that left black people socially and economically disempowered. This meant that despite

\(^7\) Shenaaz Jamal, “Increased Complaints on Racism Means More People Know Their Rights: S.A.H.R.C.,” Times Live, http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2016/07/06/Increased-complaints-on-racism-means-more-people-know-their-rights-SAHR. The South African Human Rights Commission is mandated by the constitution to protect the democracy of South Africa. There are several such entities in South Africa, and they are referred to as “Chapter Nine” entities.

\(^8\) Ibid.


\(^10\) Desmond Tutu, No Future without Forgiveness, Kindle ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 50.

\(^11\) Graybill and Lanegran, 6.
receiving their freedom, those that were discriminated against during Apartheid were left constrained by their disadvantaged past. As part of the TARC, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (RRC), was tasked with identifying methods of reparation that would mend these inequalities. Unfortunately, their role was limited to making recommendation, while the President’s Fund which was administered by the president and parliament, was given the final decision on how these reparations would be administered. Direct reparation ended up being delayed for some years and finally amounted to an insignificant monetary payment to victims. The temptation here is to try and relegate these issues to the past, and to rather focus on building an integrated future. This is however idealistic thinking, as these past issues continue to threaten the country’s future. The term, “white privilege”, which has become common in South Africa, is an example of this unresolved legacy of the past. The thinking here is that during Apartheid, white people strengthened their social and economic positions at the expense of black people. The opportunities they currently enjoy can be attributed to the benefits they incurred in the past. The continual unrest on university campuses serves as a case in point here. Although fee increases effect all races, white people are better

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13 Shore. 34.  
14 Ibid., 103.  
positioned to deal with these challenges, thanks to the advantages offered to them in the past.\textsuperscript{16} The racial injustices of the past are therefore driving racial divisions in the present. So, despite all the work that has been done in the field of reconciliation, it is apparent that more solutions are desperately needed.

In contributing to this discussion, I propose turning to the Christian community which scripture presents as a unified gathering, comprised of believers from diverse backgrounds. This theme will be developed more fully as the paper unfolds, particularly in chapter 4, however, for reference purposes I will briefly lay a foundation here.

Paul’s first letter to the Church in Corinth is especially helpful in illustrating the intended unity of the Christian community. Instead of gathering as a unified community, the Church in Corinth finds itself divided. Some of these divisions originate in their conformity to the socioeconomic divisions entrenched in the culture of the time (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:18).\textsuperscript{17} Paul’s instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, and his teaching on the unity of the body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, are two instances where he calls for an inclusive gathering of believers. In the former passage, he teaches on the Lord’s Supper, reprimanding the Church for the divisive way in which the affluent separate themselves from the less fortunate when celebrating this sacred moment in the community. During these gatherings, some are left to go hungry

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\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{17} Richard B. Hays, First Corinthians, Logos ed., Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1997), 193-94. 
\end{flushright}
while others overindulge (1 Corinthians 11:21). By creating these socioeconomic separations, the community is inadvertently rejecting the unity embedded in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. He therefore calls upon the community to “discern the body” (1 Corinthians 11:29, NRSV), a concept that Richard Hays understands as the recognition of the community of believers as singular and undivided.\(^{18}\) Hays’ understanding of this verse seems appropriate when taking into consideration Paul is dealing with issues of Church unity in this passage.

Paul continues with this theme of unity in chapter 12, but now employs the metaphor of the body to emphasize the diversity of the community.\(^{19}\) In his initial remarks, he differentiates between Jews and Greeks, and between those that are enslaved and those that are not. In doing this he is identifying social, economic and cultural divisions that exist within this community, but then goes on to show how these divisions are transcended through baptism into the “one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13).\(^{20}\) Throughout this passage Paul does not call for assimilation into the body, or for an elimination of differences, but rather he celebrates the diversity of the body, while simultaneously affirming its unity.\(^{21}\) Further exploration on the diverse and inclusive nature of the Christian community will be based on contemporary scholarship, as a

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., 200.


\(^{21}\) Ciampa, 590.
thorough study is not possible within the confines this paper. My focus will rather be to locate the local Church within this context, and assess its role as a contributing voice in the ongoing discussions around reconciliation and inclusivity.

This paper then turns to classical Pentecostalism for further leading in this area. As will be discussed, Church history recounts an inclusivity in the Christian community at the inception of the Pentecostal movement that is helpful. The inclusivity of this community can be compared to that of the New Testament Church which formed after the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2. The Pentecostal Church of today is however better known for its emphasis on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, Spiritual gifts, and its focus on world missions, and less so for the inclusivity of its gatherings. This paper therefore looks back at the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts, comparing it to several similar occurrences in Pentecostal history, and asks the question, “In what way is Pentecostalism able to contribute to the ongoing discussion on reconciliation?” One such occurrence was the Azusa Street Mission where people from different nationalities and ethnicities received the outpouring of the Spirit and then

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22 Owing to the diversity of the Pentecostal movement, discussions in this paper will be limited to denominationally based classical Pentecostalism affiliating to the Pentecostal World Fellowship (http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org). Denominations such as the Swedish Pentecostal Movement, Australian Christian Churches, Church of God, Apostolic Faith Mission in South African and Namibia, and various representations of the Assemblies of God around the world would fall within this categorization. For more on Pentecostalism, see F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1262.


24 Cross and Livingstone, 1262.
gathered undeterred by their differences. Frank Bartleman, known for his work in documenting the Azusa Street Revival, records events in the life of the community where divisions were broken down. Noteworthy are his accounts relating to white supremacists who “crucified” their racism and asked black congregants to pray for them. As this is only one of many examples, the question around the inclusivity of the Pentecostal Spirit is explored further.

This paper does not limit the contribution of the Pentecostal movements to its origins. More than 100 years have passed since the Azusa Street Revival, and during this time Pentecostalism has evolved theologically. One such instance is the way the movement has had to deal with a delayed Parousia. Instead of experiencing the imminent return of Christ as was expected in the early years, the movement has in instances developed an eschatology that sees the future realized in the present through the Spirit, thus placing the Church in the age of the “already-not yet.” This paper contends that developments such as this, along with other areas in Pentecostal theology have bearing on present-day challenges of building integrated communities.

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26 Frank Bartleman in ibid., 47.
Foundational to this paper is the acknowledgement that prejudice and segregation persists within contemporary society, and that through a scriptural understanding of reconciliation, considerations from Pentecostalism, and teachings on the inclusivity of the Christian community, the local Church can potentially witness to the possibility of reconciled and inclusive communities. The discussion is approached as follows:

In chapter 1, I present a theological basis for reconciliation. As a concept, reconciliation remains abstract and hard to define, especially seeing as different fields of study approach the subject with different outcomes in mind. A political or secular approach might bring justice to the center of the discussion, where a Christian approach would accept justice as an essential element in reconciliation, but would rather center the discussion around love, forgiveness and a desire to reconcile. Pentecostal Theologian Miroslav Volf, affirms this Christian approach by noting how prioritizing justice in the pursuit of reconciliation is likely to undermine the reconciliatory process. Drawing on Friedrich Nietzsche, he sees the flawed nature of humanity leading only to partial justice and the perpetuation of further injustices.\(^\text{28}\) Rather, Volf believes truth and justice emanate from a desire to embrace that models Christ’s embrace of sinful humanity as seen in the cross.\(^\text{29}\) Volf’s stance carries merit, but could be misconstrued as devaluing

\(^\text{29}\) Ibid., 9-11.
the role of justice in the reconciliatory process. This debate around justice is ongoing, but might not have been as prominent had entities such as the TARC not married traditionally Christian concept of reconciliation with secular and political approaches to peacebuilding. This conflict is noted; however, the departure point of this paper is a Christian understanding of reconciliation, leaving a thorough exploration of secular justice beyond the scope of this paper. The discussion on reconciliation will draw primarily from the Pauline corpus, focusing on 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Romans 5:8-11, Ephesians 2:13-16, and Colossians 1:15-23, where references to reconciliation are most prevalent.30

The Pentecostal considerations mentioned above are discussed in more detail in chapter 2. In this discussion, I intend to position the Church in the “already-not yet” and harmonized this with Paul’s teachings on reconciliation from chapter 1. I will also give attention to the Pentecostal understanding of “Spirit baptism”, to show how through the Spirit, the believer is baptized into the community of faith (1 Corinthians 12:13),31 and empowered for life within that community.32 My final consideration here will be given to the ethical and moral dimension of Jesus’ teachings and ministry, and how the

32 Ibid., 329. The impartation of Spiritual gifts through the Spirit is a central theme in Pentecostalism. Believers are given these gifts that they may build up the Christian community. This is evident in Paul’s discussion on Spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 14.
believer should receive this same social responsibility when he or she receives the Spirit.33

In chapter 3 I will then contextualize the discussion with a brief overview of the TARC. Owing to the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu, and several other Christian commissioners, the TARC has been labelled “Christian”, by supporters and detractors alike.34 This will be discussed in more detail by evaluating the commission’s approach using Volf’s 5 stages of reconciliation: remember, forgive, apologize, repair, and embrace.35 Several shortcomings of the TARC are then noted, leading to the question of Christian involvement in future reconciliatory forums. Here again the question of justice emerges and will need to be addressed.

Chapter 4 will then focus on bringing the discussion into the context of the local Church. Although political and secular contributions are recognized, my focus will be on Christocentric communities, and the possibility that they present unique contributions and opportunities to enact reconciliation. That the local Church is positioned eschatologically in the “already-not yet”, and located within local communities, presents further possibilities that can be explored. Furthermore, ordinances such as the Lord’s Supper and baptism will be considered as possible

34 Boesak and DeYoung, 51; Tutu, 81.
inclusive practices that potentially witness to the reconciliatory nature of the Christian community. The practice of these ordinances in South Africa have not always been considered in this way. In looking back on the development of Apartheid in South Africa, the late H. Russel Botman, Theologian from Stellenbosch University South Africa, shows how these ordinances contributed to divisions within the Church and played a part in the development of the Apartheid system.36 This will be discussed with the aim of repositioning these practices to emphasize their reconciliatory qualities.

Chapter 5 recognizes the potential of the Christian community, but also acknowledges its current shortcomings. The aim of the chapter is therefore to suggest practical applications that will assist local Churches in creating more inclusive communities. These suggestions include: focused preaching and teaching, a renewed emphasis on the Spirit of Pentecost, and several reconciliatory community practices, such as communal meals, narratives and storytelling, and efforts to establish alternative communities that conform to Christian principles rather than secular cultural trends.

My aim in writing this paper is to explore the role of the local Church in the ongoing discussion around reconciliation. My premise is that reconciliation, as seen from a Biblical perspective, presents unique possibilities and resources available to local

Christian communities. These communities should therefore be on the forefront of reconciliatory efforts. This is however not always the case, and so this paper seeks to address this shortcoming by prompting the Church towards it’s call to reconciliation (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:18). As noted, theological considerations, Pentecostal contributions, and an understanding of the local Church are central components of my argument. Several practical suggestions are presented in the concluding chapters; however, the incorporation of these practices remains at the mercy of the local Church and its desire to embrace inclusivity and reconciliation. As this paper is based on Christian principles of reconciliation, a comprehensive approach to matters of justice and truth falls outside the parameters of this paper. This is noted as it is expected that some of the concepts presented here will likely fail to resonate with a secular approach to reconciliation. The discussion above on justice is one such example that cannot be unpacked in its entirety. Christian concepts of reconciliation are however affirmed, but whether these principles will be embraced by both secular and Christian audience remains to be seen.
1. Theological Considerations

The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary defines reconciliation as, “the restoration of a harmonious relationship between two parties”, and applies this definition in particular to God’s initiative in restoring relationship with humanity.¹ On face value, this definition seems simple enough, however as discussions deepen it soon becomes apparent that reconciliation is not as easy to define as one would expect. In recent years there have been numerous events that have called for an approach to conflict resolution that reaches beyond mere justice and towards something more unifying. In situations such as post-Apartheid South Africa, and the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, a process was needed that would uncover truth, but also create a platform for unity and reconciliation within the context of political transition.² Although the role of justice remains important, it risks causing divisions if administered incorrectly in situations such as this. As discussed in the introduction, when the pursuit of justice is the priority, then reconciliation remains unlikely and there exists the danger of perpetuating the cycle of injustice.³ Timothy Gorringe, Emeritus Professor of Theological Studies at the University of Exeter, discusses this at length in his essay, “Crime, Punishment, and

² In the opening pages of this article, Priscilla Hayner discusses at length the role of truth commissions as instruments used in transitional justice. On pages 600-603 she lists the 15 truth commissions that form the basis of her paper. The South African and Rwandan transitions are not covered, as this article predates these events. Hayner, 598-611.
Atonement: Karl Barth on the Death of Christ.”⁴ Here he questions humanity’s approach to dealing with crime, highlighting the misconception that punishment necessarily equates to justice. Instead he suggests that reconciliation and restoration be taken into consideration when seeking to define justice.⁵ Justice therefore has a role to play, but it must follow a reconciliatory agenda if a restorative outcome is desired.

So, although the TARC was not the first commission to incorporate reconciliation,⁶ it exposed the concept to the world putting pressure onto political, sociological and theological disciplines to define exactly what reconciliation means and what it entails. Current expressions of reconciliation in societal and political realms may find their origin in Christian rhetoric, but as Christoph Schwöbel, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen notes, this is a transient understanding as it moves from “the sphere of the discourse of proclamation and worship to the discourse of political and societal life.”⁷ In saying this, Schwöbel is not only drawing attention to the Christian origin of the concept, but also to the way it continues to be captured by systems and structures outside of the Christian faith.

⁵ Ibid., 140-42.
⁶ The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación or the “Rettig Commission”) which took place in Chile from 1990-1991 was the first commission to try the dual approach of truth and reconciliation. See Shore, Religion and Conflict Resolution : Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 107.
Reconciliation can therefore be seen as highly subjective to its context and application, and in some instances dramatically distant from its theological origins. This separation from its Christian origins is however not a privilege that can be afforded the Church if it is to formulate its own practical working model for society. Although society interprets reconciliation through a subjective lens, it is the responsibility of the Church to break free from these paradigms and rediscover its theological understanding. If the Church fails in this regard, it will have nothing to offer in the ongoing discussion on reconciliation. It’s for this reason that I have opted to first establish a clear and concise theological framework for reconciliation before taking this discussion further.

My approach will be to draw from scholarly work relating to Biblical references, as a thorough exegesis of reconciliation in the New Testament falls outside of the scope of this paper. At the outset, I am therefore tasked with identifying relevant New Testament texts that will form the basis for this discussion. New Testament scholar, Corneliu Constantineanu, is helpful in this regard, noting the prevalence of the subject within the Pauline texts of the New Testament studies. The following key references are therefore identified: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Romans 5:8-11, Ephesians 2:13-16, and

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Colossians 1:15-23. After discussing these texts in detail, I will draw some provisional conclusions before looking into Pentecostal contributions in the next chapter.

1.1 A Pauline Understanding of Reconciliation

New Testament Scholar, I. Howard Marshall, notes that except for one unique occurrence in Matthew 5:24 (διαλλάσσω), New Testament references to reconciliation are found only in the Pauline epistles, of which the two central texts, namely 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and Romans 5:10-11, are considered by scholars as authentic Pauline texts. All these words are compounds of the Greek ἀλλάσσω, which in its various forms carries the basic meaning: “to alter,” “to give in exchange,” “to take in exchange,” or “to change.” From this we then get the word uniquely used by Paul, namely, καταλλάσσω (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 5:11; 11:15; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20-22), meaning “to change, or exchange; to effect change.”

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9 Several other less significant references could be brought into this discussion, but their overall contribution would be inconsequential in light of the richness of the already mentioned texts.
11 Delbert Royce Burkett, An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 292-93. That the authorship of Ephesians and Colossians remains disputed is acknowledged. This paper will however make reference to Paul as the author of these letters for the sake of continuity and flow.
14 Ibid., 258-59. ἀποκαταλλάσσω is a uniquely Pauline formulation that is only found in Ephesians 2:16 and Colossians 1:20-22.
James Earl Massey builds on this by noting the sacrificial nature of the word, indicating the surrender of “an attitude, a grievance, a position, a deed, a distance, [or] a result” with the express purpose of bringing about “change for the better”.

The Graeco-Roman world is considered to have been an influence on Paul’s theology and thinking. Constantineanu sees this same influence on Paul’s understanding of reconciliation. Firstly, he sees evidence of this in what he calls the “politico-military context” of secular Hellenistic literature, in particular as it relates to peace treaties. Drawing off Marshall, he then sees the second as coming from the Jewish Martyr tradition in 2 Maccabees (2 Maccabees 1:5, 5:20, 7:33, 8:29). Of note is how the writer of 2 Maccabees paints a picture of sinful humanity seeking the reconciliation of God, understood as God changing from a position of anger and judgment to a more favorable reconciled position where He surrenders his anger towards the people concerned. In this instance God is seen as the object of reconciliation. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this is a picture that Paul builds upon, but fundamentally disagrees with. For Paul, it is not God who changes, but rather

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16 Ibid., 205.
18 Constantineanu, 26.
19 Ibid., 26-27.
20 Marshall, 121.
that humanity's standing before God is changed through Christ.\textsuperscript{21} Constantineanu concludes then that the origins of Paul's understanding of reconciliation "reflects both the secular Hellenistic and Jewish Hellenistic usages."\textsuperscript{22} With that in mind I now turn to Paul's application of this word.

1.1.1 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Seeyon Kim, New Testament Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, sees Paul's discussion on reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 as of his earliest and clearest teachings on the subject.\textsuperscript{23} Using the language of reconciliation, Theologian Murray Harris articulates Paul's teaching on reconciliation in this passage as follows:

"Reconciliation restores humans to a proper relationship with God (the vertical aspect) and with fellow human beings (the horizontal aspect)."\textsuperscript{24} From this, it is apparent that this passage represents a unique soteriological concept that speaks directly into the relational brokenness between humanity and God, and extends to the interpersonal brokenness within humanity. For Harris, these broken relationships are the result of

\textsuperscript{21} Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation'," \textit{Novum testamentum} 39, no. 4 (1997): 362. Put differently, God is not reconciled to humanity, rather humanity is reconciled to God through the work of Christ.
\textsuperscript{22} Constantineanu, 27.
\textsuperscript{23} Kim, 366.
Paul’s conflict with the Corinthian Church adds relevancy to his use of this reconciliatory metaphor. He desires to be personally reconciled with this Church, and as J. Paul Sampley, Professor of New Testament Emeritus at Boston University notes, he also wants to establish his apostolic authority within this Church. Paul’s external presentation and unusual apostolic calling has come into conflict with the culturally accepted norms of the Corinthians who focused more on outward expressions of authority. As such, Paul has fallen short of their expectations and now seeks to re-establish his authority, especially seeing as false apostles are seeking to usurp his influence within the Church. It is for this reason that Paul draws attention away from “outward appearance[s]” and onto the heart (2 Corinthians 5:12). Sampley further notes how Paul’s use of the ambassador metaphor (5:20) is a yet another way in which Paul strengthen his authority and the authority of those who choose to accept Christ’s reconciliatory work. Several key concepts within this text will now be discussed.

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25 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 16.
29 Ibid.
1.1.1.1 A New Creation

Harris recognizes reconciliation as one of the primary metaphors Paul uses in his ministry, especially when speaking of the way God deals with humanity’s sinfulness.\textsuperscript{30} Failure to deal with this sinfulness leaves humanity alienated from God. In his essay entitled “Forgiveness in Early Christian Tradition”, Theologian Cilliers Breytenbach sees a noteworthy distinction in Paul’s understanding of the transformation that affects the believer: In the Gospels, he sees an emphasis on forgiveness, while in the Pauline corpus he sees a combination of forgiveness and redemption (Colossians 1:14; Ephesians 1:7). As in 2 Corinthians 5:17, he notes that forgiveness and redemption are to be found “in Christ.” Through baptism and the Holy Spirit, Breytenbach then highlights an eschatological element inherent to redemption.\textsuperscript{31} He sees Paul’s understanding of Christ’s dealings with sin as “more than forgiving … the believer is baptized into Christ’s death [which] has the consequence that the sinner died with Christ and that the power of sin is terminated.”\textsuperscript{32} Breytenbach therefore sees the work of Christ as bringing a distinct end to the believer’s old life, and not just a transformation or moral correction.

This is consistent with Paul’s imagery in verse 17 where he calls anyone who is “in Christ ... a new creation.” This is not simply the forgiveness of sin, but rather the transformation of the sinner from the old to something completely new. Paul echoes this

\textsuperscript{30} Harris, 435-36.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 292.
same theme in Romans 6:4 where he likens baptism to the death, burial and resurrection of the believer. Robert Mounce, American New Testament scholar, affirms this position on baptism, noting how the believer’s new life is as different from his old, as life is from death. For Paul, the work of Christ in the life of the believer should then rather be viewed as something new, as opposed to seeing it as a renewal of the old.

This metaphor of a new creation does not end here. New Testament scholar David Garland draws attention to the manner in which Jewish apocalyptic texts utilize this imagery in reference to an eschatological anticipation of the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. Paul’s reference should therefore not be limited to a personal level of transformation but rather include the anticipation of an eschatological transformation when everything will be made new (2 Corinthians 5:17, cf. Romans 8:21; Colossians 1:20). By implication, the reconciled die to their old identity and are resurrected into an eschatological new identity found in Christ (cf. Galatians 3:27-28). This new identity is then located in the larger eschatological context of God’s new creation.

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34 Garland, 286-87.
35 Harris, 431.
1.1.1.2 Reconciliatory Inversion

Ethicist Susan Dwyer sees reconciliation as a relational concept that assumes the pre-existence of a healthy relationship between two parties. Reconciliation is then only needed when this relationship breaks down due to one or more transgressions within that relationship.36 In the Pauline understanding of reconciliation, sin breaks humanity’s relationship with God, leaving humanity as the transgressor and God as the victim.37 In search of the origins of Paul’s teaching on reconciliation, Marshall looks to references in 2 Maccabees for comparisons. In this case of the Jewish Martyr tradition, humanity is the transgressor and therefore carries the responsibility to initiate and seek reconciliation with God. In this instance, reconciliation is then understood as “God changing” from a wrathful position towards humanity to that of appeasement and even friendship.38 Paul however inverts this understanding of reconciliation. Even though God has been transgressed against, it is God who takes the initiative to restore the relationship. In so doing, “humanity changes” from being the object of God’s wrath to being restored into a favorable relational state before God.39 Kim traces Paul’s understanding of this inversion as originating to the time of his Damascus road conversion experience. At this time, Paul was in no way seeking reconciliation with God, rather he can be seen as actively

39 De Gruchy, 599.
opposing God. While in this state of enmity towards God (cf. Romans 5:10), God is seen as taking the initiative to bring about a decided change in Paul, and in so doing reconciling Paul to Himself.\textsuperscript{40}

The implications here are significant, not only theologically, but also practically when seeking to formulate an ecclesial model. At the forefront of this discussion is the question of justice, and whether it be considered just that the victim again takes responsibility in the reconciliatory process.

1.1.1.3 Amnesty or Justice

The generosity of God can then be seen as restoring the transgressor, but what of justice, surely the holiness of God requires that the sinfulness of humanity be dealt with appropriately? Failure to exact justice in the reconciliatory process would cast a long shadow over the character of God. It could also be argued that the absence of justice negates guilt and would therefore nullifies the necessity of God’s act of reconciliation, or as Marshall suggests, the absence of guilt would undermine the need for salvation all together.\textsuperscript{41}

Paul’s benevolent understanding of God is however not far removed from his Graeco-Roman context. Seen from this perspective, New Testament scholar

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\textsuperscript{40} Kim, 380-81. See also Miroslav Volf, “The Social Meaning of Reconciliation,” \textit{Interpretation} 54, no. 2 (2000): 164.
\textsuperscript{41} Marshall, \textit{Aspects of the Atonement : Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity}, 41.
\end{flushright}
Frederick Danker believes it could be said that Paul is presenting God as the “supreme benefactor”, an image he believes is built throughout 2 Corinthians. In line with this, Danker sees God as offering a kind of “blanket amnesty” to all, similar to that which was occasionally offered by a benevolent head of state.\(^\text{42}\) Although this image goes a long way to highlight God’s generosity, it does little to protect God’s justice and holiness. God’s benevolence and justice are not necessarily mutually exclusive, God’s forgiving nature does not require that He abandon the demands of justice.

The opening words of verse 18 are helpful in understanding God’s justice. In saying, “All this is from God”, Paul shows God’s complete involvement in the reconciliatory process. Not only does He initiate reconciliation, but He also fulfills the demands of justice through the sacrifice of Christ. In speaking of this, the late Professor C.K. Barrett notes how in the sacrifice of Christ God was able to demonstrate his love for the sinner while simultaneous exercising His wrath against sin.\(^\text{43}\) God’s justice can therefore be seen as coexisting alongside his benevolence without either undermining the other.

The question of justice is however not yet fully addressed. German Philosopher Immanuel Kant raises concern at this junction, questioning how justice is served when

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the innocent die for the guilty; when the sinless Son of God dies to account for the guilt of humanity (2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15).\(^\text{44}\) Anglican scholar Justyn Terry addresses these concerns noting the absence of an innocent party in Christ’s act of redemption.\(^\text{45}\) Although Christ was sinless, he willingly took the sin of humanity upon himself and died in our stead. Theologically speaking, Christ was then not blameless or sinless, but rather was carrying the sinfulness of humanity upon himself.\(^\text{46}\) In this regard, scholars such as Ben Witherington, Sampley and Garland, accepted that Christ’s act of reconciliation is past, complete and inclusive in that Christ “died for all” (2 Corinthians 5:14; cf. Romans 5:6, 8).\(^\text{47}\) This then brings the next section on the volition of humanity into focus.

### 1.1.1.4 Personal Volition

Calling the work of Christ “past, complete and inclusive” raises one final question that needs answering: If Christ died for all, then how does humanity appropriate the reconciling work of God through Christ, or can humanity rest assured that nothing more needs to be done? If the reconciling work of God extends to all, then


\(^{45}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 17.

how is one to understand the work and attitude of the wicked who continue to reject Christ? Here again, Paul’s teachings in 2 Corinthians 5 help provide clarity.

Paul’s words in verse 17 should be seen as conditional. The “new creation” that he speaks of is not available to all, but rather is limited to those that are found “in Christ”. Scholars such as Colin Kruse, Barrett, and Harris agree that this is a conditional formulation that stresses the importance of the “in Christ” of humanity. Garland concurs with the conditionality of this statement but draws attention to the disputed meaning of the phrase, “in Christ”. After presenting several possible interpretations of this phrase he still however concludes that regardless of how one interprets this phase, it must be understood that change within the individual is only possible through identification with Christ, whatever that may look like. Whether this is then something given to some, but not available to all, or available to all but only chosen by some, is something that now needs to be considered.

Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians in verse 20 to “be reconciled to God” is helpful in answering this question. It is doubtful that Paul would call the Corinthians to be reconciled if they had no choice in the matter. Harris discusses this in more detail, questioning why Paul would call upon the Church in Corinth to be reconciled. Should not reconciliation with God be something reserved for those outside of Christ? Harris

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49 Garland, 286.
50 Harris, 447.
discusses this question in depth and concludes that this should be considered an evangelistic appeal, as reconciliation is portrayed here as an ongoing ministry. Its message may already have been accepted by some, but this same message forms the basis of an ongoing appeal.\footnote{Ibid., 446-49.}

An additional inference to the conflict between Paul and the Corinthian Church, should however not be excluded from this discussion. Kruse contends that veiled in this call to reconciliation is a masked appeal for the Church to accept Paul’s apostleship.\footnote{Kruse, 8, 126.} Bringing these two thoughts together, Garland suggests that the ongoing conflict Paul is experiencing within the Church, is indicative of the need for Christ’s work of reconciliation to be more fully manifest within this community.\footnote{Garland, 298-99.} Reconciliation can therefore be seen as a completed work on the part of Christ, but still requiring choice on the part of humanity if Christ’s work is to be enacted in the life of the believer.\footnote{Harris, 449.} Humanity will then also need to exercise his or her choice if the interpersonal outworking of this reconciliation is to be fully realize within the community of faith.

### 1.1.2 Romans 5:8-11

Although Paul only references reconciliation in verses 10-11, South African Theologian John de Gruchy locates these verses in a larger narrative dealing with
Christ’s work of expiation as understood through Paul’s imagery of justification.\(^5\) At the onset of Romans 5, De Gruchy sees Paul shifting his imagery of redemption from idioms around justification that he considers “forensic-cultic”, to language that is more “personal and inclusive”.\(^6\) On closer inspection of the text, it would seem that his comments are appropriate and help to correctly frame this passage within a relational context. In 5:1 this is already evident as Paul speaks of justification as bringing “peace with God.” Mounce discusses the understanding of this expression, noting that Paul’s teaching here has less to do with an inner tranquility, and more do with a relational right standing experienced by those who turn to God in faith (cf. Ephesians 2:14-15; Colossians 1:21-22).\(^7\) Barrett is in agreement and links this new relational concept back to justification noting that “peace with God” may have an emotional aspect to it, but this never supersedes the objective change in the relational state implied by this expression.\(^8\) This relational theme is continued in verse 2 where Paul speaks of the justified as obtaining access to God’s grace through Christ. The late Australian New Testament scholar Leon Morris brings clarity here by noting that Paul is painting the picture of a person being introduced into the “presence-chamber of a monarch”. With this in mind,

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\(^5\) De Gruchy, 621.
\(^6\) Ibid., 629-30.
\(^7\) Mounce, 27, 133.
the picture once again bridges Paul’s legal and relational imagery as it alludes to Christ bringing the justified into the presence of God.\footnote{Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Logos ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans ; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 219.}

Paul’s discussion in this section will culminate in verses 9-10 where the metaphors of justification and reconciliation continue in creating a relational dynamic in Paul’s concept of salvation. However, before I get to this point in the discussion, I will first look at Paul’s understanding of the motivation and the means by which Christ brings about this reconciling work.

### 1.1.2.1 Motivated by Love

In verse 6, the reader is presented with the statement: “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” In speaking of Paul’s reference here to the weak, Witherington sees the first of four expressions which builds on the readers understanding of the person for whom Christ died. At first mention the person is weak, then Paul calls this person ungodly (v. 6), then a sinner (v. 8), and finally it culminates in the unthinkable: Christ died for His enemies (v. 10).\footnote{Ben Witherington and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, Logos ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm .B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 137.} This is an extreme statement that no doubt confronted the social norms of his Greco-Roman readers. In commenting on this passage, Pentecostal Theologian Craig Keener recognizes that dying for a good person (v. 7) was possible within Greek culture, but unlikely. Dying for one’s enemies
was however unheard of in both Greek and Jewish cultures. So, what is the motivation behind Christ’s sacrificial death for his enemies? Scholars such as Barrett, Morris, and Mounce, find little room to deviate from Paul’s statement in verse 8 that places love at the center of this selfless act of sacrifice.” It is therefore God’s love for humanity that moves Christ to the cross, illustrating again how God initiates the process of reconciliation. The temptation is to look for goodness in humanity as a way of understanding God’s actions, but as Morris contends, it all comes from God. In bringing love to the center of this discussion, Paul is putting to rest any doubt his readers may still have: In the present, they stand reconciled with God through Jesus, and if reconciled through such a great love, then they can confidently anticipate the completion of their salvation at the culmination of their age.

1.1.2.2 Reconciled through Sacrifice

If reconciliation is motivated by God’s love, then by what means did God realize this salvific work? As noted above, God is a just God whose wrath towards injustice is to be satisfied. In saying this, the late Scottish Theologian William Barclay warns against misrepresenting the character of God. Of concern is that the Father inadvertently gets

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63 Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 224.
64 Witherington and Hyatt, 140.
polarized from the Son. Morris joins Barclay on this cautionary note, highlighting the temptation to viewing the Father as wrathful, while the Son is seen as lovingly trying to appeasing this wrath of the Father. This would be a gross misrepresentation and fragmentation of the trinity. Both Morris and Barclay see Paul’s teaching as emphasizing the love of the Father being revealed through the sacrifice of the Son (v. 8). Christ’s death is therefore an expression of the Father’s love for humanity.

A full understanding of Christ’s sacrifice now requires that attention be given to the relationship between atonement and reconciliation. Eerdmans Bible Dictionary speaks of the original English word for atonement meaning “the quality of being at one (with)”, a definition that was later applied to humanity’s reunification with God through Christ (it’s not difficult to see how closely this relates to reconciliation). The relationship between atonement and sacrifice is best seen in the Greek and Hebrew references to atonement which speak of the manner in which guilt was removed and relationship restored. Essentially, atonement is what needs to be done if relationship is to be restored. In the Old Testament, this was traditionally done through “substitutionary sacrifice of animals”, but not exclusively so. The basic concept of atonement carries over into the New Testament, but here the primary reference is to the

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66 Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 224.
67 Myers, 105.
68 Ibid.
death of Christ as atoning for the sins of humanity.\(^{69}\) This then leads back to the text in Romans 5 and its multiple references to the death of Christ (v. 6, 8-10).

Amongst all these references, the verse that most accurately conveys the idea of atonement would be verse 9, which speaks of justification as taking place through the blood of Christ. Witherington draws attention here to Paul’s infrequent references to Christ’s blood (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25-27; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:20),\(^{70}\) a noteworthy point as this would then take the reader back to Paul’s previous reference in Romans 3:25. In this passage Leander Keck, Professor of Biblical Theology at Yale University, sees vivid imagery relating back to the Day of Atonement, where blood was sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant for the sins of Israel. Taking a closer look at the text, Keck sees 3:25 as referring more to the outcome of the ritual, than to any particular object involved in the ritual.\(^{71}\) This verse can therefore be understood as God presenting Christ, and Christ serving as the sacrifice of atonement. It is at this point that Morris takes issues with modern translations, accusing them of watering down this verse by using the word, “atonement.” Morris sees this as a misrepresentation of the concept and prefers the word, “propitiation”, as found in the King James Version. This he believes to be a more accurate interpretation of Christ’s work as presented in this

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\(^{69}\) Ibid.

\(^{70}\) Witherington and Hyatt, 138.

verse. Mounce weighs in on this discussion, noting that at the heart of this argument is the inclination by some to interpret this verse as expiatory rather than propitiatory.

Propitiation as a concept speaks of the appeasement of divine wrath, a concept Mounce sees scholars rejecting as it carries too close an association with paganism. Although he acknowledges their concerns, he maintains that to speak of Christ’s work in this verse as expiatory is less than accurate. Mounce sees expiation as the “covering of sin”, which is a subtle but significant difference from propitiation which speaks of “an appeasing of God’s wrath.” Witherington is in agreement with Mounce on this point, favoring “propitiation” as an understanding that is more consistent with Greek literature.

Building on this, Witherington takes a Trinitarian perspective on the discussion showing that this verse can then be understood as “God appeasing God’s own wrath.” Tying this back into Paul’s words in Romans 5:9, it is clear then that Paul’s reference to blood undoubtedly speaks of sacrifice. The fact that Paul is referencing Christ’s propitiatory work is then confirmed in that he speaks of sinners being saved “from the wrath of God.” Sacrifice is therefore an essential element on the road to reconciliation.

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72 Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 180.
73 Mounce, 27, 116-17.
74 Ibid.
75 Witherington and Hyatt, 108.
76 Ibid.
77 Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans, 73.
I will now turn to Paul’s concluding thoughts in verses 10-11. In line with Paul’s reference to justification, it is understood that the sinner stands guilty and exposed to the wrath of God. Barclay illustrates the impossibility of overcoming this position by showing how in the Old Testament this was only possible through strict adherence to the law, and the impossibility of that meant humanity was left without options.78 Yet, at this point of utter desperation the love of God reaches out and appeases the wrath of God through the death of Christ. The sinner is then justified and relationship with God restored. From this one can conclude that reconciliation demands justice, and justice sacrifice, but none of this is possible without love. De Gruchy therefore sees God’s approach to justice in this passage as motivated by love and a desire for restoration, rather than through the legal concepts of justification where the response would be more punitive.79 The challenge that will however need to be overcome is the nature of this love. Is it reasonable, or even possible, that mere mortals extend such a love that seeks to restore, despite injury and transgression. This is a hurdle that will have to overcome if an ecclesial model of reconciliation is to be formulated.

78 Barclay, 67.
79 De Gruchy, 621.
1.1.3 Ephesians 2:13-16

The discussion up to this point has laid a strong theological foundation. As will be seen, many of the concepts discussed are reaffirmed in this passage, with at least one noteworthy exception. Although this passage remains theologically strong, it’s true value is found in Paul’s move from theology to praxis.

In discussing this text, author Max Anders notes both a vertical and horizontal dimension to reconciliation. The primary concern in this passage is however with divisions and animosity that exist between Jews and Gentiles in the Ephesian Church. In verses 11-12 the writer recounts how the Gentiles were being referred to as “the uncircumcision” and as “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”; expressions that scholar Bruce Fong sees as clearly slanderous and meant to create a sense of exclusivity of one group over another. Evangelical Theologian Walter A. Elwell correctly notes how the aim of exclusivity is to create a sense of superiority of one group over another. Exclusivity therefore necessitates boundaries that help define and enforce this sense of elitism. Consequently, there is a need for some to be viewed as inferior and excluded, a discriminatory practice that runs counter to Paul’s theological understanding of the

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Church. Therefore, in order to unify the Church, Paul draws on Christ’s reconciliatory work to show how these two groups are in fact one through the peace that comes from Christ.  

In verse 13 the Gentiles who “once where far off” are now “brought near by the blood of Christ.” As in Romans, Witherington again sees the reference to blood as conjuring images of sacrifice and atonement. In verse 14, Paul’s builds on this image by speaking of Christ as our peace, an expression reminiscent of Romans 5:1, and a word he uses another three times in the following three verses. These references to peace (v.14, 15, 17), along with his reference to the blood of Christ (v. 12), lead to an understanding that Paul’s intended meaning here is propitiatory rather than expiatory (cf. 2:3). This sacrifice has however done more than just appease the wrath of God, Paul sees it as foundational in abolishing the “dividing walls” between Jews and Gentiles and creating instead “one new humanity”. Scholars are not in agreement as to exactly what Paul was referring to by employing the imagery of “dividing walls.” Witherington believes Paul is speaking of the Mosaic Law that was intended to create a separation between Jews and Gentiles. He and others such as Australian New Testament scholar Peter O’Brien,  

86 O’Brien, 193.  
87 Witherington, The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles, 259-60.
make a convincing case in this regard, but caution is needed before moving on. Paul speaks about “breaking down” these walls, an inference that could easily be misunderstood as the breakdown of the Mosaic Law. Stephen Fowl, Chair of the Department of Theology at Loyola College in Maryland, raises this same concern noting that any such inference would be a contradiction to the Gospels, to Romans, and to Paul’s letter to the Galatians.\(^89\) In addition, this would then also undermine the cultural and national identity of the Jews. By implication one would then have to accept that unity demands the sacrifice of diversity, something I’m not convinced Paul is propagating in this text (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26).\(^90\) Fowl therefore contends that this wall be considered purely as an image of separation between the Jews and the Gentiles.\(^91\)

Christ’s sacrifice then breaks down this wall, but how? For the Gentiles, there was no possible access to God, hence Paul’s reference in verse 12 to the Gentiles “having no hope and without God in the world.”\(^92\) As for the Jews, author Francis Foulkes suggests that as participants in the “covenant of promise” (v. 12), they may have

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\(^{88}\) O’Brien, 196.


\(^{90}\) Cf. Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*, Kindle ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 910-14. Branson and Martinez discuss three possible models relating to diversity and inclusivity. I discuss this more in chapter 5 within the context of Paul affirming diversity within the Corinthian community.

\(^{91}\) Fowl, 91.

\(^{92}\) Anders, 8, 113-14.
considered themselves nearer to God,\textsuperscript{93} but as O'Brien notes, despite being recipients of this covenant, they still failed to fully appropriate the promises of this covenant, leaving them as alienated as the Gentiles.\textsuperscript{94} Paul is then saying that both the Jews and the Gentiles now have one thing in common that unites them and creates one new humanity from the two: The reconciling work of Christ.\textsuperscript{95}

One or two comments are appropriate at this point: From this passage, it can be seen that Paul has now applied his reconciliatory theology into an interpersonal context. As Fowl notes, the reconciling work of Christ in the life of the believer forms the basis for his or her interaction with others.\textsuperscript{96} In this case, Paul is dealing with separation along racial lines, but as scriptures such as Galatian 3:26-29 and Colossians 3:11 illustrate, this principle can find broader application. Within this passage, the commonality that builds a new humanity is the reconciliatory work of Christ. This new humanity (or “one body”, v. 16) is then the Church of the reconciled, and as Fong states, the Church therefore carries the responsibility to accurately reflect this new humanity within itself.\textsuperscript{97} There is no longer Jew nor Gentile, but only the reconciled body of Christ, who should then seek

\textsuperscript{94} O’Brien, 203.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 193-94.
\textsuperscript{96} Fowl, 96.
\textsuperscript{97} Fong, 579.
to faithfully steward the “ministry of reconciliation” that has been entrusted to it (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

1.1.4 Colossians 1:15-23

Colossians 1:20-22 is the last of Paul’s references to reconciliation that will be discussed in this chapter. This reference is contextualized by a passage which Pauline scholar N.T. Wright considers one of the most significant Christological passages in the New Testament (Colossians 1:15-20).\(^8\) The occasion for Paul’s writing is an underdeveloped understanding of Christ which is being bolstered by localized spiritual influences from Colossae.\(^9\) Scholars such as Richard R. Melick, James D. G. Dunn, and Douglas Moo, generally agree that this text takes the form of a hymn, even though the actual structure and origin of this hymn remains disputed.\(^10\) There is however agreement that this passage mirrors that of Jewish wisdom literature that personifies God, but in this instance is applied to the praise of Christ and is intended to elevate the


\(^9\) Witherington, The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles, 128.

readers perception of Him.\textsuperscript{101} My approach to this passage will be to look at how the writer presents Christ as the “image of the invisible God” (v. 15), and as “head of the body, the church” (v. 18). Further Christological themes can be identified within this passage, but a development of these themes will add little to the paper’s focus on reconciliation as this discussion moves forwards.

In verse 15 Paul speaks of Christ as the “image of the invisible God.” Melick sees a correlation between this verse and that of Hebrews 1:3 where the writer speaks of Christ as, “the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being.” For Melick, the imagery is then more than a reflection, or a representation of God, but drawing off the J.B. Philips translation, he sees Paul’s reference here as the “visible expression” of God. It is therefore through Jesus that God can be known and is present with humanity (cf. John 1:18).\textsuperscript{102} This passage also takes the reader back to Genesis 1:26-27 where the creation of humanity is seen to be in the image of God. Here too a parallel can be seen. In Genesis humanity is created in the image of God, while in Colossians 1:15 the writer presents Christ as the image bearer of the invisible God. Wright sees both as image bearers; however, he infers that humanity’s image has been marred and so Christ is presented as God’s intended image in humanity.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{101} Dunn, 86.
\textsuperscript{102} Melick, 32, 214-15.
\textsuperscript{103} Wright, 12, 74-75.
Moving ahead to verse 18, the reader is met with familiar Pauline imagery presenting the Church as the body and Christ as its head (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26).\footnote{Melick, 32, 220-21.} Paul often speaks of the Church in terms of the localized gathering of believers (Rom. 16:1, 4, 5, 16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17), but in this instance he speaks of it in terms of what Dunn refers to as the “cosmic body of which Christ is the head”.\footnote{Dunn, 95-96.} In these few words at the beginning of verse 18, Paul is asserting Christ’s headship over this cosmic Church. Moo sees this as pointing to Christ as the governing authority over the Church.\footnote{Moo, 128.} Dunn develops this further showing how the Church as the body of Christ mirrors the head.\footnote{Dunn, 96.} As the text moves to its climax in verse 20, it becomes apparent that the Church is to emulate the reconciling work of Christ.

Little more can be said regarding Paul’s presentation of reconciliation in verses 20-22 that has not already been said. Here again Paul’s reference to “[peacemaking] through the blood of his cross” (v. 20) can be seen, highlighting again Christ’s role in appeasing God’s wrath and satisfying His need for justice. About this passage, Wright says “God was offering a sacrifice to himself”, but feels uncomfortable committing to this statement and so tells his readers to rather “leave it as a hint”, his point is however
made. Witherington is once again helpful in pointing out how Paul’s reference to “blood” can here also be seen as highlighting Christ’s propitiatory work. Reconciliation is therefore made possible because God’s requirements for justice have been fulfilled through the sacrifice of Christ. One or two concluding comments regarding the scope of Christ’s reconciling work is all that now remains.

Verse 20 speaks of Christ as “reconciling to himself all things.” As discussed above, this is a traditionally Pauline concept where all things are reconciled to God, rather than God being reconciled to all things. The difference here is that God’s reconciling work is not merely limited to God’s relationship with humanity, or to interpersonal relations within humanity, but now it is seen as extending to “all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (v. 20). The implication is that subsequent to the fall, all of the created universe no longer relates to God as intended and is therefore in need of His reconciling work. Furthermore, this passage remains consistent with Paul’s eschatology. To use Dunn’s words, Christ’s work completes the “purpose, means and manner of (final) reconciliation … not that the reconciliation is already complete”. Reconciliation is therefore completed, but remains an ongoing process that will culminate at the end of this age.

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108 Wright, 12, 87.
110 Moo, 134-35.
111 Dunn, 103.
The undefiled image of God in Christ is therefore established as God’s intended image for all of humanity, and if this image is to be an accurate representation, then humanity must emulate Christ’s work of reconciliation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18). The Church as the body of Christ must therefore continue with the ongoing work as exemplified in Christ, its head. Dunn sums this passage up well when he says, “Christ’s death and resurrection quite literally [is] the key to resolving the disharmonies of nature and the inhumanities of humankind.”112 Humanity is therefore more than mere recipients of Christ’s work of reconciliation, rather humanity should see itself as partnering with Christ in bringing resolution to these disharmonies and inhumanities that plague society.

**Conclusion**

The wealth of theology surrounding Paul’s references to reconciliation is undeniable. Much has been said and a lot more could be added here. The objectives of this chapter have however been fulfilled. Key theological principles have been identified which will form a basis for further discussion in this paper. The focus of this chapter has primarily been on a textual understanding of the relevant Pauline passages. In the next chapter I intend adding another layer to this discussion by exploring the possible

112 Ibid., 104.
contributions Pentecostalism makes available to the local Church as it considers involvement in reconciliatory initiatives.
2. Pentecostal Contributions

In the previous chapter, I noted how the reconciled have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Particularly in the Corinthian text, Paul calls the reconciled into this same ministry of reconciliation. It has already been established in the previous chapter, that these texts carry significant soteriological emphasis, however, if the Church is to truly relish the richness of Paul’s teachings, then the social implications of these texts will need to be taken into consideration. Scholars such as Colin Kruse and J. Paul Sampley see the Corinthian passage (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) as written within the context of Paul’s interpersonal conflict with the Corinthians.¹ Similarly, Max Anders and Anglican academic John Muddiman see Paul’s encouragement in the Ephesian text (Ephesians 2:13-16) as aimed at bringing about reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles,² while in Colossian passage (Colossians 1:15-23), Christ is seen as “[reconciling] to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (1:20), a passage N.T. Wright sees as inclusive of all human and worldly activity, and therefore necessarily including human interaction.³ So, although these passages are embedded with a strong soteriological emphasis, they also include a social context that needs to be considered. However, even if these verses were to be interpreted as purely

¹ Kruse, 8, 126; Sampley.
² Anders, 8, 114; Muddiman, 117.
³ Wright, 12, 84.
salvific, a failure to embrace the social elements of reconciliation would surely hinder efforts to promote divine reconciliation (cf. 1 John 4:20).\(^4\) David Garland’s summary of the text in 2 Corinthians is fitting:

> “The ministry of reconciliation therefore involves more than simply explaining to others what God has done in Christ. It requires that one become an active reconciler oneself. Like Christ, a minister of reconciliation plunges into the midst of human tumult to bring harmony out of chaos, reconciliation out of estrangement, and love in the place of hate.”\(^5\)

In this chapter I will continue to explore the social dimensions of reconciliation, but will now approach this discussion from a Pentecostal perspective. This narrowing of focus comes primarily from my own Pentecostal leanings, but more than that, my premise here is that Pentecostalism has much to contribute to this discussion. My primary focus will be on the two distinct aspects of Pentecostal theology, namely, the experiential nature of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism’s strong emphasis on eschatology.\(^6\) In my closing thoughts I bring these discussions together with the intention of reframing Pentecostal missiology within a social context.

### 2.1 An Eschatological Community

After a closer look, it becomes evident that Paul’s understanding of reconciliation carries a distinct eschatological thread. In fairness, for the most part this same thread can

\(^4\) Garland, 289.
\(^5\) Ibid., 291-92.
\(^6\) Dempster, 157.
be found throughout Paul’s writings, especially in reference to the salvific work of Christ, so it would be incorrect to label this as exclusive to his writings on reconciliation. The eschatological dimension of Paul’s understanding of salvation is summed up in the words of independent New Testament scholar John Bertone who sees it as, “something that is already possessed (Rom 8:24, cf. 8:15), but at the same time is not completely finalized (1 Corinthians 1:18).”⁷ As will be seen, this aligns closely with certain developments in Pentecostal eschatology. These developments will therefore be the departure point of this section, after which I intend to complement the discussion with the Spirit’s role in inaugurating the future Kingdom of God in the present. This part of the paper will then conclude by bringing together these Pentecostal developments with Paul’s teachings as discussed in the previous chapter.

2.1.1 The Development of Pentecostal Eschatology

Donald E Miller, Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California, notes in an interview with Pew Research how the urgent and imminent expectation of the Parousia led to a strong emphasis on missions and evangelism within the Pentecostal movement. The result has been rapid growth in this relatively young

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movement which dates its origins to the early years of the previous century. This eschatological expectation is closely linked to the outpouring of the Spirit and the manifestation of the gifts. Early Pentecostalism identified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts as the “former rain”, and the outpouring of the Spirit in the early 1900’s, that birthed the Pentecostal movement, as the “latter rain.” These “latter rains” carried particular eschatological significance to the Pentecostal movement who viewed this as the sign that Christ’s return was imminent. It was this intense conviction in the soon return of Christ that gave Pentecostals a global vision for mission. So strong was this conviction, that many who felt called left almost instantaneously for far off mission fields with little or no plans of returning.

It has now been more than a century since these missionaries left expecting the imminent return of Christ and still the Pentecostal Church waits. Daniel Castelo,

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10 Dempster, 156.

11 Castelo, 233.
Associate Professor of Theology at Seattle Pacific University, rightly questions whether Pentecostals have lost this urgent expectation of the return of Christ, and concludes that in many instances this has in fact happened. Instead of emphasizing the second coming of Christ, Pentecostals are now more inclined to define themselves in terms of the empowering of the Spirit with the accompaniment of the characteristic glossolalia.\(^\text{12}\)

That does not infer that Pentecostals have given up entirely on their futurist eschatology. The expectation of the imminent return of Christ persists, but not with the same urgency.\(^\text{13}\) There is however a move to “recast” this expectation,\(^\text{14}\) and so with this recasting many Pentecostals are finding fresh eschatological expression in their interpretations of the Kingdom of God and the “already-not yet” of that Kingdom.\(^\text{15}\)

\subsection*{2.1.2 Kingdom Theology}

The development of Kingdom theology (the reign of God’s Kingdom on earth) revolves around the incarnate Jesus inaugurating the Kingdom of God through the

\begin{istencym}
\footnotesize
\bibitem{Althouse2012}

\bibitem{Macchia2003}

\bibitem{Castelo2012}
Castelo, 235.

\bibitem{Scotland2011}
The fragmented nature of the Pentecostal movement makes it difficult to view any particular development and stance in eschatology as an official position. It is best to view this statement in general terms and then to remain open to the fact that different Pentecostal churches will place themselves at different points on the “present-future” continuum. See Nigel Scotland, "From the 'Not yet' to the 'Now and the Not Yet': Charismatic Kingdom Theology 1960-2010," \textit{Journal of Pentecostal Theology} 20, no. 2 (2011).
\end{antitysm}
manifestation of the Spirit. Luke’s writings are helpful in illustrating this. In the first three chapters of Luke’s gospel, an intentional effort is made on the part of the writer to present Jesus as “the Man of the Spirit” (Luke 1:15, 35; 2:25-27). This culminates in 3:21-23 when Jesus is baptized and the “Holy Spirit [descends] upon him in bodily form like a dove” (3:22). Added to this are the strong messianic references to Jesus as the descendent of David (Luke 1:27, 32, 69, 2:4, 11). Delbert Burkett, Professor of Religious Studies at Louisiana State University, notes that in Judaism the Spirit was seen as resting on the eschatological Messiah (Isaiah 11:2; 61:1), a ruler who would come from the line of David and usher in a more favorable reign for the Jews. So when Luke points to the Spirit as coming upon Jesus (3:22), a descendent of David, he is making an eschatological statement that the anticipated Messiah has come to usher in the Kingdom of God. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus plays a central role in bringing God’s future Kingdom into the present.

Picking up on Luke’s narrative in 4:1, the writer speaks of Jesus as leaving the Jordan “full of the Holy Spirit” and being “led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” He emerges from his temptation in 4:14 and returns to Galilee “filled with the power of the

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16 Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Logos ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 71. Also understood as the theology of God’s Kingdom, Kingdom theology finds its origins in the Old Testament. It is however in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, along with the subsequent outpouring of the Spirit that the Christian understanding is derived. Of note is the way the preaching and ministry of Jesus is seen as inaugurating God’s Kingdom on earth.
18 Burkett, 61, 69. That the messiah is the “anointed one” is not lost on Burkett. Anointing was traditionally done with oil, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
Spirit”, where the writer brings the imagery of the Spirit and the Davidic Messiah together in Jesus’ reading and personal application of Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 4:18-21). Jesus then moves into his public ministry where the first of his miracles is the exorcizing of a “spirit of an unclean demon” (4:33-36). This is followed by more exorcisms and healings (4:39-41), which in effect illustrates the fulfilment of the Messianic claim Jesus makes in 4:21. It is in these exorcisms and healings that New Testament scholar Blaine Charette sees the evidence of the coming Kingdom of God, a message Jesus goes on to proclaim in 4:43.19 James Dunn agrees with this, but for him the emphasis is on the Spirit rather than on Christ himself, as Dunn says, “where the Spirit is there is the Kingdom”, rather than, “Where Jesus is there is the Kingdom.” Dunn references Matthew 12:28 to illustrate his point: “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.”20 It is therefore through the manifestation of the Spirit that the futurist Kingdom of God is seen as breaking into the present.21

The application for Pentecostalism is summed up by Charette who notes how the Kingdom of God is experienced through the blessing and works that result from the

21 Ibid., 138.
outpouring of the Spirit in Acts. In discussing the development of Pentecostal eschatology over the last 50 years, Evangelical historian Nigel Scotland affirms this increased emphasis on the “already” of the Kingdom that comes through the Spirit. He further notes how this emphasis has also led to a new understanding of ministry within Pentecostalism that extends to the social concerns of society. In saying this, he does however note that Pentecostals have not relinquished their hold on a futurist expectation, instead they have chosen to rather complement this expectation with a more realized eschatology through the ongoing work of the Spirit. The extent of this shift remains relative. Certain Pentecostals still strive to retain the urgency of the second coming of Christ, while others now focus more on the realization of the Kingdom in the here and now.

2.1.3 A Synthesis of Paul’s Teachings

Paul’s writings on reconciliation harmonize with these eschatological developments. As noted above, the “already–not yet” is central to Paul’s understanding of salvation, and is therefore also applicable to Paul’s imagery of God reconciling

22 Charette, 55.
23 Scotland. In this article, Scotland discusses the development of Pentecostal and Charismatic eschatology from 1960-2010. His premise is that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements be viewed together in this discussion.
24 Ministers such as Bill Johnson, who pastors the Bethel Church in Redding, California, are good examples of clergy who continue to wrestle with this concept and who lean towards a more realized eschatology. See ibid., 288-89.
humanity to himself. With the understanding that these teachings on reconciliation also carry social application, I will now explore the implications this has within the context of Paul’s temporal tension. A brief overview of the key Pauline texts will suffice in this regard.

In discussing the death and resurrection of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, Garland sees, “a radical eschatological break between the old age and the new.” This ties up with references in chapter 1 to Cilliers Breytenbach’s comments on Paul’s soteriology that declares the repentant sinner dead to the old life and resurrected into a new life in Christ. Paul’s imagery of a new creation can therefore be seen as eschatological in as much as it transitions the “in Christ” out of the old age and into the new (5:17). That being said, despite seeing Christ’s work as completed and in the past (5:17-18), Paul still presents reconciliation as an ongoing process (5:19). Jewish apocalyptic writings confirm this temporal tension in Paul’s teachings, however within Judaism this “new creation” imagery is considered all-encompassing, referring to the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. Garland speaks here of the

25 Wolter and Brawley, 186. Michael Wolter speaks of the “already now” and the “not yet” of Paul’s theology as the “temporal tension”.
26 Garland, 286.
28 Kruse, 8, 125.
29 Garland, 286.
“eschatological act of recreating humans and nature in Christ.” This is consistent with Kruse who not only agrees that the “in Christ” are now seen as the newly created, but goes further to locate these newly created within the broader context of a new creation comparable to that of Garland (cf. Romans 8:21; Colossians 1:20). So Paul’s thoughts in this passage should be seen as all inclusive, extending beyond the purely soteriological to include aspect of societal and even ecological transformation (cf. Colossians 1:20).

The Ephesian and Colossian texts concur with this eschatological understanding of reconciliation. The sociological application of Christ’s work is particularly pronounced in the Ephesian text. In the previous chapter, it has been established that it is Christ’s past work of reconciliation that unifies both Jews and Gentiles (2:16) into one body. It is in this new unified body that Peter O’Brien sees eschatological references. The unification of Jews and Gentiles has already been realized in the present through the past completed work of Christ, but still anticipates a final completion in the future when Christ will “gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10). The all-inclusive nature of Christ’s work in Colossians 1:20 carries a strong correlation to the text in Corinthians. In speaking of the Colossian text, Wright employs the familiar “new creation” language to emphasize

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30 Ibid., 287.
31 Kruse, 8, 124.
32 Melick, 32, 225.
33 O’Brien, 201.
Paul’s eschatological inferences.\textsuperscript{34} He is however not alone in doing this. For example, Douglas Moo shares Wright’s compulsion in using “new creation” language to share the eschatological tension present in this text.\textsuperscript{35} This tension is portrayed in verses 22-23 were the Colossians are encouraged to “continue securely established and steadfast in the faith”, even though the work of Christ must be considered past and completed.\textsuperscript{36} Through their ongoing efforts the Colossians are assured that they will be presented “holy and blameless and irreproachable” before the Lord at a future time.\textsuperscript{37}

These texts can therefore be seen as aligned to the ongoing “already-not yet” perspectives within Pentecostalism which see the Kingdom of God as already come through Christ and the Spirit, but still ongoing and moving towards a final consummation in the future.\textsuperscript{38} The past work of Christ has already established the futurist new creation, but for now the Church lives within the temporal tension seeking daily to enact this future reality in the present. Although that enactment can be seen as

\textsuperscript{34} Wright, 12, 83-85.
\textsuperscript{35} Moo, 137-38.
\textsuperscript{36} Witherington, The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles, 139.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{38} Althouse, 12-14. In introducing the book, “Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End”, Peter Althouse notes a broad acceptance of the “already-not yet” eschatology. He does however qualify this acceptance by presenting his readers with a grid illustrating the different options available within this eschatological understanding. These differing approaches are then embraced by the various authors that contribute to the book. See also ; Andrew K. Gabriel, "The Holy Spirit and Eschatology – with Implications for Ministry and the Doctrine of Spirit Baptism,” Journal of Pentecostal Theology 25, no. 2 (2016): 205-10; Steven J. Land, Pentecostal Spirituality : A Passion for the Kingdom, Kindle ed. (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 43-44; Scotland. Scotland’s article is helpful in chronicling the development of the “already-not yet” eschatology currently being embraced by many Pentecostal and Charismatic Church movements.
salvific, Pentecostal scholars such as Murray Dempster contends that with an understanding of this temporal tension, social concerns should now be given more prominence.  

39 A word from Wright lays out the practical implications of Paul’s teachings: “Christians must work to help create conditions in which human beings, and the whole created world, can live as God always intended.”  

40 In saying this, Wright has correctly positioning the Church squarely in the missional space of the “already–not yet”, a position consistent with developments in Pentecostal eschatology. Before unpacking this further, it is however first necessary that more attention be given to the Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit.

2.2 The Community of the Spirit

The interconnectedness of eschatology and pneumatology is unmistakable. So, it comes as no surprise that this discussion on Pentecostal eschatology has already touched on several key concepts regarding the role of the Spirit within Pentecostalism. My discussion here should therefore be seen more as complimentary, aimed at the ongoing objective of compiling a Pentecostal theological basis for the Church’s role in social justice and reconciliation. I will therefore limit this section to three particular aspects of

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39 Dempster, 165-66. This eschatological shift that motivates Dempster’s position will be discussed in more detail below.

40 Wright, 12, 84.
Pentecostal Pneumatology, namely, baptism of the Spirit, baptism into the body of Christ, and role of the Spirit in realizing the image of God in the believer.

2.2.1 Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Pentecostal belief in a second reception of the Holy Spirit has been greatly scrutinized, most notably by Dunn who uncompromisingly sees the reception of the Spirit in Luke-Acts primarily as a “conversion-initiation” and only secondary as empowering.41 Needless to say, Pentecostals have been vigorous in their response, clearly illustrating how the reception of the Spirit, specifically in in Luke-Acts, should be seen as a second infilling offered only to those who have already received salvation.42 Whether or not the argument goes to Dunn or his Pentecostal detractors can be argued further, but that will do nothing more than derail the direction of this conversation.43 What is noteworthy is Dunn’s role in coercing a more articulate understanding from the

43 See Thomas; Stronstad; Max Turner, "James Dunn’s Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Appreciation and Response," Journal of Pentecostal Theology 19, no. 1 (2010). Reflecting on Dunn’s work forty years later, there still appears to be little consensus as to whether the Spirit in Luke-Acts should be viewed as a “conversion-initiation”, or whether it was in fact given to “believers” and “disciples.”

At the end of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Promise of the Father (24:49). These same words are then echoed in the opening chapter of Acts where Jesus instructs his disciples to wait for this same promise (1:4), and then identifies this promise as the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1:5, cf. 2:33). In Acts 1:8 Jesus is then seen as pointing to the Spirit as the source of divine empowerment for ministry. This is consistent with Luke’s words in 24:47-49 where Jesus speaks of repentance and forgiveness being proclaimed within the context of the promise of the Father. Acts 2 is then the occasion of the initial fulfilment of this promise, in that it shows how those that gathered were “filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability” (2:4). As a result, the various nationalities represented on the day were able to hear the disciples “speaking about

44 Stronstad, 6.
God’s deeds of power” in their own languages (2:11). The Spirit is therefore seen as prophetically inspiring the disciples for Christian witness, a direct fulfilment of the Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8.

This outpouring of the Spirit in 2:4, along with further accounts in 10:44-46 and 19:6 are foundational to the traditional Pentecostal emphasis on “tongues” (glossolalia) as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit. Pentecostals do not however limit their understanding of the Spirit’s impartation to glossolalia, but extend this empowerment to include the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, Romans 12:6-8, and Ephesians 4:7-12. Although Pentecostals go to great lengths to define and categorize these gifts, and even build their understanding of ministry around this understanding, their exact definition and operation remains highly subjective. The biblical text does present further understanding on some of the gifts such as prophecy and the Ephesians 4 ministries, but for the most part the Apostle Paul does little more than lists off these gifts leaving their interpretation with his readers. My intention here is however not to argue the validity of Pentecostal definitions of the gifts, but rather to highlight the multifaceted approach Pentecostals take to empowerment for ministry.

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49 Duffield and Van Cleave, 320-21.
50 Ibid., 330, 44, 47.
In as much as Pentecostals believe in the Spirit’s empowerment for evangelism, could it be possible that the Spirit also empowers believers for practical social ministry? I believe this to be a real possibility, especially when considering the motivation behind the gifts. In Corinthians, the gifts are given “for the common good” (12:7) and their operation is clearly placed within the context of love (chapter 13).\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, in Romans one can see Paul’s list of gifts followed by a teaching on love (Romans 12:9-21).\textsuperscript{52} Romans 12:8 also presents the gift of compassion, similar to the Corinthians reference to assistance (12:28),\textsuperscript{53} and although the exact nature and operation of these gifts cannot be known, in the broadest sense these gifts still infer a social dimension.\textsuperscript{54} Seeing a social application in Pentecostal empowerment should therefore be seen as highly probable.

\textbf{2.2.2 Baptism into the Body of Christ}

Up until this point I’ve focused primarily on the Spirit’s empowering of the believer for works of service. In saying this, it is inferred that a previous experience

\textsuperscript{51} Cf. Larry McQueen, "Early Pentecostal Eschatology in the Light of The Apostolic Faith, 1906–1908", in Althouse, 141-42. Early Pentecostalism eventually moved to consider love as the true confirmation of Spirit baptism.

\textsuperscript{52} A correlation exists between Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12-13. In Romans 12, Paul speaks of the unity of the body (verses 4-5), then lists the gifts (verses 6-8), and then speaks of love (9-21), while in 1 Corinthians 12-13, Paul starts with the gifts (12:1-11, 28-30), then inserts his discussion on the unity of the body (12-17), and follows that up with the famous love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13. This connection is visible in the way commentators continually cross reference these two texts. See Duffield and Van Cleave; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans; Mounce, 27; John R. W. Stott, The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World, Logos ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001); Witherington and Hyatt.

\textsuperscript{53} Duffield and Van Cleave, 347.

exists that changed the status of the individual to that of believer prior to his or her reception of the empowering Spirit. Here too, Pentecostals see the Holy Spirit as instrumental in imparting this new life to the believer. Pentecostals are therefore not opposed to the Spirit’s redemptive work, but do insist that the two experiences be separated, seeing Luke-Acts primarily as illustrating the Spirit as the agent of empowerment.\textsuperscript{55} The salvific work of the Spirit is then more prominent within the Pauline corpus (Romans 8:9; Galatians 3:1-5), than it is in Luke-Acts.\textsuperscript{56} 1 Corinthians 12:13 points to the Spirit as the agent that baptizes the believer into the body of Christ: “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” Paul uses this same imagery of baptism in Galatians 3:27-28 to illustrate the inclusion of those who find themselves “clothed … with Christ.”\textsuperscript{57} Here too he confronts the natural differences that exist, whether it be “Jew or Greek … slave or free … male and female”, and then calls them “one in Christ Jesus.”\textsuperscript{58} The salvific reception of the Spirit is therefore to be understood as incorporating all believers into the singular body of Christ.\textsuperscript{59} In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:27-28, Paul explicitly mentions ethnic, social, and gender diversity, and

\textsuperscript{55} Duffield and Van Cleave, 277.
\textsuperscript{56} Whether the Spirit’s work in Luke-Acts is primarily salvific or empowering is the issue that lies at the heart of James Dunn’s argument. Although Pentecostals such as Robert Menzies oppose Dunn’s interpretation of Luke-Acts, they don’t fundamentally disagree with the Spirit as the agent of salvation.
\textsuperscript{57} Wolter and Brawley, 133-34. Wolter and Brawley see a strong correlation in Paul’s use of terms such as "In Christ", "clothed … with Christ", and "to baptize".
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Duffield and Van Cleave, 277-78.
then unifies them into the one body of Christ through the Spirit. This is noteworthy when considering how often the body of Christ tends to divide itself along ethnic and social lines. Paul’s discussion on the unity and diversity of the body should therefore not be interpreted too narrowly, its application should extend beyond the gifts to include the various social diversities that existed within the Corinthian Church.\(^{60}\)

These verses are comparative to Paul’s discussion on the unity between Jews and Gentiles in Ephesians 2:13-16. Verses 15-16 are particularly noteworthy in that Paul speaks of “[creating] in himself one new humanity” and “[reconciling] both groups to God in one body through the cross”, a statement reminiscent of the “one body” he speaks of in Corinthians and Galatians. In both passages Paul eliminates all possibility of a divided body – Christ’s body is clearly singular, regardless of ethnicity, social standing, or gender. It could be argued that unity in Corinthians is through the Spirit while in Ephesians this unity comes through the blood of Christ and the cross (verses 13, 16), and although this is true, a more complete picture emerges when Paul references the “one Spirit” that grants both Jews and Gentiles access to the Father in verse 18.\(^{61}\)

The Spirit can therefore be seen as playing a central role in unifying diverse communities. In leaning on the inclusivity of the salvific work of the Spirit, the Church is

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\(^{60}\) Ciampa, 596-97.

\(^{61}\) Foulkes, 10, 92.
then able to overcome divisions, be they racial, cultural, or gender based, and in so
doing, gain credibility as a contributor in reconciliatory initiatives.

2.2.3 The Spirit Realizing the Image of God in the Believer

Of all that can still be said of the Spirit, I have opted to end this section with a
brief look at the transforming power of the Spirit in the life of the believer (2 Corinthians
3:18). This carries particular relevance to the Colossians 1:15-20 text, as it speaks of the
Spirit’s work in realizing the intended image of God.\(^{62}\) In speaking of the transforming
power of the Spirit, Paul is confirming the fact that this image remains imperfect in the
life of the believer and requires a continual process of transformation;\(^{63}\) a transformation
that “comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” Application for reconciliation is then seen in the
relationship between Christ and his body, and the Spirit’s role in realizing a fuller
expression of the image of God in the body, which is the Church.

In Colossians 1:18, Paul speaks of Christ as the “head of the body, the Church”,
and although this language may appear awkward the relational dynamic inferred is
intentionally aimed at portraying the organic unity that exists between Christ and his
Church.\(^{64}\) Richard Melick sees the importance of this relationship in the way it gives the

\(^{62}\) Duffield and Van Cleave, 279-80.
\(^{63}\) Kruse, 8, 101-02.
body of Christ a visible representation through the Church.\textsuperscript{65} As the head of the body, Christ represents the authority that governs the activity and intent of the Church.\textsuperscript{66} So when Paul speaks of the believer being transformed into the image of Christ through the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:18, it can be assumed that this transformation includes a move towards the ministry of reconciliation found in Christ (Colossians 1:20).

### 2.3 Towards a Pentecostal Social Missiology

The urgency associated with Pentecostal eschatology is probably the foremost contributor to the rapid growth of the Pentecostal movement. With the outpouring of the Spirit came the expectation of the soon return of Christ, and with that, the urgency of preparing souls for the coming Messiah.\textsuperscript{67} A further significant influence on Pentecostal missiology can be seen in the development of early Pentecostal thinking that moved away from the hope found in their “latter rain” eschatology, choosing rather to adopt dispensational premillennialism as a generally accepted position.\textsuperscript{68} In doing this, Pentecostals managed to retain the sense of urgency associated with the imminent return of Christ,\textsuperscript{69} but now believed the world would continue to degenerate with little

\textsuperscript{65} Melick, 32.  
\textsuperscript{66} Bratcher, 25.  
\textsuperscript{67} Dempster, 156-57.  
\textsuperscript{68} Althouse, 15.  
\textsuperscript{69} Bertone, 61-62, 82-90. Adopting dispensationalism was not without its problems, especially for Pentecostals who struggled to reconcile the dispensational understanding of the cessation of the gifts with
hope other than in the return of Christ. This pessimistic view of the eschaton further fueled the mission of the Church with Pentecostals now viewing any societal deteriorations as confirmation that the end was near.\textsuperscript{70} Their mission therefore remained urgent and firmly focused on evangelism, giving little attention to societal transformation or ecological preservation.\textsuperscript{71} This is not to say Pentecostals totally rejected social involvement, on the contrary, Dempster notes that despite the eschatological leanings within Pentecostalism, it was common to find the Church actively developing programs aimed at bettering the social conditions of their communities.\textsuperscript{72} This was likely motivated by the Church’s encounter with the dire conditions of the people they ministered to, rather than a firm theological conviction.\textsuperscript{73} There is however a renewed emphasis on social responsibility within Pentecostalism as more theologians such as Dempster seek to challenge traditionally held beliefs in this regard, and more Pentecostal ministries focusing on social concerns emerge. In 2011, their own experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. Bertone unpacks this in considerable detail in this essay.


\textsuperscript{73} “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” 53.
Christianity Today published an article by Robert Crosby highlighting this focus on social ministries within the Pentecostal movement.\textsuperscript{74} In the article, Crosby shows how organizations such as Convoy of Hope (www.convoyofhope.org), with its international ministry focused on serving the poor with food, water, and emergency relief services, serves as an example in this regard.\textsuperscript{75} Another example he uses is that of the Los Angeles based Dream Center Movement (dreamcenter.org) with ministries such as food trucks, shelter for human trafficking victims, and mobile clinics.\textsuperscript{76} Another more localized example includes that of Pastor Pedro Landeverde, who started a bakery in the gang ridden suburb of Comunidad Iberia, in San Salvador to help meet the material and economic needs to the area.\textsuperscript{77}

These are just a few examples of the way Pentecostals are now engaging social concerns as part of their ministry focus.\textsuperscript{78} Whether there’s a correlation between the eschatological developments within Pentecostalism and their approach to social responsibility remains to be determined, but it does seem likely.

\textsuperscript{75} Since its founding in 1994, Convoy of Hope has ministered to more than 80 million people in about 114 countries. See www.convoyofhope.org for more details.
\textsuperscript{76} The Dream Center Movement in Los Angeles, run as a joint initiative between the Assemblies of God Church and the Foursquare Church, currently ministers to more than 40 000 individuals and families each month, and has been instrumental in establishing more than 100 independently run Dream Centers around the world. See dreamcenter.org for more details.
\textsuperscript{78} Cf. Crosby, 53. In 2009, at the national conference of the Assemblies of God in Orlando, the denomination added compassion as a fourth element in its "reason for being." The organization therefore now exists to "glorify God, save the lost, make disciples, and serve human need".
The discussion up until this point has laid a solid foundation for the further development of a Pentecostal social ethic and its subsequent application to reconciliation. Individual studies of eschatology and pneumatology have already contributed considerably in this regard. All that now remains is to complement these thoughts by bringing these disciplines together.

2.3.1 The Kingdom and Pentecostal Social Concern

It has now been established that Pentecostals see the future Kingdom of God as breaking into the present through the power of the Spirit. Characteristically, this is evidenced by visible manifestations of the Spirit. I would however like to question whether this interpretation does not unnecessarily limit further elements of the future Kingdom, such the social and moral characteristics of that coming Kingdom. Surely scriptures such as Galatians 5:22-23, which speak of the fruit of the Spirit, illustrate the moral nature of the future Kingdom.\(^79\) Romans 14:17 is more direct in this regard calling the Kingdom of God “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”\(^80\) The social and reconciliatory characteristics of the Kingdom have also been presented in the above

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mentioned discussion: The future Kingdom brings people together, regardless of their ethnicity, social status, or gender (Ephesians 2:16; Galatians 3:27-28). Dempster would agree that Pentecostals should include moral and social characteristics in their understanding of the Kingdom. For him however these characteristics are seen in the mission and ministry of Jesus that has now been passed on to the Church through the Spirit, more specifically he sees the “ethical teachings” and “moral responses” of Jesus as the “visible witness in the present age of what the future will look like.” The question then is whether Pentecostals will be prepared to make room in their eschatology for this social aspect of the “now” Kingdom of God.

### 2.3.2 Empowered for Social Witness

A further element worth considering is the central belief that the Spirit empowers believers for works of ministry. Here again, the traditional understanding is that this empowerment is directed towards the Church’s mandate to witness (Acts 1:8). This empowerment can also be extended to the edification of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:3-4), but could it be that the Spirit empowers the Church for social witness? I have already established that the gifts of the Spirit have been given within the context of love and for the common good. It therefore seems appropriate to consider the

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82 Ibid., 167-70. Dempster references the work of Joachim Jeremias to identify love, justice, and the respect of persons as three visible expressions of God’s moral principles.
empowerment of the Spirit and impartation of gifts as extending to social witness. The impartation of the Spirit in Acts 2 is seen as Christ imparting his own mission and ministry to the early Church through the Spirit. The early Church’s reception of the Spirit should therefore also be seen as an empowerment to emulate the inaugural work of the Kingdom as seen in the life and ministry of Christ. Subsequently, there is now an understanding that this Kingdom includes a social dimension, meaning the Church has now been empowered through the Spirit to further the social cause of the coming Kingdom.

**Conclusion**

Pentecostalism clearly has much to add to the ongoing discussion around social justice and the Church. In this chapter, I’ve limited my approach to Pentecostal eschatology and pneumatology, and even within these disciplines, I have further been compelled to limit the extent of my coverage on these topics. The relationship between Pentecostalism and social justice therefore needs more attention, especially in light of the shifting emphasis on Pentecostal eschatology.

Scholars such as Dempster are already paving the way in this regard, and have been doing so for some time now. One of his major contributions has been a refocusing on the inaugurated Kingdom of God in the present, and the “historical continuity and

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83 Ibid., 161-62.
theological homogeneity” that this creates between the present manifestation and future consummation of the Kingdom of God. In doing this he has reframed the end time apocalyptic expectation from a “total annihilation” to the “total transformation” of the world. With this understanding, the Church must now move forward with the Kingdom’s transformative agenda as this is just a foretaste of the Kingdom that is to come. No longer should the Church’s contribution be seen as inevitably doomed at the end of the age, but rather it should be seen as completed and fulfilled in the return of Christ.

Ibid., 166.
3. Religion and Reconciliation in the South African Context

As I move this discussion towards the Church’s role in reconciliation, it may seem ironic that the Church’s involvement needs to be defended. Theologically it has been established that reconciliation is central to the Christian faith, and with that could come the assumption that the Church should be warmly welcomed into reconciliatory forums. However, the reality is that religion and the Church have not always been welcomed into these forums. Modern secular thinking has been particularly skeptical of including religious role players for at least two noteworthy reasons: Firstly, in many instances religion has been considered a catalyst to conflict, such as in Northern Ireland with its historic conflict between Catholics and Protestants,\(^1\) or in the Rwandan genocide where a mostly Christian nation saw the massacre of more than 800 000 people within a period of 100 days,\(^2\) or in South Africa, where the Dutch Reform Church theologized an ideology of racial segregation.\(^3\) Modernity and the consequential secularization of society is the second reason the Church and religion have been excluded. Within the origins of modern social sciences, it was understood that secularization would lead to

\(^{1}\) Shore, Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 1.


both the marginalization and decline of religion, a theory that has since largely been scrutinized. The exclusion of religious role players was therefore seen as the preempting of a future reality. The continued prominence of religion and religious conflict has subsequently cast doubt on the legitimacy of this theory. One needs look no further than the ongoing conflict in the Middle East where Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is waging an ideological war in the name of Islam, or in a country such as Egypt where the conflict between the Muslim Extremists and Coptic Christians persists. These are not isolated incidences, and they are not limited to the Middle East. The West is seeing religious extremism spilling over into countries that were originally thought to be moving towards secularization. An example of this would be the Paris attacks on the night of 13 November 2015 where Muslim extremists killed at least 130 people.

That religious extremism has historically contributed to violence and continues to do so, is not in dispute. What has however come into question is the role of religion in

7 "Paris Attacks: What Happened on the Night," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34818994. The role of globalization and immigration should also be considered in incidences such as this, where extremists are able to move freely into the West and perpetrate acts of terrorism. In saying this I am not necessarily inferring that all extremists are foreigners.
peacemaking,\(^8\) or more aligned with the topic of this paper, the role of the Church in facilitating reconciliation. Academic Megan Shore considers the religious dynamic of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TARC)\(^9\) a significant contributor in the ongoing argument in favor of including religion in peacemaking and reconciliatory processes.\(^10\)

3.1 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 1994, after more than four decades of extreme racial oppression, South Africa finally established its first inclusive government under the presidency of Nelson Mandela. One of the first acts of the newly formed Government of National Unity, was to establish the TARC, which it did under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, passed just one month after the first free and inclusive elections.\(^11\) Government then invited NGO’s, Churches, and political parties to present nominations for the board of commissioners who would oversee the proceedings of the TARC. From

\(^8\) Appleby, 7. Appleby’s book has been instrumental in this discussion as it identifies religious role players in peacemaking, and questions whether legitimacy should be given to these voices.

\(^9\) The TARC was divided into three committees. The first being the Human Rights Violation Committee (HRVC) which was tasked with establishing a record of human rights violations. The second was the Amnesty Commission (AC) mandated to offer amnesty to perpetrators in exchange for a complete and truthful account of their crimes. The last of these committees was the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (RRC) which was to give recommendations for reparation. References to the TARC in this paper are primarily concerned with the HRVC, unless otherwise stated. Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. 34.

\(^10\) Ibid., 177-78.

this list the president and his cabinet selected the final 25 commissioners, among whom was Bishop Desmond Tutu who was appointed as the commission’s chair.\textsuperscript{12} Although not intended as a religious forum, it was unavoidable that a commission headed up by a Christian bishop, and largely comprised of professing Christians, would bring an overt Christian dynamic to the hearings.\textsuperscript{13} Tutu with his purple clerical garbs, Christian traditions, and continual reference to Christian practices, seemed in no way hesitant to bring his Christian bias into the formalities of the hearings.\textsuperscript{14} In his own words he notes that, “when I was challenged on it by journalists, I told them I was a religious leader and had been chosen as who I was. I could not pretend I was someone else.”\textsuperscript{15} Tutu can therefore be seen as acknowledging and endorsing this bias within the proceedings.

For the most part, the Christian emphasis of the TARC was well received by South Africans, where at the time about 77\% of the population identified with the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{16} This aspect of the commission did however draw criticism, particularly from those outside the faith who did not identify with the overt emphasis on Christian concepts, such as repentance and forgiveness.\textsuperscript{17} Historians Jacobus du Pisani and Kwang-Su Kim echo this in their observation that the Christian focus on elements such

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Miracle or Model?* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. 64-65.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Boesak and DeYoung, 114.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Tutu, 82.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Graybill, “South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Ethical and Theological Perspectives,” 46.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
as forgiveness and reconciliation seemed to take precedence over truth.\textsuperscript{18} International Ethicist Lyn Graybill sees amnesty as the “secular counterpart of forgiveness”,\textsuperscript{19} and as such it is possible that the offer of amnesty, which was strongly opposed by some,\textsuperscript{20} was seen as derived from the Christian faith. This assumption would however be incorrect, as the commission’s mandate to offer amnesty in exchange for truth,\textsuperscript{21} was essentially given through the Act and came as a political compromise negotiated by the outgoing Apartheid government.\textsuperscript{22} Whether the TARC should have taken on a distinctive Christian focus remains debatable. Truth, justice, amnesty, and reconciliation are important issues that need to be addressed, but it would be wrong to see these issues purely from a secular perspective. As will be seen, these concepts find their origin within the Christian faith, and so it seems appropriate to seek their full expression in that same place. In speaking of the religious nature of the TARC, H. Russel Botman says the following: “Only naiveté would make one think that you can unearth a Judeo-Christian Metaphor, applying it as if it has mere secular roots.”\textsuperscript{23} So, if reconciliation is

\textsuperscript{19} Graybill, \textit{Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Miracle or Model?}, 57.
\textsuperscript{20} “South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Ethical and Theological Perspectives,” 57-59.
\textsuperscript{21} Human Rights Watch, the former pastor for the ANC, Michael Lapsley, Theologian Willa Boesak, and several of the victims of Apartheid were among those opposing provisions for amnesty that protected perpetrators from prosecution.
\textsuperscript{22} Borer, 27.
\textsuperscript{23} Graybill, “South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Ethical and Theological Perspectives,” 61.
\textsuperscript{24} Botman, 253.
the desired outcome, then it seems appropriate to understand this desired outcome from a Christian perspective.

### 3.1.1 How Christian Was the TARC?

In his book entitled, “Reconciliation: Restoring Justice”, John de Gruchy identifies at least four interrelated ways that people speak about reconciliation, namely, theologically, interpersonally, socially, and politically. These are helpful distinctions, especially when looking back at the TARC. This paper has already established a strong theological basis for reconciliation, but in so doing the assumption should be avoid that entities such as the TARC incorporated reconciliation into its operations using these same theological paradigms. Even with Tutu as the chair and a largely Christian presence amongst the commissioners, it should be remembered that the TARC was first and foremost established as a political entity aimed at “[promoting] national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflict and divisions of the past”. Although the idea of reconciliation took center stage in the proceedings of the commission, it was only added as an afterthought when incorporated into the transitionary process of the interim constitution, and therefore the concept was never

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24 De Gruchy, 290-300.
25 Borer, 27.
properly defined.\(^{26}\) The success of the TARC was therefore difficult to determine without a clear understanding of what it’s intended reconciliatory outcome was meant to be.\(^{27}\) Christian elements of reconciliation were however present within these proceedings, but whether they reflected a true theological understanding of the concept, or whether they were compromised by the political process remains to be seen. Then again, the desired political outcome of the commission may well have largely been satisfied through a confluence of at least the political and theological concepts of reconciliation, if not an inclusion of all De Gruchy’s listed approaches to reconciliation.

The TARC does however present a reference point from which to discuss Christian elements of reconciliation and determining their validity for local Church application.

### 3.1.2 Christian Elements of Reconciliation

Discussing the Christian elements of reconciliation can be just as confusing as trying to distil the theological elements from the political. Not all theologians agree as to what reconciliation should look like. An example of this would be how the relationship between justice and forgiveness should be understood. This issue drew much attention during the TARC hearings, with theologians such as Willa Boesak questioning whether


\(^{27}\) Borer, 23.
justice was indeed served if perpetrators were offered amnesty without a legal hearing.\textsuperscript{28} These inconsistencies along with the general shortage of clear theological models in reconciliation, have left me searching for a template from which to launch this discussion. This template I find in Miroslav Volf’s 5 points of reconciliation as presented in his book, “Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World.” Over the past 20 years, Volf has proven to be an authoritative theological voice in reconciliation, and so with that in mind I have opted to structure this discussion around his 5 stages of reconciliation: remember, forgive, apologize, repair and embrace.\textsuperscript{29}

\subsection*{3.1.2.1 Remember}

According to Volf, a more accurate articulation of this principle would be to “remember rightly”.\textsuperscript{30} In saying this, he is warning against the dangers of a distorted recollection of the past. On the one hand, perpetrators may distort the truth, seeking to justify their actions, present a false sense of innocence, or to avoid the legal consequences associated with past wrongdoings. The victim on the other hand may seek to overemphasize the injury with a view of seeking greater retribution or revenge.

\textsuperscript{28} Botman, 248-49.
\textsuperscript{29} Volf, \textit{Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World}, 2785.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
Regardless of whether memory is distorted by either the perpetrator or the victim, an incorrect recollection of the past will always lead to someone being wronged.\textsuperscript{31}

Central to the mandate given to the TARC was the responsibility of establishing an accurate record of the wrongs committed during the Apartheid era,\textsuperscript{32} as such it can be said that the commission was concerned with what Volf calls, “remembering rightly”. Despite the apparent injustice of a “truth-for-amnesty” agreement,\textsuperscript{33} the TARC proved to be effective in uncovering truth that would never have been revealed within a legal setting.\textsuperscript{34} The offer of amnesty was made available for only a limited time, and required that applicants make a full disclosure of the facts. If for some reason it became apparent that the applicant had not made a full disclosure, the commission could refuse amnesty, leaving the applicant open to legal proceedings.\textsuperscript{35} If the transitional government had opted to deal with past atrocities legally and through the courts, it is doubtful that they would have managed to accumulate as much information as they did. The legal route would have had to make use of hard evidence to secure a conviction, most of which had already been destroyed.\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, it is doubtful that perpetrators would have willingly disclosed personal incriminating information in such a setting. This offer of

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 2808.
\textsuperscript{33} Shore, \textit{Religion and Conflict Resolution : Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission}. 159-60.
\textsuperscript{34} Graybill, \textit{Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa : Miracle or Model?}, 68-69.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 60, 69. The five amnesty applicants in the case involving the death of Steve Biko is a case in point, where the commission rejected their appeal for amnesty owing to their failure to fully disclose all the facts.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 67.
amnesty has therefore aptly been referred to as the carrot that motivated truthful disclosure from perpetrators.\textsuperscript{37}

The question then is, why the emphasis on memory and truth? What possible good could come from digging up the past? Should one not rather let “bygones be bygones”, as the former president of South African, Mr. F.W. De Klerk put it?\textsuperscript{38} For the TARC, the issue was not simply a matter of digging up the past, but rather a case of “promoting national reconciliation through unearthing truth.”\textsuperscript{39} A past shrouded in secrecy and deceit would do little to build a unified national future – disclosure was essential. Besides, for many family members of those who died under the Apartheid regime, it was more than truth, it was a question of healing, closure, and the reframing of both an individual and national identity.\textsuperscript{40} In Volf’s book, “The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World”, he notes that healing is not merely a question of memory, but rather of “interpreting [these] memories and inscribing them into a larger pattern of meaning – stitching them into the patchwork quilt of one’s identity.”\textsuperscript{41} Volf’s comment is helpful here in that it contributes to the understanding that memory was an important part in reestablishing individuals as part of a new national identity.

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{37} Ibid., 60.
\bibitem{38} De Gruchy, 480.
\bibitem{39} Ibid., 1779.
\bibitem{40} Tutu, 26-27.
\end{thebibliography}
When the TARC’s proceedings were finally concluded, the commission presented Mr. Nelson Mandela, the acting president at the time, with a five-volume, 2700-page report of the commission’s proceedings. This record is more than a matter of historic archiving, rather it serves as a warning not to repeat what has been done in the past. Museums, such as the Apartheid Museum in the south of Johannesburg (www.apartheidmuseum.org), and the Hector Pieterson Museum in Soweto, are two such institutions that call on all South Africans to “remembering rightly” the past and ensure its peaceful unified future.

3.1.2.2 Forget

Forgiveness is an issue of justice, and so in seeking to understand the role of forgiveness in reconciliation it is necessary that a discussion on the justice of expecting victims to forgive be included.

Forgiveness is a difficult and somewhat unnatural concept to come to terms with. Humanity seems more accustomed to concepts such as revenge and retribution, than with forgiveness. However, where justice has been sought through revenge, such as in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, it has often come at the cost of much bloodshed. Forgiveness is central to the Christian faith, where it is considered a merciful act given

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42 Tutu, 210-12.
44 Botman, 248.
by God to the sinner for the restoration of divine relationship.\textsuperscript{45} However, even among Christians it remains a challenging and often controversial concept, as was evident in the TARC where theologians and clergy wrestled with the justice of a process that granted amnesty to perpetrators.\textsuperscript{46} It is therefore understandable that people outside of the Christian faith could find it difficult to see how justice is served through forgiveness.

Forgiveness in the proceedings of the TARC, whether it was the state offering amnesty, or an interpersonal act of forgiveness between victim and perpetrator, was seen by some as a grievous injustice. The only requirement for amnesty was a full confession, and sometimes without remorse or regret, perpetrators confessed and received amnesty.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, the hearings took on a distinctly interpersonal character bringing victims into contact with those that had injured them.\textsuperscript{48} This approach received a mixed response, with some willingly and openly offering forgiveness, such as the widow who discovered through the TARC that her husband had been kidnapped, killed, his body incinerated, and his ashes thrown into the river. Her words are humbling: “Don’t we want peace for South Africa? How are we going to find peace if we don’t forgive? My husband was fighting for peace for all of South

\textsuperscript{45} De Gruchy, 574.
\textsuperscript{46} Graybill, "South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Ethical and Theological Perspectives,” 59.
\textsuperscript{47} Tutu, 48. The Act that gave the TARC its mandate required only a full disclosure in order to grant amnesty. This was particularly evident in the Amnesty Commission (AC) which ran more along legal lines and without the Christian overtones of the Human Rights Violation Commission (HRVC) that was led by Bishop Tutu.
\textsuperscript{48} Borer, 25. Tristan Borer differentiates between “individual reconciliation” (IR), referred to as ”thick” reconciliation, which deals specifically with the reconciliatory dynamics of individuals, and ”thin” reconciliation which speaks more of a national approach to reconciliation.
Africa. How can you correct a wrong with a wrong?” Then again, others such as the mother who heard of her son’s murder, were less forgiving: “I will never forgive them. I want to see them dead like our children.” At this point it should be reiterated that perpetrators were not required to apologize, and not all did. This further complicates the question of justice which continues as a contentious issue within this paper.

So, what should justice look like in a situation such as this? Should revenge be considered a viable form of justice, or should an alternative such as retributive justice be preferred? Christians theologians critical of the justice process in the TARC differentiated between revenge and retribution. Revenge they saw as contrary to their Christian convictions while retributive justice they considered “an impartial and controlled process in accord with God’s justice.”

In his book, “No Future Without Forgiveness”, Bishop Tutu defends the approach of the TARC as the best possible solution for promoting reconciliation and national unity. He accepts that this was not a perfect solution, but notes that a vengeful or retributive response would have had “South Africa lying in ashes”. It is helpful to turn again to Volf at this point. He notes that retribution and revenge as a response to injustice is inadequate for at least two reasons, namely, the “predicament of partiality”

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49 Ibid., 33.
50 Ibid.
51 Appleby, 196.
52 Tutu, 58.
53 Ibid., 23.
and the “predicament of irreversibility”. On the former point, he notes the inability of an impartial understanding of justice, and so although an act of revenge or retribution may be viewed as just on the part of the victim, it is unlikely that the perpetrator will share in the victims understanding of the justice measured out. The result will inevitably be a cycle of “‘just’ revenge [leading] to ‘just’ counter-revenge.” On the latter point, “the predicament of irreversibility”, he references Hannah Arendt in her book, “The Human Condition”, who highlights the inability to undo past injustices. No action taken after the fact can adequately reverse the damage done, so an alternative solution should be preferred.

The question however is not whether there should be justice, but rather what that justice should look like. Authors Allan Boesak and Curtiss DeYoung co-author the book, “Radical Reconciliation”, in which they note the uncompromising connection between justice and reconciliation. They contend that “unless we remove injustice at its roots, the weeds of alienation and fragmentation will return and choke the hope of reconciliation.” Furthermore, they see much of what is encountered in the political realm as mere compromise aimed at generating peace, often at the expense of justice.

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54 Volf, Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World, 2832.
57 Volf, Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation, 121.
58 Boesak and DeYoung, 95.
59 Ibid.
Although I agree with them, I remain unsure as to what perfect justice will look like this side of the eschaton. Drawing off the text of Isaiah (1:17, 59:15-16) and Luke’s Gospel (4:16-18), and referencing liberation theologian Miguel de la Torre, Boesak notes that “Jesus is Yahweh’s incarnated justice” and therefore also “Yahweh’s incarnated reconciliation.” It would therefore appear that a fully realized representation of justice seems improbable apart from a fully realized revelation of Christ.

The misunderstanding surrounding the TARC’s suspected abandonment of justice must still be addressed. Instead of revenge or retribution, Tutu sought to apply the principles of restorative justice, hence the emphasis on forgiveness. As in the TARC, restorative justice brings the victim and the perpetrator together, giving the victim a voice and providing the perpetrator with an opportunity to confess and seek forgiveness. Bishop Tutu sees in restorative justice an alignment with the African concept of “Ubuntu”, which he considers “the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offense.” The focus of restorative justice is therefore on crafting a future in which both victim and

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60 Ibid., 45.
61 Tutu, 54.
62 Botman, 249-50.
63 The Zulu proverb, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (a person is a person through other people), best represented the concept of Ubuntu. This speaks of the interconnectedness of humanity and the need each person has of others if a true and full expression of oneself is to be realized. See Charles Villa-Vicencio, Walk with Us and Listen : Political Reconciliation in Africa (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 114.
64 Tutu, 54.
perpetrator can find restoration and unity. These principles are not opposed to punishment, but rather choose to approach punishment restoratively rather than punitively. Timothy Gorringe is helpful here. In discussing Karl Barth’s understanding of “punishment as a form of care”, he draws on French Philosopher Simone Weil’s writing in “The Need For Roots”, where she approaches punishment from a communal perspective noting that it “welds the offender back into the community.” Academic Donald Shriver seems to balance out this concept well when he speaks of forgiveness as “[thriving] in the tension between justice-as-punishment and justice-as-restoration.” Punishment is then an option, but not as a form of revenge or retribution, but rather as a means of reparation and redemption.

3.1.2.3 Apologize

It is not immediately apparent how one should understand the concept of “apology”. In everyday life, apologies are given and received in many ways. As Theologian Darlene Weaver puts it, people apologize for “acts of commission and omission, for minor breaches in etiquette as well as serious moral failures, for discrete
acts of wrongdoing, and for systemic corporate evil.” In everyday living one is more likely to encounter apologies for minor infringements, than for gross human rights violations such as were present in the TARC, and as such humanity tends to be conditioned to a more incidental understanding of apology. People may even be more accustomed to apologies that are used to explain or justify transgression, such as apologizing for a late arrival by blaming the traffic. Incidental apologies can therefore dilute the potential impact of an apology, and so when including it in a discussion such as this, it is possible to underplay its importance.

Scott Appleby, Dean of Notre Dame’s Keough School of Global Affairs, believes that reconciliation is not possible without perpetrators sincerely apologizing for the wrongdoing they have inflicted on others. More than being an incidental act of goodwill, apologizing has come to be understood as an important, and even mysterious act where “mere speech” can generate a “profound shift in moral attitude.” Nick Smith, Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Hampshire, goes to great lengths to dissect the intricacies of an apology, listing up to 12 elements he believes need

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72 Appleby, 199.
73 Govier and Verwoerd, 68.
to be present if an apology is to be considered authentic.\textsuperscript{74} A comprehensive unpacking of all twelve of these elements is unnecessary for the purposes of this discussion, as such, only a few of his points are needed in highlighting the dynamics and importance of the matter.

Firstly, an apology provides a “Corroborated Factual Record”.\textsuperscript{75} As has been discussed, truth was an essential element in the TARC. At the heart of the commission was the victims’ need for truth surrounding the losses they had suffered. This is best illustrated in the words of Ms. Babalwa Mhlauli, daughter of one of the Cradock Four who were murdered by the security police in the Eastern Cape, “We do want to forgive but we don’t know whom to forgive.”\textsuperscript{76} An apology sets the record straight. Secondly, an apology must include “Acceptance of Causal Responsibility Rather Than Mere Expression of Sympathy.”\textsuperscript{77} There are several reasons why people fail to apologize, or apologize inadequately, among them is the fear of discipline or legal consequence.\textsuperscript{78} The infamous apology of former President F.W. de Klerk serves as an example of an apology that does not go far enough. It was hoped that the former president would apologize and take responsibility for the National Party’s role in instituting Apartheid, and for the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\item Smith, "The Categorical Apology," 476.
\item Tutu, 147-49.
\item Smith, "The Categorical Apology," 477.
\item Volf, \textit{Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World}, 2858.
\end{thebibliography}
crimes of the Apartheid era government. Mr. De Klerk did apologize and express
remorse for the Apartheid system, but he was not prepared to go as far as to accept
either personal responsibility, or responsibility on behalf of the cabinet and former
government of South Africa for the oppression and violence of the Apartheid years.\textsuperscript{79}

Thirdly, I would like to reference Smith’s point of “Shared Commitment to Violated
Moral Principles”.\textsuperscript{80} In apologizing, the wrongdoer acknowledges a deviation from
accepted social norms and in so doing reaffirms the moral social norms needed in a
functioning society.\textsuperscript{81} This point can be further developed to include the reaffirmation of
personal identity. The dehumanization of individuals through discrimination, violence
and oppression devalues both the victim and the perpetrator. Through apology the
perpetrator acknowledges this moral violation and initiates the journey of restoring
value to the violated individual. The apology further implies acknowledgement on the
part of the wrongdoer that he or she has acted in a way that is morally degrading and
therefore enlightens the wrongdoer of his or her potential for healthy moral and social
change. This was the theological approach Tutu took at the TARC hearings. Despite the
horrendous accounts of abuse between fellow human beings, Tutu continually held firm
to the belief that true human identity was to be found in the Trinitarian image of God.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{79} Govier and Verwoerd, 77-79.
\textsuperscript{80} Smith, “The Categorical Apology,” 480.
\textsuperscript{82} Battle, 174.
As such he remained hopeful in the restoration of this image in both the victims and the perpetrators, believing that all had “the capacity to become saints”. Although Tutu’s approach seems idealistic, and it seems doubtful that the image of God will ever be fully realized within an individual this side of the eschaton, his approach does present a positive response to a rather complicated problem.

A final point on Smith’s elements of apology will move this discussion into the next section on “reparation”. Implicit in truth, responsibility, and the reaffirmation of social values, are practical steps of restitution. Smith calls this, “Reform and Reparations”. Although the principle of irreversibility teaches that what has been done cannot be undone, some form of reparation is required if the process is to be considered just.

### 3.1.2.4 Repair

Sincere apology is therefore to be understood as instrumental in starting the process towards healing in both the victim and the perpetrator and moving both parties towards reconciliation, but this alone is seldom sufficient in righting the wrongs of the past. Apology must translate into tangibles that will prevent a repetition of the injustice

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83 Ibid., 177.
of the past and ensure reparation on the part of those wronged.\textsuperscript{85} For Volf, the ideal state of reparation exists when the perpetrator, through acts of repentance, apology, and reparation, can create a world that looks no different to what it would have looked like had there been no wrongdoing.\textsuperscript{86} It is on this point that Charles Villa-Vicencio, a leading authority in transitional justice and reconciliation, sees weakness in the TARC process.\textsuperscript{87}

In seeking to address the injustices of Apartheid, the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act defined human rights abuses as ‘killing, abduction, torture, or severe ill treatment’.\textsuperscript{88} Through this definition the TARC could shape its mandate into a more realistic and achievable task that would not be drawn out, yet would ensure a complete and thorough process.\textsuperscript{89} The downside to this narrowed focus was the failure of the TARC to adequately address the social and economic consequences of the systematic racialization of South Africa. In this regard, Villa-Vicencio references Govan Mbeki, veteran ANC leader and father of former president Thabo Mbeki, who spoke of the need for “having and belonging”.\textsuperscript{90} The premise of Mbeki’s comment is that without access to basic material and economic resources,\textsuperscript{91} along with a sense of economic,

\textsuperscript{86} Volf, \textit{Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World}, 2880.
\textsuperscript{87} Villa-Vicencio, 164.
\textsuperscript{89} Tutu, 105-06.
\textsuperscript{90} Villa-Vicencio, 95-96.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 162.
political and social inclusivity, there would unlikely be political renewal. On the contrary, Villa-Vicencio believes that without addressing issues of economic transformation, peace within the country remains vulnerable.

Apartheid is therefore seen as a system that historically benefitted the white minority, subsequently leading to what has been called “white privilege” with benefits that have now been transferred to the current white youth of the country. Drawing from Tutu, Boesak contends that the current youth who claim innocence in regards to the transgressions of their ancestors, should take “generational responsibility” for those who have been “historically victimized”. This is echoed in a growing voice coming from the historically disadvantaged in South Africa, where more people are calling for corrective measures that will rectify the injustices of the past that persist into the present. This is particularly evident in the unrest surrounding the “#FeesMustFall” protests over the past two years. In attempts to promote access to tertiary education, students staged protests that shutdown universities across the country, some remaining closed for several weeks, threatening the very existence of these institutions. The question then is

92 Ibid., 96.
93 Ibid., 164.
94 Boesak and DeYoung, 122-23.
95 Ibid., 122.
whether the country’s inability to institute adequate reparatory measures is now catching up with it.

To be fair, the TARC was acutely aware of the need for reparation, including psychological and emotional support for victims, but its mandate was limited to research and the recommendation of remedial action, not implementation.98 This task was left to the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee which was handled by the president’s office. Reparation, which was in the form of a monetary donation, was slow in coming and has subsequently only added to the sense of injustice of the process.99 On the other hand, South Africa has instituted various affirmative action policies which aim at levelling the economic disparity. Opinions vary as to the success of these programs, but this does point towards an intentional effort on the part of the government to bring about reparation.

Although this section offers an overview of reparation as it relates to reconciliation within the South African context, I must concede that the issues at hand are far more complicated, and more time will be needed to fully unpack this, but that must be done in another forum.

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98 Tutu, 233.
99 Shore, Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 169.
3.1.2.5 Embrace

Once the demands of forgiveness, apology and reparation have been met, all that remains is the willing act of embrace between victim and perpetrator.\textsuperscript{100} This concept of embrace has been popularized by Volf who goes to considerable lengths to unpack this in his seminal work, “Exclusion And Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, And Reconciliation”.\textsuperscript{101} His central premise is God’s embrace and inclusion of “hostile humanity” serving as a model for how humanity should relate to each other.\textsuperscript{102} In relation to God, man is the perpetrator who is embraced by a forgiving and reconciling God, and from that embrace humanity should then reach out to others in like manner. Volf sees this embrace as taking place in 4 structural elements: Opening arms, waiting, closing arms, and then opening them again. The initial “opening of arms”, he sees as discontent in one’s “self-enclosed identity”, a sign of one’s willingness to reach out.\textsuperscript{103} In “waiting”, he sees a pause that is content in one’s own initiation of the embrace, but chooses to wait for the desire to awaken in the other.\textsuperscript{104} The third movement, “closing arms”, is the goal. Here both parties come together in mutual giving and receiving, represented by the completion of the embrace.\textsuperscript{105} Finally, the arms are

\textsuperscript{100} Volf, \textit{Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World}, 2880.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation}, 99-165.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 143.
opened again, symbolizing the individual identity of the persons involved without negating the unity of the embrace.\(^{106}\)

This is however something that Volf sees as possibly happening, rather than something that will necessarily happen. On the one hand, victims and perpetrators may choose to pursue reconciliation, while on the other hand it is possible that either of the parties may choose to exit the relationship.\(^{107}\) As a final thought, it is worth noting that Volf himself acknowledges that this process will never be perfect, but will contribute greatly to healthier societal relations.\(^{108}\)

**Conclusion**

This brief overview of religion and reconciliation in the South African context has been helpful in adding credibility to the Christian faith’s role in peacemaking and reconciliation. It is evident that the overt Christian emphasis of the commission brought in faith principles that were instrumental in beginning the healing process in a deeply divided country. Around the world the TARC has received an almost fabled reputation for its role in orchestrating a bloodless transition in extremely dire circumstances. Those involved in the process are however more realistic to the shortcomings of the commission. Failure to adequately implement measures to bridge the economic divide

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\(^{106}\) Ibid., 144-45.

\(^{107}\) *Flourishing : Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*, 2880-903.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 2903.
continue to plague South Africa. Blame cannot however rest solely with the TARC. After more than 20 years, the new democratic government of South African is still struggling to address the basic needs of the poor,\textsuperscript{109} leaving the country vulnerable to unrest.

A further question that remains to be answered relates to the role of the local Church in reconciliation. It has been established that religious role players were active in the TARC, and that Christian principles were applied, but what of the gathered community of believers? The Church’s role in protesting the Apartheid system remains certain, but it’s role after that is a bit more ambiguous. Several days were set aside in the TARC to hear confessions of wrongdoing from Churches. Lyn Graybill comments on these hearings calling them “a mixed bag [with] some apology, some acknowledgement of complicity or, more typically, recognition of acts of omission”, this despite Tutu calling the faith hearings “the best of all the Truth Commission hearings”.\textsuperscript{110} Surely the Church should be doing more?

As I write this, reports are coming in of a peace agreement which has been reached in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an agreement that came into being thanks to the initiative of the Roman Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{111} More and more it is becoming evident that the Church and religion can and must contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Appleby agrees, but notes that the scope of religious contribution should

\textsuperscript{109} Villa-Vicencio, 164.
\textsuperscript{110} Graybill, \textit{Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa : Miracle or Model?}, 135-43.
extend beyond truth commissions. In the next chapter I will bring together the discussion thus far and argue in favor of the local Church’s role in reconciliation.

112 Appleby, 202.
4. The Reconciling Church

The previous chapter leaves one with a distinct tension between the TARC’s political agenda aimed at national unity, and the Christian principles implemented to try and achieve that agenda. Compromises were essential if the intended aim of the TARC was to be achieved, and in instances such as the commission’s approach to apology and reparation, it can be seen how these principles were diluted to achieve those outcomes. A full expression of these Christian principles therefore seems unlikely within a political context, and it is for this reason that I now turn to the local Church. In moving the discussion in this direction, I remain aware of the danger of polarizing secular applications of reconciliation from spiritual ones. The spiritual contributions made within the TARC have been noted and affirmed, and I contend that the confluence of the sacred and secular in forums such as this contribute positively and should therefore be an ongoing conversation.¹ The reason for narrowing my focus to the local Church is therefore not to discredit the partnership between the spiritual and the secular, but rather to draw attention to the Church’s potential in realizing a Christocentric representation of reconciliation that can potentially benefit society at large.

As this chapter unfolds, it will become apparent that the Church is inherently a community that fosters inclusivity and reconciliation. Through the Spirit the Church is

¹ Shore, Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 1-2.
empowered for eschatological κοινωνία,² giving the world a glimpse of the possibilities of a united and inclusive community. The Church makes further statements of inclusivity through practices such as baptism and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The Church therefore serves, not only as an agent of reconciliation, but also as a witness to the possibilities of a community founded in Christ.

4.1 The Christocentric Community

In speaking of the local Church, I am drawn to Theologian Howard Snyder’s definition of the Church as “the community of God’s people – a people called to serve him and called to live together in true Christian community as a witness to the character and values of his kingdom.”³ His emphasis on “true Christian community” is noteworthy as it introduces the notion that not all representations of community should be considered Christian. A case in point would be the recent controversy surrounding the Reverend Gretta Vosper who leads a protestant Church in suburban Toronto. As an outspoken atheist, she runs a Church where God is deliberately excluded as she seeks to cater for nonbelievers, “looking for a community that will help them create meaningful

² D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, Logos ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 217. The word κοινωνία (koinonia) is understood as participation in fellowship or communion, and speaks of community involvement that goes deeper than that of shallow association.
³ Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 12.
lives without God.”⁴ This community may embody Christian principles, but without Christ it cannot be called a legitimate Christian community. In divorcing the community from Christ, the community is inadvertently rejecting its identity as the new humanity and undermining the foundations of its call to the ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18).

The emphasis on the centrality of Christ in the Christian community has become more pronounced since publications from Vatican II shifted the sacramental understanding of the Church from being a Church with sacraments, to seeing the Church itself as a sacrament.⁵ Rowan Williams, Anglican bishop and theologian, gives thought to this ecclesiological development. For Williams, understanding Paul’s reference to the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church is central to this new development (Ephesians 5:32). Falling back on the classical and Hellenistic usage of the word, μυστήριον, Williams sees Paul’s imagery of the relationship between a husband and wife as presenting a hidden understanding of the Church. This relationship is knowable and revealed, but still considered a mystery and therefore not

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⁵ Gary D. Badcock, “The Church as “Sacrament”,” in The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 189; Cf. Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964 (Boston, 1965). This shift in understanding does not however do away with the sacramental practices within the Roman Catholic Church.
revealed completely. This imagery does however emphasize the essential role of Christ in relation to His Church. The point is accentuated when one considers removing Christ from the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Such a celebration would at best be considered a common meal and nothing more. The same is true when one considers removing Christ from His Church. Such a gathering would then become nothing more than a social gathering caught up in the externals, but void of its spiritual identity as the community of Christ. On the other hand, the implications for the Church are far reaching when Christ is correctly positioned within the community. What follows is a closer look at the inclusive and reconciliatory implications of the Christocentric community.

4.1.1 The Eschatological Community

This discussion on the practical implications of the reconciling community now necessitates that I revisit the Pentecostal emphasis of this paper, particularly as it pertains to the eschatological nature of the Church. Seen as an entity that exists within the tension of the “already-not yet”, the Church finds itself with a unique contribution to make to the ongoing ministry of reconciliation. This eschatological character of the Church is however only possible through the Spirit. The eschatological essence of Christ

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7 Badcock, 190.
is seen in the presence of the Holy Spirit on the person of Jesus (Luke 3:22) and in His ministry, which is in the power of the Spirit (Matthew 12:28). After the ascension of Christ, this same eschatological application is then evident on the New Testament Church with the impartation of the Spirit at Pentecost. The presence of the Spirit represents the inauguration of the “last days” (Acts 2:17-20), and with the reception of this eschatological Spirit the Church must now also be seen as the eschatological community of these last days. Although the Spirit at Pentecost with the accompanying glossolalia is best described as the “prophetic Spirit”, the Christocentric nature of this impartation should not be undermined. In Acts 16:7, the author goes as far as to refer to the Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus, and in so doing creates a close association between the Spirit and Jesus.

This emphasis on Christ and eschatology is consistent with a Pauline understanding of the Church where Christ is portrayed as the head, and the Church as His body (Ephesians 4:15, 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24). Academic Timothée Joset in his article on “The Church as a Counter-Cultural Eschatological Fellowship” builds on this relationship between Christ and His body, drawing attention to the locality of the

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8 Burkett, 61-62.
9 Ibid., 268.
10 Althouse, 17.
Church. He suggests that if Christ is to be found in heaven, then one needs to entertain the idea that as the body of Christ, believers are not separated from the head and therefore the Church’s locality extends to heaven. His thought echoes that of New Testament Theologian George Ladd (whom Joset cites) who sees the Church as belonging to both this present age and the age to come:

“The church has a dual character, belonging to two ages. It is the people of the age to come, but it still lives in this age, being constituted of sinful mortal men. This means that while the church in this age will never attain perfection, it must nevertheless display the life of the perfect order, the eschatological Kingdom of God.”

This is consistent with Paul’s “new creation” motif in 2 Corinthians 5:17, which sees the salvific work of Christ as incorporating the believer into the eschatological new creation. This concept of the “new creation” should however be taken beyond an individualistic interpretation to include a collective understanding of believers as the new eschatological community. The Christocentric nature of this community would then render it exclusive in as much as it limits membership to those who are “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17). On the other hand, it must also be seen as an inclusive community that does not distinguish between race, culture, class, or gender, as all those who are

16 Wolter and Brawley, 253.
found “in Christ” are now included in this new eschatological community (Galatians 3:26-29).

But in what way is this new community uniquely positioned to contribution to the ongoing conversation of reconciliation? By being positioned within the eschatological “already-not yet”, the Church faces the same challenges as society, but through the Spirit it can approach these challenges from a realized eschatological perspective. Put differently, the Church can access the resource of its heavenly locality as it deals with the challenges of this present world. In chapter 2 it was established that the impartation of the Spirit in Acts 2 was given for Christian witness (cf. Acts 1:8), and although this can be seen in the way the gospel spread throughout the known world in the book of Acts, it should not discount the reality that the Spirit equipped the new eschatological community to love and reconcile in a manner that is consistent with the Spirit of Christ. Acts 2:42-47 attests to the fact that with the impartation of the Spirit came the formation of a unique Christian community where believers “were together and had all things in common”. In verse 42 the author of Acts uses the word κοινωνία to refer to the dynamics of this fellowship, a word that New Testament Scholar David Peterson defines as a “‘[sharing] with someone in somethings’ above and beyond the relationship itself.”

Drawing from the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament he further highlights the inclusive and communal understanding of the word noting how

17 Peterson, 160.
“common participation in Christ necessarily leads to a mutual fellowship amongst members of the Christian community.”\textsuperscript{18} The inclusivity of the eschatological Spirit is further seen in Acts 10:44-46, where the Gentiles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are incorporated into this new community of believers.\textsuperscript{19} The Spirit is therefore seen as instrumental in breaking racial divides and establishing an inclusive community.

As will now be discussed, this is consistent with the origins of the Pentecostal movement where social inclusion has been identified as central to the move of Spirit. Supernatural manifestations associated with Pentecostalism receive much attention, often at the expense of the deeper social transformation that was ushered in through this movement. At the heart of the Azusa Street Revival, and central to William J. Seymour’s preaching was the understanding that “the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit broke down all unbiblical racial, class, educational, social, denominational, and gender barriers.”\textsuperscript{20} Author Gastón Espinosa notes that the focus of Seymour’s message was less about tongues and physical manifestations and more about brotherly love and the fruit of the Spirit that should accompany the regenerated believer.\textsuperscript{21} Accounts of this regenerated community testify to the social transformation experienced by this new humanity. Mattie Cummings had this to say about the community: “Everybody was just the same. It didn’t matter if you were black, white, green, or grizzly . . . Germans and

\textsuperscript{18} Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, 804-09; cited in Peterson, 160.
\textsuperscript{20} Espinosa, 32.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
Jews, blacks and whites, ate together in the little cottage at the rear. Nobody ever thought of race.” Frank Bartleman notes how “the color line was washed away in the blood.” Azusa Street is however not unique in this regard. In tracing the origins of Pentecostalism, Theologian Michael McClymond identifies several independent manifestations of the Spirit, many of them prior to Azusa street, where the manifestation of the Spirit was accompanied by the transformation of the community. In the 1860s, John Christian Arulappan, reported on the outpouring of the Spirit in India, noting its transcendence of race and class. In 1808-1809 in Finland, women were empowered by the Spirit to speak prophetically, challenging the generally accepted male dominated social order of the day. Citing several more examples, McClymond propagates a broader and more inclusive understanding of the Spirit’s empowerment by suggesting they be seen as “empowering inclusion[s]”, referring to the inclusivity that historically has accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit.

The manifestation of the Spirit is therefore seen as instrumental in establishing the Church as the reconciling community. Through the Spirit, the centrality of Christ and His reconciling work is established; through the Spirit the eschatological Kingdom is realized in the present; and through the Spirit, this new community is equipped to live

22 Douglas J. Nelson, "For Such a Time as This : The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival, a Search for Pentecostal/Charismatic Roots" (1981), 234; Cited in Espinosa, 47.
24 McClymond, “I Will Pour out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh”, 356.
25 Ibid., 358.
26 Ibid., 372-73.
as the eschatological reconciling community, bringing a glimpse of the future into the presence.

4.1.2 Ordinances of the Reconciling Community

Nowhere is the Christocentric nature of the new community more evident than in the ordinances of the Church. It is in baptism and the Lord’s Supper that the Church not only identifies with Christ, but finds inclusion and identity in the larger body of believers. When rightly understood, and administered, these practices of the Church contribute to the strengthening and unity of the community. An incorrect application of the ordinances can however have far reaching consequences, with implications that may reach beyond the local Church to negatively impact society at large. This was the case in South Africa, where an incorrect administration of these practices ultimately gave rise to the now infamous Apartheid system. H. Russel Botman traces the roots of this system back to the early nineteenth century where the issue of baptism and separate celebrations of the Lord’s Supper led to a racially segregated approach to congregational life within the Dutch Reformed Church.\textsuperscript{27} Originally the issue was more religious than racial, with black people only being permitted to partake in Holy Communion once baptized.\textsuperscript{28} Baptism as the pathway into Christianity was however not purely an issue of

\textsuperscript{27} Botman, 244-45.
\textsuperscript{28} De Gruchy, 1111.
faith, but from a cultural perspective it was also seen as a passageway into Western culture.\textsuperscript{29} As society became more socially stratified, socialization took on a distinctly racial approach with whites eager to protect their social status.\textsuperscript{30} The ordinances were then employed as a means of creating and protecting the social superiority of the white community.\textsuperscript{31} While black people were eventually baptized and granted access into the Christian community, they were first relegated to the back of the churches, and ultimately established in separate Churches due to the “weakness of some” white Christians, who requested separate celebrations of the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{32} This separation within the Christian faith would eventually form the basis for the Apartheid governments separate development program which formed the ideological basis for the Apartheid system.\textsuperscript{33}

The tragic irony of the situation is that the very institutions that were meant to witness to the inclusive nature of the Christian community served only to drive divisions into the Church and into the country. As I now turn to baptism and the Lord’s Supper, it will become evident that these practices serve as a visible form of the invisible community that Christ continues to establish through his Church.\textsuperscript{34}

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\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Johnston, Sampson, and Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington D.C.), 184.
\textsuperscript{31} Botman, 244.
\textsuperscript{32} De Gruchy, 1120.
\textsuperscript{33} Johnston, Sampson, and Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington D.C.), 186-87.
\textsuperscript{34} Cf. Cross and Livingstone, 1445. St. Augustine speaks of the sacraments as the “visible form of invisible grace”.
4.1.2.1 Baptism

In Romans 6:3-4, Paul notes how the believer identifies with the death and resurrection of Christ through baptism. In discussing this, Systematic Theologian Wayne Grudem advocates the position that the mode of baptism be full immersion as he feels this best represents the symbolic participation of the sinner in the death of Christ, and subsequent resurrection into a new life.\(^{35}\) This anticipation of a new life is then both futurist and realized in the present. On the one hand the baptized now live in the anticipation of the resurrection at the end of the age (Romans 6:8-9),\(^ {36}\) while on the other hand they partake in the realization of the Kingdom of God in the present and become members of the eschatological community.\(^ {37}\) In respect to past crimes and misdeeds, such as in the case of perpetrators during the Apartheid era, baptism can represent a repentant attitude that desires to see the degenerate person crucified with Christ. The practice of baptism therefore exists not only for the baptized who choose to identify with


Grudem’s position is consistent with Breytenbach’s discussion on the transformation of the believer as discussed in section 1.1.1.1 in chapter 1 under the heading of “new creation”.

\(^{36}\) Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 118.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 114.
the death of Christ, but also for the community who witness the outward representation of an inward change.\textsuperscript{38}

Theologian and Ethicist John Howard Yoder sees in Paul’s imagery of the “new creation” in 2 Corinthians 5:17, a close alignment with the institute of baptism. For him, being “in Christ”, renders the sinner dead to the old life and a possessor of the new life that comes through the resurrection of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:4, Galatians 2:20).\textsuperscript{39} As a new creation, the believer is then also part of the new inclusive eschatological community. Max Anders sees Paul articulating this same inclusivity of the “in Christ” in Galatians 3:27-28, where he addresses racial, social and gender divides to present the baptized community as “one in Christ Jesus” (cf. Ephesians 2:14).\textsuperscript{40} Anders does however add a word of caution noting that this unity must not be confused with uniformity.\textsuperscript{41} 1 Corinthians 12:13 presents another instance where Paul embraces the inclusive nature of the those “baptized into one body”, but here his comments are in the context of the diverse nature of the Corinthian community. Through baptism, the new community of Christ is then an inclusive community, but it must also celebrate the diversity of its members.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} Anders, 8, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{42} Hays, 213-14.
This application of the practice of baptism is however problematic when applied to the South African context, where perpetrators openly considered themselves baptized members of the Christian faith, and yet continued with their oppressive practices. Should this then be considered under the controversial heading of “rebaptism”, or should alternatives be sought? If this is not a question of rebaptism, then how are “baptized” perpetrators to part with their past and reintegrate into the community of faith? John de Gruchy sees this as taking place through penance, which he identifies as a recognized sacrament within the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II. It is through penance that reconciliation and accountability before God and the community can take place. Penance requires an acknowledgement of sin and guilt on the part of the perpetrator, along with the acceptance of responsibility for past wrongs. It is here that Pentecostals fall short. In advocating penance, De Gruchy’s has presented the Church with a much needed resource in the reconciliatory process. Pentecostals would therefore do well to develop their theology in this area. That’s not to say Pentecostals should consider instituting penance as an ordinance in the Church, but its value should be recognized and a Pentecostal position developed and applied into the reconciliatory process. The value of penance is therefore acknowledged, but any attempt to adopt it as a sacrament of the Church, will likely to be rejected within Pentecostal circles.

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43 De Gruchy, 1120. See also Pohl, 1164.
44 De Gruchy, 1223.
4.1.2.2 The Lord’s Supper

In celebrating the Lord’s Supper, the community remembers all that Christ has done and anticipates all that He will still do.45 This idea that the Supper is a time of remembering, is for the most part consistent with a Pentecostal understanding of the practice.46 Finnish Theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen affirms this position and notes how Pentecostals seem to deliberately avoid a more sacramental approach to the Supper.47 It is therefore through the symbols of bread and wine, that the body and blood of Christ is remembered and the community is given the opportunity to reflect on the salvific implications of the cross. This is however more than just an individual time of remembering and reflection. As Miroslav Volf notes, it is also a time of considering the communal implications of the Supper.48 In the new community, believers join to celebrate the Supper, not as victim and perpetrator, but as fellow believers forgiven through the body and the blood of Christ. In this regard, Volf has the following to say:

“Inscribed on the very heart of God’s grace is the rule that we can be its recipients only if we do not resist being made into its agents; what happens to us

must be done by us. Having been embraced by God, we must make space for others in ourselves and invite them in – even our enemies.”

Volf can therefore be seen as presenting the bread and the wine as symbols of healing. More to the point of this paper, these symbols represent relational healing. The relationship between God and man has been restored through the body and blood of Jesus, and now these same symbols call for the healing of relationship within the community. This is consistent with a Pentecostal understanding which sees healing as part to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Pentecostals would also see this as a time when the gifts of the Spirit come into operation to edify the body of Christ. As discussed in chapter 2, the Spirit’s work is inclusive of social concerns, and it is therefore not inconceivable that these gifts would empower believers as they reach out to both give and receive forgiveness in acts of relational healing. Pentecostal theological, Simon Chan, affirms this position saying, “the holy communion should be the best occasion for prayers of reconciliation and healing to take place.”

The inclusive nature of this shared meal is however not limited to reconciliation between victims and perpetrators. Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 will now

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49 Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation, 129.
51 Black, 81-82. Black is writing here with reference to British Pentecostalism, however, in South Africa this same emphasis has been placed on the Lord’s Supper within denominations such as the Assemblies of God. Although the practice of these gifts during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is evolving, it is doubtful that Pentecostals will reject the presence and possibility of the Spirit and His work at this time of the service.
serve to illustrate the inclusive nature of the Lord’s Supper. To better understand Paul, it should first be understood that this meal was unlike current Holy Communion services where symbolic representations of the body and blood of Christ are administered. In speaking of the Lord’s Supper, Paul is referring to a communal meal shared at the time when believers gathered together. Unfortunately, instead of this being an inclusive meal, as it was intended to be, it came to be practiced as a time where the social and economic disparities in the community were emphasized (1 Corinthians 11:17). So, instead of the meal serving as a “symbol and seal of their oneness”, the rich enjoyed an excess of food and drink, leaving the poor hungry and shamed (1 Corinthians 11:21-22). For Paul, the bread and the cup represent the new covenant relationship with God which now defines the way believers relate to God and each other (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). The way the Corinthians celebrated the Supper did not reflect this changed relationship and therefore cast doubt on the legitimacy of this meal being called the “Lord’s Supper” (1 Corinthians 11:20). Only meals that reflect the inclusivity of Christ’s salvific work were to be considered legitimate, anything less was to be regarded as nothing more than a regular meal aimed at filling the stomach, and that could be

53 Yoder, 36-37.
55 Hays, 193.
56 Ibid., 199.
done within the confines of one’s own home (1 Corinthians 11:34). The severity of this exclusion and misrepresentation of the Lord’s Supper is reflected in Paul’s words in verses 29-30, where he sees judgment coming upon those that do not “discern the body” in their celebration of the Supper, the consequence of which is illness, weakness and even death. On reflection, the contemporary Church might find that it too faces “illness, weakness, and death” because of exclusive celebrations of the Lord’s Supper.

The inclusivity of the Lord’s Supper therefore represents a community far removed from the realities of the present world, and more akin to the eschatological community that transcendent divisions such as race, class, and gender, even bridging the divide between victim and perpetrator. Pentecostal Theologian Amos Yong notes that through the Spirit, practices such as the Lord’s Supper, “become signs that foreshadow the new creation and coming reign of God.” In discussing the Pentecostal understanding of this ordinance, Kärkkäinen affirms Yong’s position, and in so doing locates this practice in the “already–not yet.” Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 11:26 are consistent in this regard: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Through the regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the Church participates in the eschatological banquet that anticipates the completion of salvation in the Kingdom of glory.

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59 Kärkkäinen, 131. Although Kärkkäinen does not use the term, “already-not yet”, he does affirm this position by quoting Volf and Kuzmic who speak of the Lord’s Supper, “as an anticipatory experience of the eschatological messianic banquet, enhanc[ing] our expectant yearning for the completion of salvation in the Kingdom of glory.”
Supper, the community of Christ looks back and proclaims the death of Jesus with the understanding that there remains a future celebration that will take place at the time of the Lord’s return. This is a confirmation of the eschatological tension present in Jesus’ celebration of the Passover meal where he refers to the day when He will once again drink the “fruit of the vine” with His disciples in His “Father’s Kingdom” (Mathew 26:29). As author and Theologian Peter Leithart says, “The Eucharist is our model of the eschatological order, a microcosm of the way things really ought to be”, namely, a representation in the present prefiguring the inclusive reconciled community anticipated at the culmination of the age.

4.1.3 The Missional Community

In seeing the Church as the eschatological community and identifying the ordinances as institutes of inclusivity, it becomes apparent that much of what the Church is and does reflects the ordering of a community unlike that of the world in which we live. As a diverse community, Theologian and Missiologist Darrel Guder sees the Church as taking on elements of its context, however, he maintains that its identity must be derived from Christ and the Godhead and supersede any other cultural or racial

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61 Ibid., 165-66.
identification it may have. He therefore sees the Church as “biculural, [being]
conversant in the language and customs of the surrounding culture [while] living
toward the language and ethics of the gospel.”

Whenever culture or race takes precedence within the Christian community, the outcome undermines the eschatological, inclusive and incarnational elements intended for this Christocentric community. In Rwanda, the genocide was a question of cultural identity with Hutu inhabitants in Rwanda massacring the Tutsi inhabitants in a quest for power. For South Africa, it was a question of racial identity with white South Africans oppressing black South Africans, or more to the point, white “Christian” South Africans oppressing black “Christian” South Africans. The Church may have been “biculural”, but the emphasis was placed on its secular identity rather than giving priority to its spiritual identity as the community of Christ.

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63 Ibid.
64 David Jacobus Bosch, Transforming Mission : Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, American Society of Missiology Series (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 291-98. Bosch highlights this point through an in-depth discussion on the cultural agenda of Western missions over the past two centuries, where culturalization was seen as an essential part of missionary endeavors.
65 Graybill and Lanegran, 8.
66 Stephen William Martin, "Civic Sacrament and Social Imaginaries in Transition: The Case of the South African Churches and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," Political Theology 12, no. 3 (2011): 367. The Dutch Reformed Church’s role in Apartheid has already been articulated in this paper. Martin however goes one step further calling their faith "Afrikaner Christian Nationalism"; John W. De Gruchy, "Church Unity and Democratic Transformation: Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethics in South Africa," The Ecumenical Review 49, no. 3 (1997): 357. Here De Gruchy notes that both the oppressed and the oppressor were considered "baptized Christians"; Brian Frost, Struggling to Forgive : Nelson Mandela and South Africa’s Search for Reconciliation (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 1, 49, 111. People such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Albert Luthuli, along with others in the ANC who opposed the Apartheid regime, were all confessing Christians.
How then is this new Christian community to be understood? Peter Althouse, Professor of Theology at Southeastern University, articulates well the Trinitarian basis of the Church. He speaks of “the triune God who is a community of persons in unity of essence and purpose, [as] the basis for koinonia, both in the mutual fellowship we have with God and each other in the Church.” Guder puts it this way, “the church bears the stamp of the ‘eternal community’”. The interaction among the persons of the trinity, referred to as the “perichoresis”, serves as the basis from which the Church formulates its own understanding of community. A closer look at the trinity reveals the missional nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which must then be incorporated into the understanding of the new community as established in this paper.

On this point, it is appropriate to quote South African Missiologist David Bosch: “The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world.” The emphasis here is on the Church’s participation in the mission of God as a more accurate understanding of the Church’s mission. This replaces the more traditional model that prioritizes the

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68 Guder and Barrett, 82.
69 Ibid., 81. Guder uses the term "interpenetration" to define perichoresis, while Volf prefers the term "mutual interiority."; Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, 128.
70 Bosch, 390. "Missio Dei" is a term used synonymously for the mission God. It’s a Latin expression which means, "mission of the God" or the "sending of God."
Church in mission, often at the expense of a holistic perspective of God’s work.\(^71\) This is a subtle but significance shift that moves the Church away from the entanglement of pursuing mission for its own purpose, to recognizing God’s gracious inclusion of the Church in His plan of Salvation.\(^72\) Having established a theological foundation for the Church as a missional community, all that now remains is a consideration of the practical implications this has for the community of believers. In doing this, I will once again turn to Volf who sees a twofold application derived from the “mutual interiority” of the trinity.\(^73\) He encapsulates these two dimensions in terms of the salvific work of Christ which he defines as “self-giving love which overcomes human enmity and the creation of space in himself to receive estranged humanity.”\(^74\) Volf then sees this as displayed in and through the trinity.\(^75\) In reconciling the world to himself, Christ is seen as embracing fallen humanity through the complete giving of himself. Those that are in Christ then received forgiveness, reconciliation, the impartation of the Spirit, and a glimpse of the eschatological community that brings hope and vision. As the Christian community called to the “ministry of reconciliation”, the Church then has the fullness of

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 389-90. This understanding of the mission of God is relatively new, only gaining recognition since Karl Barth highlighted it in 1932. Even so, the concept remains generally accepted today with few contesting its validity.


\(^{74}\) Ibid., 127.

\(^{75}\) Ibid.

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Christ at its disposal as its members engage one another and society in the mission of God.

Missiologist, Lesslie Newbigin, speaks of the Church’s participation in this mission as a “sign, instrument, and foretaste of the reign of God.” The reign of God is first inaugurated through the life and ministry of Jesus, who then imparts it into the Church at Pentecost. The Church therefore becomes the tangible “sign, instrument and foretaste” of a future eschatological reality. This has already been seen in the inclusivity of communities who experience Pentecostal revivals, such as the first century community in Acts, and the Azusa Street Mission. It can be argued that the inclusivity of the Azusa Street community contributed more to the witness of the Church than the visible manifestations of the Spirit. Furthermore, a community that is prepared to baptize and include people from vastly different national, racial, social and economic backgrounds, stands out as otherworldly in a time of increasing prejudice and divisions. The thought of victims and perpetrators joining to share in the common meal of the Lord’s Supper sounds unheard of this side of the eschatological Kingdom where the “wolf shall live with the lamb [and] the leopard shall lie down with the kid” (Isaiah 11:6). This new community therefore witnesses not to what it, but rather to what will be.

The temptation is to stop here, but that would give a false impression of the realities of this eschatological community which must still navigate the struggles of living in the “already-not yet.” As Bosch so aptly puts it, “There is an abiding tension between the Christian community for which we long and the Christian community as it actually is.” 78 Bosch’s words highlight the frustration of this new community which experiences glimpses of what can and will be, but must accept that the full and lasting expression of that eschatological state is unlikely in the present. 79 This does not however undermine the witness of the Church, for in as much as it witnesses to what will be, the way it deals with its imperfections witnesses to the reconciliatory nature of Christ and His Church. Christ’s act of reconciling humanity to himself is both an acknowledgement of the imperfection of humanity and the means of overcoming that imperfection (cf. Romans 5:8). As ministers of reconciliation believers therefore remain acutely aware of their own imperfections and the imperfections of those around them, but choose rather to embrace humanity with the same “self-giving and other-receiving” love that flows from the trinity. The restorative attributes of penance serve as an example here. By incorporating the principles of penance into the Church, there is the understanding that humanity remains flawed and will continually need avenues of reconciliation and restoration.

78 Bosch, 387.
79 Ibid., 386.
The frustration of the eschatological tension should therefore not be viewed negatively as it serves as an integral part of the Church’s witness. By straddling both the present and the future ages, the Church finds itself well positioned to draw off the resources of the age to come while remaining relevant to the time and space in which it finds itself.\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Conclusion}

This discussion gives further credence to the mysterious nature of the Church. When looking at its outward expression it is indeed a mystery to many, even to clergy who often see the confused and questionable state of the communities under their care and sometimes even doubt God’s wisdom in using the Church as His chosen vessel. To be fair, the body of Christ does not always give an accurate representation of Christ, and so there are times when it must accept the criticism levelled against it. Speaking of the Church as God’s “chosen vessel” is however appropriate in this regard as it references Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 4:7: “But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.” As seen in this chapter, the power of this vessel does not come from its visible exterior, but from some place deeper within it. To separate this community from Christ

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 388. Bosch insists that the Church betrays the foundational principles of its establishment and mission when it fails to adequately confront the challenges of this world.
would render it powerless and ineffective, no different from any other social gathering.

On the other hand, by ensuring the centrality of Christ, the community transforms into the new community that witnesses to the possibility of inclusivity and the hope of reconciliation and restoration. Political and sociological approaches to reconciliation and peacebuilding do have merit, however, what the Church offers lies beyond their reach. The Church therefore carries a mandate and a responsibility to step forwards and actively engage the challenges of reconciliation in the world today.
5. Practical Applications for the Local Church

The Church’s potential in matters of reconciliation has been highlighted in the previous chapter. With all that has been said, it would seem probable that the Church would be functioning prophetically in a world that struggles with prejudice and division. Unfortunately, the Church has become better known for its exclusivity and inability to embrace diversity than for its witness as the inclusive community of Christ. The words of Martin Luther King Jr., spoken more than 50 years ago, are still used convincingly today: “We must face the fact that … the church is still the most segregated major institution in America.” Some things have however changed since King spoke these words at Western Michigan University in 1963. One significant change has been the formalization of denominational positions and structures on racial and ethnic inclusivity, others have not have gone that far, but have still chosen to make public statements encouraging the development of multi-ethnic Christian communities. In doing so, these denominations have sent a clear message regarding the importance of

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1 Wessel Bentley, “Defining Christianity’s ‘Prophetic Witness’ in the Post-Apartheid South African Democracy,” Studia historiae ecclesiasticae 39, no. 1 (2013): 261-62. In defining the Christian Church’s prophetic witness, Bentley references Walter Brueggemann who speaks of “a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness”; Bosch, 376-78. Bosch’s discussion on “Church and World” is helpful in understanding the theological development of the Church’s engagement with the world.
seeing the Church as an inclusive community that welcomes people of all races and ethnicity. The transformation process does however remain slow. In 2007 the National Congregations Survey showed that more 85% of American Churches were still racially exclusive. The results from the 2010 Faith Communities Survey presented similar figures, indicating only 13.7% of American congregations were to be considered racially mixed. This does reflect an improvement from 1998 when only 7% of Churches were considered inclusive. These statistics are based on the understanding that Churches be considered multi-ethnic only when the dominant culture constitute 80% or less of the congregation. While this criteria may serve as a general tool to measure and promote diversity, it does oversimplify a rather complex matter, often creating a perception of inclusivity that is far removed from the reality. Whereas this assessment tool may indicate a multi-ethnic environment, it fails in that it cannot measure interaction and integration among congregants. The statistics above therefore represent a generous, but unlikely assessment of the reality of the situation. In saying this, I do not mean to engage in what appears to be a much-needed discussion regarding the methodology in

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4 Ibid., 185-86.
8 Ibid., 81-82; For more understanding on the 20% congregational threshold, see Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson, 213.
assessing the diversity of congregations. My intention here is primarily to show how far removed the Church is from the often stated ideal of a Christocentric identity and calling.

The discussion thus far reflects an understanding of the American Church, and not necessarily the current state of the Church globally, or more particularly, the state of the Church in South Africa. A look at the American Church is however a helpful departure point as it presents a glimpse into the realities of moving the Church to a place of inclusivity. For the American Church, it has been more than half a century since the Civil Rights Movement, and still the Church remains largely segregated. Authors Michael Emerson and Christian Smith note in their landmark book, “Divided by Faith”, that despite attempts by the Civil rights Movement to bring people together, American society remains largely segregated, unfortunately, the Church is no different.⁹

The South African context, with its history of institutionalized segregation, has been a far shorter journey and is not as easy to assess. Up until 1991, the Group Areas Act separated the hegemonic white population into more developed areas,¹⁰ relegating all other races to inferior settlements, removing them from the cities, towns and the places of their employment. Formal permission was required if whites wanted to enter black areas, and the movement of blacks was controlled through the

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¹⁰ The Group Areas Act consisted of three laws, the first enacted in 1950, the second in 1957, and the third in 1966. This final act was eventually repealed on 30 June 1991.
implementation of “pass books” containing personal and employment information.\(^{11}\) So, besides for the legislative restrictions of Apartheid, Churches also faced logistical challenges in forming multi-ethnic congregations as races remained physically separated from one another.\(^{12}\) There were however a few exceptions, particularly in situations where neighborhoods managed to avoid racial segregation, such as Saint Mary’s Catholic Cathedral in Cape Town.\(^{13}\) Limited research has been done on congregational integration subsequent to the Group Areas Act being repealed, making an accurate assessment on the transformation within Churches relatively unknowable. One academic survey conducted in 1997 determined that only 3% of Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic congregations were "significantly racially integrated and culturally diverse."\(^{14}\) Since then, traditionally white neighborhoods have continued to diversify racially, so it is expected that more white Churches have moved towards multi-ethnicity, however, research in this regard remains limited making it difficult to verify this independently.\(^{15}\)


\(^{13}\) Ibid. Venter lists several more congregations that were established in a deliberate effort to counter societal segregation, but even here Venter concedes that their success was largely dependent on the proximity of racially mixed neighborhoods (1051-1090).

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 315.

With the fall of Apartheid, some Churches have moved to unify previously segregated expressions of their denominations, such as the coming together of the Baptist Convention (black) and the Baptist Union of South Africa (white and colored) to form the South African Baptist Alliance in 2001. The Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church of God have made similar moves, even though these efforts proved to be long and difficult, often taking several years to finalize owing to the reluctance of white constituents. Other denominations such as the white Dutch Reformed Church seem intent on unifying with the Uniting Reformed Church, but this remains a work in progress. The journey towards unity remains complicated, especially in cases where Churches have traditionally been instrumental in forging a unique culture and identity among their congregants. The Dutch Reform Church’s role in defining the Afrikaner people is one such case, as is the role of many of the African Independent Churches (AIC) who find their origin in efforts to retain and assert black identity. A move towards inclusivity and diversity in these cases can often be misconstrued as an attack on culture and identity, and therefore met with resistance.

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16 Inverting the Norm: Racially-Mixed Congregations in a Segregationist State, 1225-39.
17 Julie Aaboe, "The Other and the Construction of Cultural and Christian Identity: The Case of the Dutch Reformed Church in Transition" (University of Cape Town Faculty of Humanities Department of Religious Studies, 2014), 81-109; J. Cilliers and I. A. Nell, "Within the Enclave - Profiling South African Social and Religious Developments since 1994," Verbum et Ecclesia 32, no. 1 (2011): 4. Both Aaboe and Cilliers discuss the DRC’s struggle to redefine its identity after the fall of Apartheid. This same struggle, naturally becomes the struggle of congregants who derived much of their identity from the DRC.
18 J.M. Lamola, "Towards a Black Church - a Historical Investigation of the African Independent Churches as a Model," Journal of Black theology South Africa 2, no. 1 (1988): 5. The two largest of these Churches are the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and the Shembe Church, however, various smaller independent Churches can also be defined in this way.
Establishing an official position on issues such as segregation and prejudice is a helpful step that denominations in South Africa should consider taking, however, this alone will not suffice. The witness of the Church will eventually rest with the way the local Christian community embodies the theological principles of inclusivity and reconciliation in congregational life.\(^1\) Unfortunately, despite inclusivity in all other aspect of South African life, such as shopping, transport, schools and housing, some Churches still continue to establish themselves as exclusive cultural enclaves. It is in instances such as this, that the Church needs to recognize that it may well be more prejudiced than it realizes and possibly even more prejudiced than the world in which it exists.\(^2\) That said, the Church is not to strive for greater inclusivity as if competing in some imaginary race with the world, rather it should awaken to the reality of what it truly is, namely, the eschatological community of Christ, a current reality of a future expectation.

\(^1\) A recent incident illustrates well the ongoing struggle in the South African Church. Being one of two churches in our street, a new family wishing to visit our church, inadvertently arrived at the wrong church. Unfortunately, that Church remains racially predisposed towards white congregants. The family were politely informed that they had probably arrived at the “wrong church”, and were advised to rather try the church up the road.

5.1 **Practical Applications**

Besides for the more rural and isolated communities, there are few places in South Africa that are not exposed in one way or another to the increasing levels of diversity in the country. When thinking of multi-ethnic Churches, one often falls into the black-white trap, thinking these are the only two ethnicities present in the country. As of 2016, only 8.1% of the country’s population was considered white, with 80.7% being categorized as African. These populations groups can then be divided even further, as can be seen in the eleven national languages of South Africa. Taking into consideration that up to 5.8% of South African residents are immigrants adds further to the multi-ethnic makeup of the country. With such high levels of diversity, it is imperative that the South African Church intentionally work towards building inclusive communities. What follows are several practical suggestions on how the Church can intentionally embrace its call to be the reconciling community.

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21 "Mid-Year Population Estimates 2016," (http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022016.pdf: Statistics South Africa, 2016). 2. Statistics South Africa identifies two further population groups in South Africa, namely "Colored" which comprises 8.8% of the population and the remaining 2.5% are listed as "Indian/Asian".

22 Sintha Chiumia, "Factsheet: How Many International Migrants Are There in S.A.?," Africa Check, https://africacheck.org/factsheets/data-migrants-numbers/. The accuracy of this figure is largely disputed owing to the tendency among immigrants to conceal their immigrant status. Current figures therefore range from as low as 2.8% of the population to as high as 5.8%.
5.1.1 Intentional Preaching and Teaching

My earliest memories of Church life relate to the observance of the Lord’s Supper which took place religiously every Sunday morning in our local Assemblies of God Church. During this time, the congregation would gather to share communion, and without fail, either the minister or an elder in the Church would read Paul’s instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper from 1 Corinthians 11. Thinking back on that experience, I now realize that Paul’s reproof of the Corinthians for their social discrimination was never taught as part of the Church’s observance of the Lord’s Supper. The congregation was encouraged to “examine themselves” and to avoid “eating and drinking without discernment” (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:28-29), but this was understood as being a matter of personal holiness, or alternatively relating to the importance of maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships within the congregation. Partaking in the Lord’s Supper while harboring personal sin or conflict with a fellow congregant was understood as bringing judgment upon oneself (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:29). Sadly, this happened week after week in our small homogenous white congregation while our black Christian brothers and sisters were battling Apartheid. Possibly, with more teaching and understanding, the Pentecostal Church in South Africa would not have been as passive as it was during the Apartheid struggle.

This paper affirms the centrality of Paul’s teachings on reconciliation. If the Church claims to be Christocentric, then it carries the responsibility of instilling a
correct and complete understanding of reconciliation into the life of the community. For the most part, Churches correctly present the salvific understanding of Christ’s work, but fail to take this teaching further by including the social application of these same principles (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18). There are several opportunities within congregational life where this can be taught, most notably within the Sunday sermon, but as alluded to above, times when Church practices such as the Lord’s Supper and baptism are observed, present ideal opportunities to highlight the inclusive nature of Christ’s work.23 Discipleship and membership classes should also be considered focal points, allowing the Church to establish inclusivity as a value from the outset of the new believer’s journey into the community of Christ. Throughout scripture the reader is confronted with teachings that promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity.24 A healthy discipleship model should teach congregants to identify these references and live accordingly. Being deeply immersed in the Pentecostal tradition, I have heard many teachings on the operation of the gifts in relation to the local Church (1 Corinthians 12). Here again, omissions of Paul’s references to the unity of “Jews, Greeks, slaves [and] free” remains a distinct shortcoming in my experience of the Church’s teachings in this area. An intentional approach to teaching and preaching can therefore be seen as beneficial in propagating values of inclusivity in local Christian communities.

24 Ibid., 214-15.
5.1.2 A Renewed Emphasis on the Spirit of Pentecost

The impartation of the Spirit in Acts 2, with the accompanying glossolalia and empowerment for mission, are central to the Pentecostal identity. As has been discussed, this move of the Spirit brought about more than individual physical manifestations, it also served to form a new community that included “all who believed” (Acts 2:44).

This impartation of the Spirit in Acts 2, relates back to the narrative of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, a passage used by the Dutch Reform Church to theologically justify Apartheid. Instead of obeying God’s instruction in Genesis to “fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28), humanity rather chooses to build a tower in the land of Shinar. God responds to the people’s disobedience by confusing their language and scattering them across the face of the earth (Genesis 11:7-8). For the Dutch Reform Church, this formed the theological justification for the separation of races, which served as a basis for the development of the Apartheid system.

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25 Jud Davis, "Acts 2 and the Old Testament: The Pentecost Event in Light of Sinai, Babel, and the Table of Nations," Criswell Theological Review 7, no. 1 (2009): 46. Here Davis affirms this relationship between Genesis 11 and Acts 2, and notes how others such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Bede, John Lightfoot, F. F. Bruce and G. K. Beale also makes this connection. He is however not ignorant of scholars such as Ben Witherington and I. Howard Marshall who disagree on this point. He discusses this more fully on page 30 of this same article.

Acts 2 is a recapitulation, or parallel to Genesis 11. As the believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, they begin to speak in other languages. In contrast to Genesis 11, the tongues that are given serve to unite the people rather than confuse them because each of the nations present hear the believers speaking in their own language (Acts 2:6). The author of Acts emphasizes the diversity of the nations present, highlighting the nature of the Spirit as being inclusive and reaching across language and culture barriers (Acts 2:9-11). So when Luke says, “all who believed were together” (Acts 2:44), it can be assumed that he is speaking of a multinational community, and possibly even a multi-ethnic community. In Acts 2:5, Luke speaks of “devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem”, leaving one to question whether the gathering was indeed a multi-ethnic gathering, or whether it was an ethnically homogenous gathering of Jews from different nations. Although this is a valid question, this need not be something of concern, as the inclusivity of the nations, be they Jews or Gentiles, is affirmed in the Gentile reception of the Spirit in Acts 10. The Spirit of Pentecost in Acts 2

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27 Judy Yates Siker, "The Unsettling Holy Spirit," *The Living Pulpit (Online)* 19, no. 2 (2010): 17; Keener, "Why Does Luke Use Tongues as a Sign of the Spirit’s Empowerment?,” 181; See also Gerald A. Klingbeil, "He Spoke and It Was: Human Language, Divine Creation, and the Imago Dei," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 36, no. 1 (2014): 56. Klingbeil speaks of this as the "great reversal", a title commonly employed when pulling these two passages alongside one another. This title does not however accurately reflect the relationship between these two texts as they are more parallel passages than contrasting passages. Furthermore, within the context of Apartheid theology, a title such as this could inadvertently endorse past misinterpretations of Genesis 11.


and beyond therefore anticipates the incorporation of people from different nations and cultures.

Denominations that identify as Pentecostal, should therefore be mindful of the rich heritage and resource at their disposal. Since the Azusa Street Revival, Pentecostalism has continued to evolve, sometimes at the expense of its own distinguishing beliefs. It is not uncommon to find Pentecostal Churches who no longer emphasize the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, or the inclusivity of the mission that comes with the impartation of the Spirit (cf. Acts 1:8). Revisiting the history of Pentecostalism, and the way these revivals created inclusive communities would be helpful. This can be done through preaching, teaching and discipleship. Many within the Pentecostal movement are familiar with the empowerment of the Spirit and the accompanying glossolalia but remain ignorant of the social particularities of the Pentecostal movement, an area that requires more intentional focus within Pentecostal theology. Scholars such as Murray Dempster, have already started a journey into the relationship between Pentecostalism and Christian social concern, but more is needed in this area.30

The role of the Spirit in realizing the new eschatological community should also be explored and emphasized further, along with the Pentecostal understanding of the gifts and how these gifts might have deeper social and reconciliatory applications. Craig

Keener takes a step in this direction by showing how Luke’s use of tongues as the sign of the impartation of the Spirit in Acts 2, represents an empowering for cross-cultural ministry. The empowerment at Pentecost is prophetic and represents the first stages of the fulfilment of Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8, which will ultimately transcend language, nationality and ethnicity, bringing all who believe into the community of Christ. This same prophetic Spirit persists today. As the eschatological community of Christ gathers, it should witness to the inclusive and reconciliatory character of the community of Christ. Here actions must speak louder than words, although words will always have an important part to play in teaching and discipleship.

Ignorance can possibly be identified as one of the biggest obstacles preventing Pentecostals from contributing to the formation of inclusive and reconciliatory communities. Once the Pentecostal Church awakens to their own significance in this regard, and actively pursue the formation of inclusive and reconciliatory communities through the empowerment of the Spirit, they will find they have an important role to play within the Christian Church and further afield in the community at large.

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32 Ibid., 178-80.
5.1.3 **Reconciliatory Community Practices**

As noted, the number of inclusive Christian communities is on the rise. Whether these communities can be referred to as integrated and authentically inclusive, remains largely unknown. As the Church moves towards diverse and inclusive communities, it should guard against creating environments where congregants share the same congregational space, yet fail to share the same relational space. Speaking into the American context, Emerson and Smith note how with the adoption of the Virginia Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in 1785, and the ratification of the First Amendment in 1791, Churches lost state support causing them to adopted a more consumeristic approach to maintaining and growing congregations.\(^{33}\) Inadvertently, Churches were plunged into a religious market place, so much so that Emerson and Smith refer to America as the “‘mega-mall’ of religious consumerism.”\(^{34}\) As a result, Churches have tended towards socially and racially homogenous congregations which are more attractive and marketable. Consequently, more generalized approaches to Church tend to carry limited appeal, making them less desirable to Church leaders and congregants alike.\(^{35}\) South Africa, with its extensively diverse population, faces similar challenges in trying to establish integrated Churches. Aspects such as language, culture and worship style all contribute significantly when Christians choose their spiritual home. As a result, 

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\(^{33}\) Emerson and Smith, 137-38.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 140.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 140-41.
Churches have approached the multi-ethnic challenge in several ways. Some have conscientiously adopted structures that promote exclusivity, while other have welcomed inclusivity but opted for separate services where differences of language, culture and worship can be accommodated. Although this latter option may seem functional, its likeness to the Apartheid system of separate development makes it untenable. Some of the more progressive Churches purposefully encourage inclusivity, but often end up with diverse congregational spaces with little to no integration amongst congregants. The question of inclusivity therefore remains largely unresolved in the South African Church. Activities aimed at bridging these divides, such as communal meals, storytelling and the establishment of inclusive alternate communities are possible ways of helping move congregations towards inclusivity.

5.1.3.1 Communal Meals

Sociologist Dawid Venter, in his article entitled, “Mending the Multi-Coloured Coat of a Rainbow Nation”, notes the importance of interpersonal interaction amongst various groupings within a congregation. Participating in a common meal is one way of encouraging this type of interaction. Theologian Pieter Rossouw aptly puts it this

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way: “our common humanity is out in the open when we eat together”.\(^{37}\) He further speaks of a “missional-sacramental way of eating”, which involves, “eating with strangers in locations that are strange to us.”\(^{38}\) In doing this he draws attention back to the inclusive nature of the common meal. As discussed, when Paul addresses the social inequality of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, he is speaking of a diverse group of people coming together to share a common meal,\(^{39}\) a gathering that is centered on Christ and foreshadows the inclusive eschatological feast at the end of the age.\(^{40}\) The sharing of a common meal is often underplayed in the current western “drive-thru” culture where meals are bought and consumed on the go. Building inclusive communities will require intentionality, sacrifice, and the sharing of meals in environments that are culturally and ethnically foreign.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Yoder, 37.

\(^{40}\) Leithart, 166.

\(^{41}\) Every two years all the clergy from the various groupings of our denomination meet for our General Conference. This is a large gathering which outwardly presents the church as inclusive and diverse, much like that of our country. Unfortunately, although all the ministers gather for the same meetings, the true level of integration and inclusivity (or lack thereof) is most evident at meal times, where ministers tend to avoid the communal eating hall in favor of their own different cultural spaces, prioritizing culinary choice over inclusive Christian fellowship. Intentionality and sacrifice will have to start with the clergy in forums such as this if the church in South Africa is to become the witnessing community of Christ.
5.1.3.2 Narratives and Storytelling

In his book, “The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa”, Catholic Theologian Emmanuel Katongole challenges his readers to acknowledge the role of “stories and imagination” in shaping identity. Speaking into the African context, Katongole contends that the stories we’ve told of ourselves and the stories that others have told of us, have been instrumental in determining the narrative of Africa, and what its people have become. He emphasizes the importance of stories by placing them within the “social ecology” of humanity, and thus “forming the very heart of our cultural, economic, religious, and political worlds”.42 He therefore sees a connection between the presumptive stories told of Africa and the continual political instability that frequents the larger continent of Africa.43 The Rwandan genocide serves as a tragic example of how the Christian story was in many instances captured by the political agenda that created divisive distinctions between the Tutsi and Hutu people.44 Not only were Christians involved in the Rwandan genocide, but in some instances the killings took place in churches where Tutsi and Hutu people had previously worshiped together.45

This same innate potential for destruction can be seen in the South African past where the narrative favored white people and devalued people of other ethnicities.

43 Ibid., 153.
44 Ibid., 172.
45 Ibid., 162.
During the Apartheid years, black and white South Africans were continually exposed to propaganda that portrayed white people as superior while dehumanizing people of other races. Legislation that controlled the media was instrumental in this regard, as was the educational system, which included outings such as camps and field trips. Compulsory military conscription was also instrumental in propagating stories of white superiority and the need for segregation. The “danger of black people” was reinforced in the way these young men were often assigned the task of enforcing peace when unrest broke out in black townships.

These negative accounts of propaganda represent only one of many conflicting stories vying for dominance during the Apartheid years. While the Apartheid government fashioned a narrative that sought to elevate white people at the expense of black people, there were also those that opposed the struggle and chose rather to subscribed to a narrative and ideology that placed value on all individuals, regardless of

47 Nazir Hoosain Carrim, “Human Rights and the Construction of Identities in South African Education” (University of the Witwatersrand, 2007), 173-76. Lynette Steenveld, “The Pen and the Sword: Media Transformation and Democracy after Apartheid,” Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics 9, no. 2/3 (2012): 125-26. I recall one such occasion in my youth when all the ninth-grade classes were taken on a week-long camp which included meetings every evening with stories about the “dangers of black people” and the need to fight for a “Christian South Africa”.
48 In a recent meeting I attended, a fellow minister voiced his struggle with the growing multi-ethnic composition of his congregation. Although he had a deep desire to embrace and love each of his congregants, regardless of ethnicity, he was finding it difficult to unravel the stories of hate and discrimination that had been so deeply entrenched in his life while serving in the army during Apartheid.
their racial identification. The rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the early 1970’s through the person of Steve Biko, was one such movement that confronted the dehumanizing rhetoric of Apartheid by emphasizing the dignity and identity of black people. The origins of the BCM in South Africa can be traced back to the formation of the University Christian Movement (UCM) in 1967, a student movement that found inspiration following a meeting convened by Archbishop Robert Selby Taylor. Along with this movement’s Christian origins, it should also be noted that the BCM found inspiration in American black theology and liberation theology. Although Christianity played a central role in the movements origins and influences, it would not be accurate to refer to the BCM as a purely Christian. Other influences such as African American liberation authors, anti-colonialist African leaders, student uprisings from around the world, as well as the personal reality of living within the Apartheid system, provided further inspiration for the South African BCM. Considering the origins and influences of the movement, I am left wondering what impact the Christian narrative might have had on the BCM. Is it possible that Biko’s unique emphasis on “humanity,  

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50 Frost, 91.
53 Van Aarde, 2.
54 Mukuka, 18-19. The limitations of this paper do not permit a comprehensive representation of Mukuka's discussion on these influences on the BCM.
identity, self-respect, trust in oneself, responsibility, [and] pathos\textsuperscript{55} can be traced back to one or another Christian story? Even though Biko was outspoken regarding the “whiteness” and colonial nature of Christianity, he is still seen as surprisingly preoccupied with the Church and religion.\textsuperscript{56} Parallels can be drawn here to the Kairos document which was produced and published in 1985 by a group of local pastors and Christian activists from Soweto.\textsuperscript{57} A comprehensive overview of the document is not possible here, however, what is relevant to this discussion is the way the document challenges the South African Church to read the Biblical narrative within the context of the challenges facing the country at the time.\textsuperscript{58} This reinforced the position held by the Churches that opposed Apartheid, and challenged those Churches that were complicit and passive.

The telling of stories was central to the TARC proceedings and central to reshaping the South African narrative. Although the question of amnesty and justice remain contentious issues,\textsuperscript{59} the uncovering of truth and the sharing of stories gave

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Du Toit, 32.
\item Ibid., 42-45. A comprehensive understanding of Steve Biko’s relationship to Christianity is only possible through substantially more discussion which is not possible within the confines of this paper.
\item De Gruchy, \textit{Reconciliation : Restoring Justice}, 456-86.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
victims the opportunity to take their first steps towards healing. Through these stories, victims were given the opportunity of welcoming both friends and perpetrators into their lives, and in so doing lay a foundation for a narrative based on forgiveness and reconciliation. Despite these past victories, the conflict of narratives persists, with some employing the stories of past divisions in pursuit of personal and political ambition. It is within this context that the Church can utilize the foundation of forgiveness and reconciliation embedded in the country’s more recent past to build a counter narrative of inclusivity and reconciliation.

5.1.3.3 An Inclusive Alternate Community

Finally, I would suggest that Churches make a deliberate effort of establishing culturally alternative communities. For the most part, the Western Church continues to struggle with individualism, where faith is viewed as a private matter between God and the believer. This is far removed from the Biblical model that sees both the horizontal

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60 Tutu, 165.
61 Kaveel Singh, "Former Gupta P.R. Firm Apologises," news24.co.za, http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/former-gupta-pr-firm-apologises-20170706. The recently exposed campaign by the British public relations firm, Bell Pottinger, serves as a case in point here. Over the past few years, a politically connected family in South Africa employed the services of Bell Pottinger to counter negative public perception. The approach taken was to create a racially divisive narrative in the country that laid blame at the feet of “white monopoly capital”.
62 Bosch, 273, 362; Emerson and Smith, 76-77. Bosch traces the origins of individualism back to the Enlightenment’s emphasis on the “emancipated autonomous individual”. Emerson and Smith see this as predominantly an issue among white American evangelicals, and prefer to emphasize the Reformation and the subsequent Free Church traditional as the origin of white individualism in America.
and the vertical dimension of Christianity as central to one’s faith. According to John’s Gospel, the clearest indication of the believer’s identification with Christ is not in his or her individual spirituality, but in the love that the community shows one for another (John 13:34-35). This is affirmed in Jesus’ teaching on the greatest and the second greatest commandments which speaks of loving God and loving one’s neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; cf. Luke 10:25-28). In Luke’s Gospel, this teaching is followed by the parable of the Good Samaritan which Jesus tells as a way of providing clarity to his reference of “neighbor” in the second greatest command. It is interesting that Jesus would draw on the cross-cultural interaction between a Samaritan and Jew to make His point. Could it be that the witness of the eschatological community is not in the way we love those that are like us, but rather in the way we love those that are different from us? The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer affirm this: “The Kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies.” The Kingdom manifests when Christians gather with those that are different from themselves, even with those that they would consider their enemies. It is in these gatherings that the eschatological divide is bridged between what is, and what will be. These communal and inclusive gatherings of Christians, based on Christ’s directive to love those that are different from us, stand in contrast to

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64 Bonhoeffer and Wells, 35.
65 Ibid.
humanity’s preference for homogenous gatherings. It can therefore be said that when the Church operates as intended, then it is rightly called the alternative community.

The more contentious issue amongst Christians is however in the practicalities of establishing and facilitating these integrated communities. Scholars Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martinez, in their book, “Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities”, see three prominent models popular amongst Churches.66 The first of these is the “Anglo-conformity” model which calls upon people of other ethnicities to conform to the dominant culture, in their case it would be the white American culture. The second model they call the “melting pot”, where each cultural group brings something to the community creating something new and unique. The third model they identify is based on a “cultural pluralism” where each cultural group retains its distinctiveness, while simultaneously choosing to identify with the larger group.

At first blush these models appear workable, however, several practical and theological shortcomings become apparent on further reflection. In speaking of the Christian community, the Apostle Paul employs the imagery of the body to illustrate both the diversity and the unity of the community (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). A model that promotes conformity, such as the “Anglo-conformity” model would therefore

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66 Branson and Martínez, 912. It should be noted that Branson and Martinez are speaking specifically into the American context when they suggest these three models.
undermine the theological integrity of the community as it neglects Paul’s call for
diversity. The “melting pot” model appears to be more inclusive, but here again the
danger exists that the community loses the strength of its diversity as members
assimilate into the newly created community, which then also risks evolving into an
exclusive community. The danger of the “cultural pluralism” model is that diversity
may be retained but risks undermining the unity of the community. As noted, this is not
an acceptable model in a country such as South Africa where racial prejudice was
propagated under the guise of “separate development.” On the other hand, creating a
singular multi-ethnic forum may carry appeal to the idealist, but provisions still need to
be made for differences in language, culture, and worship preferences. It is not
uncommon to find people with the same cultural background speaking the same
language, seeking different worship experiences. Individuals from different cultural
backgrounds who speak different languages can then also be expected to gravitate
towards worship experiences that are more akin to their own cultural identities and
preferences.

The complexity of facilitating inclusive and reconciling communities must be
acknowledged and solutions actively sought. It would be naïve to suggest that one
model will serve as the answer in every community. A theological understanding of
God’s intention for the Church to be the witnessing eschatological community of Christ
is the start of the Church’s journey towards inclusion and reconciliation. Building on
that, Churches should seek to formulate an understanding on what that community should look like, and then seek the courage to move in that direction. As Churches seek to establish these inclusive communities, they can find comfort in the fact that it is the Spirit that gives wisdom, guidance and empowerment in the establishment of these communities.

Conclusion

The Church’s move towards inclusive communities remains a work in progress. My intention here has not been to identify one singular model and present it as a one-size-fits-all answer. On the contrary, I believe every community will have to take up the challenge and embark on its own journey. Every Church finds itself immersed in a context and culture, each with its own unique challenges and opportunities. For South Africa, those challenges include overcoming a deeply segregated past, coming to terms with the diversity of language and culture, and seeking solutions to the social inequalities caused by past discriminatory practices. On the other hand, the country’s miraculous transition into a free and democratic country, largely influenced by clergy such as Bishop Desmond Tutu and their conviction for reconciliation, presents the Church in South Africa with unique opportunities. Few countries have a reconciliatory heritage such as South Africa, and the Church would do well to acknowledge this heritage and use it as a foundation for further reconciliatory efforts. The thoughts
contained in this chapter represents signposts that I believe will help guide the Church in its efforts to establish theologically credible expressions of Christian community. These thoughts represent the start of what needs to be a far more comprehensive discussion, one that should take place within the local Church, where clergy and congregants are best qualified to understand the challenges and opportunities of their locality. In the end, it will be less about finding perfect solutions and more about finding the courage to start the journey. However, an understanding of the Church’s inclusive eschatological future provides hope that a representation of that futurist community remains possible in the here and now.
Conclusion

In this paper, I have approached the subject of reconciliation from a Christian perspective with the intention of finding application for local Christian communities. My departure point has been an exploration on reconciliation as presented in the Biblical text. The Apostle Paul’s writings have proved insightful in this regard. I then narrowed my focus to assess the possible contributions to be found in Pentecostalism which I did by highlighting developments in eschatology and the Pentecostal emphasis on the empowerment of the Spirit. Finally, I concluded by considering the practical implications of the local Christian Church establishing integrated communities and contributing towards the larger discussion on reconciliation. These concepts will now be brought together with one or two final considerations.

Justice and the Teachings of Paul

In chapter 1, Paul’s teachings regarding reconciliation are assessed. In this assessment, it was established that Paul’s understanding of reconciliation is based on God initiating a process of restoration through the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 5:8-11; Ephesians 2:13-16; Colossians 1:15-23). The controversy of Paul’s teaching is found in the fact that God is to be viewed as the victim, and then also as the primary agent of reconciliation despite humanity being responsible for breaking relationship with God. If God had been the perpetrator in this instance,
Paul’s teachings may have been more palatable. However, in this account of God’s salvific work, humanity sins against God, and so it is humanity that is the perpetrator, but then also the beneficiary of God’s reconciliatory initiatives. Romans 5:8-10 is useful in affirming this. Here Paul speaks of humanity as being God’s “enemies”, but in the same breath notes how God reconciles humanity to himself “through the death of his Son” (v. 10). This model therefore presents the victim as the one who reaches out to reconcile with the perpetrator. The crucifixion further escalates the contentious nature of this model, as it is through the sacrifice of the victim that the perpetrator is restored. At the heart of this discussion is the question of justice, and whether it should be considered just that the victim can be seen as taking responsibility for the reconciliatory process, and in this instance, achieving reconciliation at such a high personal cost. How is the relationship between justice and reconciliation to be understood? Is justice an essential element in the reconciliatory process? If so, then in what way does the Biblical model of reconciliation fulfill these demands?

This was a central concern in the proceedings of the South Africa TARC, where an amnesty-for-truth agreement created an environment that seemingly thwarted the demands of justice.1 Instances such as this continue to drive the search for some sort of middle ground, where justice is fulfilled without creating a downward spiral of

1 Tutu, 48-50.
repaying injustice with injustice, as Donald Shriver notes, “Violence feeds on revenge; revenge, on violence.”2 Finding this middle ground is however proving to be ambiguous. Was the process of truth-telling at the TARC an appropriate and sufficient form of justice? If not, as some have argued,3 then the question must be asked, what should a just response to the crimes of Apartheid have looked like? Miroslav Volf’s predicament of partiality, which highlights the improbability of victims and perpetrators agreeing on the measure of justice, comes to the forefront in this discussion.4 Looking back at the TARC, it is unlikely that both the victim and the perpetrator would have agreed on an appropriate form of justice, leaving at least one of the parties with an aftertaste of injustice. Tristan Anne Borer, Professor of Government and International Relations at Connecticut College, touches on this in her article, “A Taxonomy of Victims and Perpetrators: Human Rights and Reconciliation in South Africa.” Here she draws a distinction between direct and indirect perpetrators, noting that many of those who committed crimes during Apartheid did so on the orders of their superiors.5 How are perpetrators and victims to agree on justice in instances such as this? As things stand, some victims did leave the proceedings of the TARC questioning the justice of the process. Political Theorist Hannah Arendt’s predicament of irreversibility, which notes

2 Shriver, 19.
3 De Gruchy, Reconciliation : Restoring Justice, 487.
4 Volf, Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation, 121.
the inability to undo past injustices, represents another conundrum in the search for justice. Regardless of the form and extent of justice being measured out, the past remains irreversible. It is into this situation that scholars such as H. Russel Botman have attempted to forge a compromise by distinguishing between revenge, retribution, redistribution, and restoration as different approaches to justice. There is an understanding that justice must form part of the reconciliatory process, but what that justice looks like remains an ongoing debate.

So, did the Apostle Paul address this issue of Justice, and if so, in what way does the Biblical account of reconciliation fulfill the demands of justice? As discussed in chapter 1, justice is central to the Biblical model of reconciliation, but in Paul’s model the demands of justice are fulfilled by the victim, and not by the perpetrator as might be expected. It is in the crucifixion of Christ that God’s demands for justice are fulfilled on behalf of sinful humanity. Stepping back from a Judeo-Christian perspective, it becomes apparent that the Biblical approach to reconciliation is likely to fail the secular requirements of justice. There is little doubt that this paper would have been presented differently had the subject been approached from a political, economic, or even humanist standpoint. Even so, I still contend that the controversial approach presented by the Biblical model challenges secular thinking and presents noteworthy possibilities.

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7 Botman, 248.
for reconciliation. In saying that, I realize that these suggestions will likely be met with resistance from those both in and out of the Church. It is for this reason that I recommend further study in Biblical justice and its application for reconciliation. As noted, this is not a new field of study, but more work is required if the Biblical model is to be understood and its contributions appreciated.

**Considering the Biblical Model of Reconciliation**

An example in the understanding of the Biblical model of reconciliation lies in the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. Peter’s question in 18:21 regarding forgiveness contextualizes this parable: “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” New Testament scholar R.T. France notes how Peter’s question supersedes the commonly taught limitation of forgiving someone only three times as taught by the Rabbis of the time, but Jesus still seeks to enlarges his thinking on the subject by instructing him to

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forgive seventy-seven times (18:22). The parable that follows then clarifies Jesus’ thoughts regarding forgiveness.

This parable presents two debts that need to be settled. The first is an unpayable debt owed to the king (18:24). That this is an unpayable debt is easily lost to the contemporary reader. In emphasizing this fact, Craig Keener questions whether such a sum of currency would even have been in circulation in the country at the time. The slave has therefore amounted an enormous debt, and even though the king is entitled to throw him and his family into jail and torture them, this debt will never be recouped (18:25). In desperation, the slave begs for a reprieve, and subsequently finds mercy in the eyes of the king who dismisses his debt (18:26-27). In using the language of reconciliation, the king can be viewed as the victim as he will not receive the debt owed him. The slave is then the perpetrator as he has wronged the king by not honoring his debts. The king is within his rights to exact judgment on the slave, but chooses rather to forgive his debt, bringing the slave into right standing before the king. Keener likens the extent of this forgiveness with that of God forgiving humanity, who as sinners, find themselves in the position where they owe an unpayable debt to God. It is only through God’s grace and forgiveness that humanity can find absolution and be reconciled back to God, this is the only solution available to humanity.

10 Or, “Seventy times seven” (NKJV, NLT, GNB).
12 Ibid., 458.
The parable then sees the forgiven slave threaten and jail a fellow slave who owed him only a minor debt that could easily be paid back (18:28-30). On hearing of this, the king rescinds the forgiven debt of the unforgiving slave and throws him into jail until such a time as the debt is repaid (18:31-34). This being an unpayable debt means the slave’s fate is sealed. In this instance, Jesus is clear as to the meaning of the parable: “So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart” (18:35). In bringing this back to reconciliation, it adds clarity to how the Biblical model is to be understood. Those reaching out in reconciliation are not to do so from the position of justice or fairness, rather, finding strength in the forgiveness of an unpayable debt, Christians reach out into the world and offer others forgiveness in kind. That the slave owed his fellow slave a payable debt, should give further assurance that the Biblical model of forgiveness is not void of justice. Wrongdoing carries consequences, but the parable sees resolution as possible and within the reach of humanity, and in this instance, it propagates forgiveness as the solution. It is less about the size of the debt, and more about a willingness to seek resolution and reconciliation. Turning once again to the TARC, one can see a phenomenon where many victims who suffered greatly at the hands of the Apartheid regime, willingly reached out in forgiveness. In doing this, there is a reenactment of the Biblical model of

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14 Tutu, 102-03.
reconciliation where the victim reaches out to reconcile with the perpetrator. I contend that it is for this reason that South Africa experienced a miraculous transition.

In saying this, I remain acutely aware of the improbability of humanity taking on the forgiving nature of the divine without some form of supernatural intervention. It is at this point that I now turn to Pentecostalism.

**Empowerment Through the Spirit**

Empowerment is central to Pentecostalism. Traditionally, this has been an empowerment for mission driven by an eschatological urgency. However, in chapter 2 I draw from the work of scholars such as Murray Dempster and propose that this empowerment of the Spirit with the accompanying impartation of gifts be expanded to include a social dimension. In chapter 4, I then also discuss the Church as the eschatological community noting how the inclusive nature of communities during the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2, and during the founding of the Pentecostal movement, points to the social and reconciling dynamic of the Pentecostal Spirit.

In Romans 5:8, Paul explains the motivation behind Christ’s sacrificial act of reconciliation: “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” As has been discussed, Paul is not discounting the demands of justice, but rather showing that love is the dominant factor in God’s work of reconciliation. This same love must therefore be inherent to the Christian if he or she is to emulate the forgiving and reconciling nature of Christ. Without divine intervention, this seems unlikely. It is here that Amos Yong’s understanding of the Pentecostal Spirit offers solutions. In his book entitled, “Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace”, Yong contends that Pentecostals have understated the Spirit’s role in empowering believers to “love”. He suggests that in moves such as the Azusa Street Revival, much of the reconciliatory interaction within that community can be attributed to the Spirit empowering believers to love one another. He therefore argues that the baptism of the Spirit also be considered a baptism of love. In this same line of argument, Scholar Joshua Reichard pens a paper on “Relational Empowerment”, where he challenges Pentecostals and Charismatics to see the Spirit’s empowering as “other-orientated” and originated in the love of God. His argument aligns with Yong’s in as much as he sees this empowerment as constructively contributing to interpersonal dynamics, suggesting

18 Ibid., 1404-19.
19 Ibid., 1631-46. Yong develops this theologically in chapter 5 of his book entitled, “The Spirit’s Baptism of Love”.
20 Reichard, 226.
that forgiveness can be viewed as a fruit of this empowerment. It is therefore through the Spirit of Jesus that the believer can exercise this same love, forgiveness and reconciliation that is seen in Christ’s act of reconciling humanity to himself.

Eschatological developments within Pentecostalism have further added to the understanding of the Spirit’s empowerment of the Church in terms of reconciliation. Pentecostal Theologian Steven Land shows how it is through the Spirit that believers find themselves in the eschatological “already-not yet”, continually assessing the balance between a realized and futurist understandings of this eschatological position. The advantage of this position is that through the Spirit, the believer can access the resources of the future age as her or she contends with the challenges in the present. This can be seen in the believer’s reception of gifts through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:6-8), which Reichard argues must be considered within the context of the community. In referencing the Biblical model of reconciliation, I am therefore not calling for an ultraistic moralization, neither do I seek to undermine the demands of justice, but I do propose that a higher level of engagement is possible when the believer is empowered by the Spirit.

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21 Ibid., 240-41.
22 Land, 2-3.
23 Reichard, 241.
The Reconciling Community

Pentecostal scholars such Robert Menzies and James Shelton see the empowerment of the Spirit as a second reception, occurring only after the salvific work of the Spirit has taken place in the individual. Receiving empowerment to love, forgive and reconcile is therefore limited to the Christian community. This is consistent with Paul’s teachings in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 where he sees the believer’s call to the ministry of reconciliation as flowing from Christ’s work of reconciliation occurring first within the believer. In discussing this, C.K. Barrett speaks of “God [putting] in us ... the message of reconciliation”, and so it can be seen that reconciliation is firstly something that Christ imparts to the individual, and then something that Christ does through that same individual. The Christian community should therefore be seen as witnessing to an otherworldly interaction where the forgiven extend forgiveness to others. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Church is yet to embody principles of inclusivity and reconciliation within their local expressions, and so much work is still to be done in this area. Whereas some Churches have taken deliberate steps in this direction, the overall picture of the Church is not that of integrated and inclusive communities. The Church should therefore identify its shortcomings in this area and pursue transformation and

25 Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 177-78.
26 In the open paragraphs of the chapter, I reference statistics that point to the Church as still being largely segregated. This is contradictory of the reconciling work of the Spirit that empowers believers to find forgiveness and to gather together across racial and ethnic lines.
empowerment within its own ranks while simultaneously stepping out into a larger context. In doing so, the Church will be well positioned to speak into the secular context, and add credibility to the Biblical model presented here.

That the Church’s ministry of reconciliation is inseparable from its context is a factor that should not be disregarded in this conversation. It is here that further study on culture and its impact on reconciliation can assist the Church in ministering to its community. This is evident from Michael Battle’s comments where he highlights the influence of Tutu’s understanding regarding “Ubuntu” as a contributing factor in the reconciliatory process. Another such example would be the reconciliatory process that followed the Rwandan genocide, where cultural tools such as the Gacaca courts proved helpful in administering restorative justice. In these instances, culture positively contributed towards the reconciliatory process. That culture can potentially contribute towards the initial conflict should however also be taken into consideration, not only when dealing with reconciliation, but also when considering measures to prevent future conflict. As the Church steps forward in reconciliatory endeavors, it would do well to consider where cultural and Christian values align, and where they could potential come into conflict. This will affect the Church’s role in reconciliation.

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27 Battle, 178-79. The concept of Ubuntu is derived from the Zulu expression, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", which is translated as "a person is a person through other people". Ubuntu therefore stresses the interconnectedness of humanity. See Villa-Vicencio, 114.
This topic has not fallen within the scope of this paper and has therefore not been covered. Resources that might be helpful in this regard have been included below.\(^\text{29}\)

**Final Comments**

This paper has been built on the premise that reconciliation is a theological concept. Using that as my departure point, I endeavored to revisit these theological beginnings and show how the local Church is positioned as a role player in this ongoing discussion. In concluding this paper, I affirm the role of the local Church in matters of reconciliation. Not only is the Church to be a reconciled community, but it is also to play a part in bringing about reconciliation to society at large. More to the point, through its theology, and through traditions such as Pentecostalism, the Church makes a unique set of tools available to this discussion. I must however acknowledge the elusive nature of the subject, noting that my study here has highlighted the need for this conversation to be ongoing. This paper is therefore to be considered as part of a larger discussion that will hopefully move the Church towards its role as the reconciling community.

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Biography

Ralph du Plessis, was born 30 August 1973 in Sasolburg, South Africa. In 2006, he received his B.A. Bible and Theology from Global University, Springfield, Missouri. On completion of that degree he furthered his studies through the Assemblies of God Bible College in the United Kingdom, receiving a M.Th. from the University of Wales, Bangor in 2009. In March 2000, he was ordained as a minister in the Assemblies of God, South Africa, at which time he was also appointed to lead the One Way Community Church in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa.